

All Puppy Bulletin

Subject: Home Switches

Dealing with the Visiting Puppy and the Return Home after a Home Switch

Home Switches are required of every puppy at least once per quarter. You will be advised if a puppy has a particular need for more switches.

Reason: Home Switches help the puppy adjust to new environments and feel comfortable in them.

Goal: Building a relationship and confidence with a new handler.

Reminder: Puppy's comfort over control.

A new home without the comfort of their Puppy Raiser is an unsettling event for all puppies. We can help the puppy by recognizing the signs of concern and acting properly. A visiting puppy needs to feel comfortable before going off to see the "World". This period should be at least 24 hours. Always remember to take Baby Steps.

Dealing with the Visiting Puppy

Two ways a puppy reacts to a new environment are:

- Animated - The puppy may become very animated, doing things it would not do at home.
- Withdrawn - The puppy may shut down, becoming withdrawn. Seemingly to be the best puppy in the world perhaps curled up sleeping, but not the confident puppy you may think. This puppy is really shutting off the world and in need of a lot of encouragement. Remember, you should not coddle the puppy.

The Animated or Withdrawn Visiting Puppy

Animated Puppy

- Use an umbilical cord or a leash and anticipate the puppy's inappropriate behavior. If the puppy has an opportunity to jump, say "Off" and give a loose collar. If the puppy responds to "Off", praise the puppy. If not, give a pop/release correction, then praise by saying "Good Off". Repeat the same exposure until the puppy "Gets It", that is, the puppy stays off while you are passing by the object. Be sure to give lots of praise when the puppy stays off.
- Minimize the opportunity for bad behavior. Anticipating undesired behavior is better than correcting bad behavior.
- Slow down the puppy by being calm and proactive.

Withdrawn Puppy

- Bring the puppy out of its shell by human/canine interactive play. This process will build a relationship and teach the puppy that the new environment is a great place to be. Do not overwhelm the puppy by taking him to a lot of places. Keep exposures low key. The household exposure is enough until the puppy is comfortable.
- If the puppy does something once and the next time refuses, i.e. stairs in the visiting home, do not continue. Instead, do something fun around the stairs and quit for the day. For example, throw a comfort toy properly at the top of the stairs. If the puppy placed one paw on the first step or landing, praise the puppy and quit for the day. Repeat this process until the puppy is comfortable. A puppy visiting for 1 – 3 days may not accomplish anything more and that is okay. If there is another dog in the

house, it may be easier if the more confident dog goes up and down the stairs while the visiting puppy watches. Throwing a ball for the household dog and praising him helps the visiting puppy.

Visiting Puppy Guidelines

Introductions

Introduce your household dog and visiting puppy on common ground. This is done outside with both dogs on leash with no training collars. Allow the dogs to interact for the count of 1001,1002 then each handler calls their dog while backing up. If leashes become entangled, then untangle them for the above count. Continue this process until the distance between the dogs is enough so that the dogs can focus on the handlers. Then, have the dogs sit. As one dog sits and watches, the other dog should move. Finally, have the dogs interact again, repeating the above process until the dogs are less interested in each other.

Basics

Strive to have the visiting puppy comfortable with obedience, loose leash walking, respect leash (pole), massage and body handling inside and outside the new home environment.

Building Trust

Never trust a visiting puppy. The puppy must earn your trust. The visiting puppy will not earn your total trust. If the visiting puppy is wandering through a few rooms in your house and is not being watched, the puppy will not learn good manners. A puppy is always learning. Learning on his own is not how a puppy learns good manners. Make sure that you are following the puppy or use an umbilical cord. Remember, there is no magic in the cord, rather you need to manage the puppy while he is attached to the cord. If you are unable to watch the puppy all the time, put the puppy in the crate for the minute it takes you to complete your task, then bring the puppy out and continue with positive exposures and experiences. The Puppy Raisers with well-mannered puppies don't get all the easy puppies, rather they work hard on good manners from the moment their puppy arrives.

Exposures

All puppies need exposures three (3) occasions weekly, five (5) exposures per occasion. The exposures are not necessarily new exposures. Remember, comfort over control. For the visiting puppy, everything is new in your home so take it slow and easy. Your main objective is to properly expose the puppy to a new home environment, i.e. garage doors, new stairs, local traffic, noises, etc. Puppy Raisers should share information regarding normal exposure locations with the home switch handler. Repeating these familiar exposures helps the puppy's comfort level when he is with a different handler. When doing exposures with a visiting puppy, think about the first time you stayed away from home. Put yourself in your puppy's place and remember that Less is More!

Coming Home after the Home Switch or Puppy Sitter Visit

When the puppy returns home, the puppy may show signs of concern in areas where you didn't notice before the home switch. This does not mean that the home switch handler did something wrong, rather the puppy's comfort zone and normal routine have been disrupted. The Puppy Raiser needs to go back to basics.

- If the puppy demonstrates poor house manners, the puppy needs to earn your trust again.
- If the puppy shows concern with objects or exposures not shown before the home switch, reintroduce the puppy to the situation. Take it slow and easy. It may require a few repetitions before the puppy is comfortable.

Examples of Concern and How to Address the Situation

Stairs

- As you approach the stairs, use your comfort toy. Properly toss the toy in the vicinity of the stairs. Initially, do not toss the toy too close to the stairs. When the puppy goes after the comfort toy, give lots of praise. Repeat this process until the puppy is comfortable.
- Sit near the stairs with a chew bone a few times before attempting the stairs.
- When you begin stairs, go back to basics i.e. up a few steps, loose leash, then call the puppy back down. Repeat this procedure until the puppy is comfortable.

Elevations

Approach elevations while watching the puppy's body language. If necessary, use your comfort toy. Properly toss the toy in the vicinity of the elevation but do not allow it to drop off the elevation initially. Use lots of praise and repeat the process until the puppy is comfortable.

Noises

Use the following guidelines if the puppy is showing concern about noises, either inside or outside the house. If the concern is with an object that you can touch, such as a vacuum, turn off the machine. Approach the object with the puppy on leash so you are between the object and the puppy. Touch the object and allow the puppy to smell your hand. Repeat this procedure until the puppy approaches the object. Do not coddle the puppy. Praise the puppy when it approaches. If the puppy still does not approach the object, use your comfort toy properly and praise the puppy for approaching the object. If this process does not work, contact your Area Coordinator for further assistance.

Traffic

Build the puppy's comfort level by facing traffic at a distance. Use your comfort toy properly near traffic and as the puppy relaxes, use a chew bone to build the comfort. As the puppy becomes more comfortable, gradually shorten your distance to the traffic. When the puppy is comfortable listening and watching traffic, start short walks at a distance, and then gradually get closer watching the puppy's body language for signs of concern. Use your comfort toy as needed.

Adjusting to the Return Home

Your puppy may seem manipulative but consider that the puppy may be confused. The puppy has just gone from a handler back to you and your standards. Return to basics using the four steps to sit and down. Your puppy is as frustrated as you. Slow down and be patient.