



Fetching Facts & Noseworthy Notes

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Upcoming Classes

Puppy Class:

May 14 – June 18

Doggy Manners:

May 14 – June 18

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Growing Up Doggy:

3 Tips for Success During Adolescence

Many puppy owners start off right, by getting their new family member into a puppy class or have in-home training to help everyone adjust and learn how to live in harmony. Puppies learn all their basic behaviors and rules are established to ensure the puppies do not chew up the couch or pee in the house. The next couple of months typically go well. Then, adolescence strikes!

The once compliant, sweet puppy starts chewing again, jumping on guests, and stealing from the counters and table tops. Many owners wonder how the puppy “forgot” what he learned in classes! Doesn’t he already know the behaviors? Why is it he suddenly does not come when called?

As with human “teenagers,” dogs are transitioning from puppy to adult. They test limits and rules; try new things to get attention;

and have even more energy than they did as young puppies. As your dog is growing up, and going through this phase, there are three key things to focus on to help you and your dog be successful into adulthood: proper exercise, consistent rules, and positive reinforcement of the right choices and behaviors.

🐾 Proper exercise includes both physical and mental stimulation. Adolescent dogs are full of energy. To avoid chewing damage and other problem behaviors, young dogs need the opportunity to run and play every day. In addition, getting

involved in dog sports, providing games and puzzles, and taking more challenging classes are excellent ways to harness and focus that energy. A well run doggy daycare is another option to offer play and stimulation. A well exercised, tired dog is a well behaved dog!

🐾 Consistent rules for behavior and manners are also very important. Allowing your young dog to jump sometimes, but get angry when he does so other times creates confusion and frustration for your dog. If the rule is always the same, for example sit to greet a guest, your dog will not “wonder” or “guess” what he should do in that situation. Frustration will result in your dog trying to figure out the “right answer” and often getting it wrong. Rather than have your dog guessing wrong, have set and well trained right answers for him to perform. Coach him consistently; reminding him of the rules every time he faces a particular situation.

🐾 Positive reinforcement of the right choices and behaviors will ensure future compliance with the rules you have established. Treats are not the *only* way to reinforce good choices. Praise and petting, permission to greet someone, engaging in play such as fetch or tug are all ways to reinforce your dog for making a good decision.

Following these three rules will allow you and your dog to work as a team, and conquer those tough teenage months successfully. Making growing up doggy more about enjoyment than frustration!

Charley S



Q's Views...



Guess what this month is?!? Q's birthday!! I will be one year old on March 31st!! My momma tells me I am a very good boy "considering I am an adolescent Lab." Not sure if that is a compliment...

Adolescence is a tough time for a dog. We are no longer puppies, but are not grown up either. Sometimes we forget the rules we learned at puppy school and need gentle reminders. Also, we may tend to "test the limits" on occasion; just to see if you are really going to enforce the rules. If you remind us in a positive way, we will follow your lead! After all, we want to grow up to be successful family members!

Koda's Komments...



Not to brag, but I am a very young 11 year old. In addition to my youthful good looks, I am also playful and energetic.

A key role I have is big brother to the crazy Q. Being an adolescent, he tends to forget his manners sometimes. Luckily, my youthful ways allow me to remind him to behave.

If you have an older dog, and are considering bringing in a youngster, assess the situation fairly. If your senior is not as youthful or has health issue, he may not be able to handle an adolescent dog. Consider the needs of both dogs when making your decision.

A HAPPY TAILS TALE....

This month's tale is an experience and philosophy I would like to share. Taking Tuck and Koda to puppy school was fun! Seeing them learn new behaviors and meet other puppies was a positive experience. The issue came a few months *after* puppy school... Puppy school never mentioned what was ahead: adolescence.

Doggy adolescence is similar to human teenage years; full of challenges, growing, changing, and the need for patience. Puppy parents need to continue to guide, reinforce the right choices, and provide proper activities. The puppy that would play for a half an hour then sleep for two hours is now able to play for two hours, and sleep for half an hour! As a first time puppy owner, this change came as a huge shock! No one had warned me about these behavior challenges and increased exercise needs.

Now I have the opportunity to help prepare puppy owners for adolescence! Part of my puppy class curriculum is discussing these upcoming changes. I advise class participants how to use the information and skills from class to address the challenges that will arise as their puppy matures. I offer specifics about exercise, learning, and possible behavior issues.

This discussion is not to discourage or scare puppy parents! Exactly the opposite! Puppy parents are informed and aware; the tools they need to be successful are already in their hands from our time together at class. And, I am a resource any time they have questions. Knowledge and preparedness lead to success; which leads to puppies staying in their forever homes!

Kirb's Blurb!



Now that I am a distinguished gentleman of 7 years old, I can tell you I have a lower tolerance of goofy youngsters. When my little brother Q plays with his pals at the park, I sometimes have to remind them not to be so crazy around me. I prefer to stroll along with my mom, occasionally running off to explore a smell. When I give my gentle correction, which is usually just a grumbly growl, those youngsters know I mean business and they back off.

So remember that not all grumbly growls are bad. They are a safe and successful way for older, more mature dogs to remind younger dogs that we prefer to be left alone. I am never mean or aggressive, but I do make sure I gently warn them to give me space so I am comfortable.