

**Ask
The
Trainer**



Puppy Training... A to Z

by Devon Inglove, Trainer



STARTING PUPPIES AT 7 WEEKS

Starting with puppies is like a bank account the more you invest, the more return you will get, the investment is time.

First start with a quality puppy, the finest you can afford, remembering the price you pay for your puppy is the least expensive part of a quality finished field trail or gun dog.

Breeding, genetics and raising quality puppies is an expensive and time consuming job for the breeder if they are doing things the best way.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- ◆ Bloodline Development
- ◆ Facilities
- ◆ Health/Vet Care
- ◆ Nutrition
- ◆ Socialization
- ◆ General Care
- ◆ Exposure to Retrieving, Birds and Water (Weather/temperature permitting)



All these things make for good quality puppies, to have a good finished dog one must start with a good pup. These pups should be well socialized, intelligent, have great desire for birds, retrieving water.

Research your breeder carefully, get numerous references, see the parents work (if possible) and be sure parents are OFA certified and have passed CERF in the last year.

There are many topics directly related to puppies and we will address most of them through out a series of articles, I feel much time should be spent on puppy training as it is the most crucial time of training and developmental learning and will set the stage for rest of the dog's life.

These things are important as the pup you start with will be a part of your life for approximately 12 years. A trained dog is a totally free dog and this starts as soon as you become a part of the pup's life; in the ca-

nine pack social order you will be, you must be the pack leader. This does not mean domination, abuse, or inhumane treatment.

A dog needs direction, the pack social order is bred into him/her. A dog would rather be with humans than other dogs, but if we let the dog be the pack leader and us the subordinate, life for us and the dog will not be pleasant.

Now, what do all of these things have to do with sporting dog training? My answer is... everything. By doing these things as puppies, we are insuring trainability to the highest level in that we are laying the foundation now. These things are a sensible sound beginning, that all good dogs should know.

We will break puppy training down into several sections:

- ◆ **STARTING PUPPIES AT 7 WEEKS**
- ◆ **HOUSE-TRAINING**
- ◆ **BUILDING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**
- ◆ **DEVELOPING YOUR PUP FOR INTERMEDIATE TRAINING**
- ◆ **PREPARING YOUR PUP FOR ADVANCE LEVEL TRAINING**



The need to socialize your dog is most important, to become an acceptable candidate for future training. The puppy must interact with you, your family, other humans, dogs, different setting and places.

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If you don't give your puppy this exposure, your dog's behavior could be very unpredictable around strange places, people and other dogs. They can be either fearful or aggressive and thus future training will be impaired. All things at this point should be positive and exposure to traumatic experiences should be avoided. This is a good time to start your pup riding in a vehicle. The time you spend now is well worth the effort in making your pup the well adjusted mature trained dog. I like my pups to be raised in the house but, one pup must be separated so they can be individuals and bond with you, not another pup... especially a litter-mate. A young pup, particularly a retrieving breed pup who is very aware of their mouth, is going to chew. Provide chew materials for the pup, limit it to 1-2 items and nothing that resembles a no chew item. (Example) do not give the pup an old tennis shoe to chew and expect the pup not to chew your good shoes. They cannot make the distinction between the two. Also having too many chew objects give the pup the message that they can chew



everything. If you catch the pup chewing, stop him/her and tell them "NO" in a firm voice and give them their only acceptable chew object. This is a good time to make our pup know his place in the house. Pick a spot where you want the pup to stay and/or go to on command. Start by doing your crate training in this spot and later start using a mat to teach the "PLACE" command.



Next Quarterly Article:

HOUSE-TRAINING