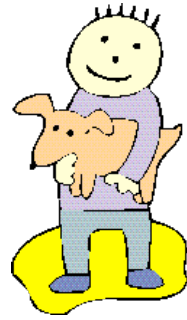


Teaching Your Puppy To Like Being Handled



The majority of dogs are not born with a desire to be handled by humans.

While a puppy might not mind you touching her feet, as an adult she is likely to develop an intolerance of it if she wasn't taught as a pup that it's not threatening. Handling a dog can become problematic if that dog wasn't taught to enjoy handling while it was a puppy, during the socialization period of birth to 18 weeks.

Your pup, and soon to be adult dog, is going to be handled by vets and vet techs, have her temperature taken, get shots, be held down to examine a cut or a lump, will need to be bathed and groomed, will need nails clipped regularly and might have a foxtail or burr removed from a paw or fur. A child might pull your dog's tail or pet her a little too roughly. Or someone might step on your dog. A dog who hasn't been taught to tolerate handling can make these experiences very unpleasant, and unsafe, for everyone involved.

The puppy socialization period is the perfect time to teach your pup to love to be handled, or at least tolerate it without protesting. Here are some things you can do to help your pup grow into a dog who can tolerate all these things. Just handling your pup is not enough. It is essential that you associate handling with something pleasant, so plan on using part of your dog's daily calories for these exercises, something your pup LOVES to eat!

- Gently tug on your pup's tail, pop a treat in his mouth.
- Gently squeeze your dog's skin, give a treat.
- Handle your pup's ears, treat! Look in ear, treat! Gently touch your finger inside the ear, treat!
- Handle his muzzle, treat!
- Lift up the lips to look at the teeth, treat! Run your fingers around this teeth, treat!
- Gently restrain the head for a second, treat!
- Handle each foot, treat! Press gently on each toe pad, treat after each one!
- Gently touch between the toe pads, treats!
- Handle your pup's behind, treat!
- Rub your hands from the base of tail to the tip, treat!
- Rub your hands on every part of your puppy's body, using some pressure, treat!
- Gently restrain your pup, treat!

When restraining your pup in any position, be sure to start off with very, very short (2 seconds) restraints and then increase it in later sessions as the dog becomes more comfortable.

