

PUPPIES - SIT NICELY NOW!

Clumsy and boisterous, they capture the hearts of children and adults alike: Puppies. But this phase is often over before dog owners even realize it – and that cuddly puppy has suddenly become a young dog. One can only hope that it learned to tell right from wrong during its first few weeks in its new home. Because only if your pet has been equipped with good environmental and social manners during this decisive period is it ideally prepared for a future free of conflict, say the experts at the pet store chain Maxi Zoo.



The first 16 weeks are regarded as decisive in forming a puppy's character, which does not mean that it won't still be capable of learning. But what a dog learns in those first few weeks of its life will be firmly imprinted in its mind. From good breeders, you won't get puppies before the tenth or twelfth week. So you need to use the time after that as intensively as possible to feed your puppy's brain with important information. That includes impressions of its living environment, but also the right behaviour towards man and animal.

Before you start, first give your little pupil one or two days to get acquainted with its new home. Make sure it has a fixed place of its own, where it can rest undisturbed. Even effervescent puppies need their peace and quiet and should not be constantly bothered by members of the family. Give it one or two toys appropriate to its age. That is more than enough. After its acclimatization, offer your pet as many stimuli as possible: something to watch, to sniff at or to listen to.

Don't only acquaint it with lots of objects, but also everyday situations – even if its future day-by-day life may look different: Take it with you into town, to the zoo, to paddocks with horses, to the river or lake, into a restaurant, in a lift, on the bus, train etc. But be careful: This will be really tiring! Let your youngster take a break now and then, and don't make it walk too far.

Your puppy will learn proper social behaviour best by playing with you and other dogs. It can test its limits and find out what forms of behaviour produce good or bad consequences. You can use this

time to teach it the basic commands, such as "Sit", "Lay" or "Come here". Visiting a puppy playgroup or a dog school together is absolutely recommended: Here, little Pooch can learn the behaviour and language of its fellow dogs. And, as its companion, you not only discover your nosy puppy's character traits, but also learn how to handle it properly.

RAISING PUPPIES MEANS TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Before you decide on a puppy, you should think carefully about what that means: In the first few months you need to invest a lot of time and patience into giving your pet a good start in life. After all, you want yourself and your pet to go through life without conflicts later. Dog schools, vets and books can help you make your decision and prepare for a life with your dog.

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