

## Setting a Routine

As a pack animal, your new dog will want to learn the power structure of your household as soon as possible. As the newcomer, your dog will be willing to accept the proper submissive role, but you should assert dominant behavior from the start to ensure that your dog knows how to act. These dominant acts are not aggressive and never violent, but dogs recognize and react to them. By establishing dominance early, you will be laying the groundwork for effective training down the road.

When you first come home, make a habit of walking through doors ahead of your dog, and eat a snack in your dog's presence before setting out the dog food. Taking the lead and eating first are activities your dog associates with a pack leader.

In the first few days, your dog will be busy exploring his new home. Don't discourage him, but make sure you keep your dog within sight whenever he's out of his crate during the first few days. Your dog may chew, scratch, or run indoors where these activities aren't appropriate. By watching your dog closely the first few days, you are always in a position to nip this behavior in the bud.

When you see your dog doing something wrong, say "No" in a low voice, and distract your dog with a chew toy or let him outside. Praise him for this appropriate behavior. Pretty soon, your dog will know which activities result in praise and which result in scolding.

Dogs are creatures of habit. They will be happiest if their food, water, bathroom break, exercise and play come at the same time every day. Set a schedule as quickly as possible and follow it as closely as possible.

One of the most useful tools in setting a schedule is a crate. Once you have taught your dog to view his crate as his den, he will be glad to stay there when you aren't home. This will keep him out of trouble and allow you to control when he eats, runs and eliminates.

Remember that your dog will react most directly to tone of voice and body language. Use a high and excited voice to motivate, a calm, normal tone to command and a low, growling voice to warn or correct.

Because dogs/puppies are creatures of habit, schedules are very important. You need to schedule when to feed, water, exercise and take your dog/puppy outdoors to eliminate. You will want to get your new friend housebroken very quickly and, without a schedule, housebreaking can be a very long drawn-out ordeal.

Exercise is important for all dogs. 40% to 60% of all adult dogs are either overweight or likely to get that way due to diet and lack of an exercise program. Lack of exercise can cause dogs/puppies to exhibit destructive chewing behavior because they become bored or are trying to burn off excess energy. Taking your dog/puppy for a 15-20 minute walk can help socialize him, give you both something to do together (bonding), and what a great way to exercise.

With this groundwork, you and your dog will learn more about each other and will be able to learn to work together. Once your dog has settled into her new life and has acknowledged you as leader, you will have a much easier time correcting behavior and teaching different activities.