**Monson Small Animal Clinic**

**125 Palmer Road**

**Monson, MA 01057**

Housetraining Tips!

**Have Everyone Be Consistent**

Make sure that everyone in your household treats the puppy in the same way, and that everyone in the house follow the same procedures for praising, taking the pup outside, and for not punishing. This is of the utmost importance. Different reactions and behaviors from family members will confuse the puppy, delay housebreaking, and will cause her anxiety and insecurity.

**Use Confinement**

The best training aid is a crate; if you don’t have one, get one. Some crates can expand, providing the puppy with more room as she grows. This type is the best for housebreaking, since it will restrict her area to a small one consistent with her size.

A crate is not cruel! This has nothing at all to do with “keeping an animal in a cage.” She will come to see this as her “den”, which is instinctual behavior for a puppy or dog. She will actually be more comfortable and secure in it than without it.

You can crate her during the day for one or two hours at most. The puppy needs exercise when she is growing, so don’t crate her for more than four hours at a time during the day.

If a crate is unavailable, keep the puppy confined to one room - preferably the kitchen where there is both traffic and easy cleanup. Consider using a “baby gate” or “pet gate” which can reach across the entrance to the kitchen, blocking it off from the rest of the house.

Keeping the puppy’s area small will encourage her to “hold it” and to let you know when she has to relieve herself.

**Be Consistent Inside**

Always walk the puppy out of the same door on a leash to go to the bathroom. This will also encourage the puppy to associate that one door with going outside, and she will sniff at the door when she needs to go.

Puppies love and need routine. Take her outside frequently at first and then gradually lengthen the time between walks, but always go out through the same door and to the same spot.

**Be Consistent Outside**

Go to the same spot outside each time - not too far away from the house. Stand and wait for a few minutes for her to sniff and to relieve herself. Leave some stool in this location so that she will smell it, and encourage her to go there. When she relieves herself, give her gentle verbal praise, making it absolutely clear that you approve and that she had done well.

**No Long Walks**

If you take your puppy for a long walk she will get too distracted by the new sights and smells, usually to such a degree that she will forget about relieving herself, and she will “go” when you get back into the house. If she doesn’t do anything outside for a few minutes, bring her back inside and immediately crate her for five to ten minutes, then try again. Again, when she does her stuff outside, give her gentle verbal praise.

**Use Rewards**

If praise alone doesn’t give the pup enough incentive to go outside, try a special food reward, such as a small piece of cheese or hot dog, given within seconds of the big event.

**Don’t Punish!**

Remember p positive reinforcement always works better than punishment! Never push a puppy’s nose in the stool or urine and yell at them! Punishing your puppy will simply motivate her to hide it next time she goes, producing exactly the kind of behavior that you don’t want.

**Walk Immediately After Meals, Naps, and Playing**

Puppies usually have to go right after eating; this is called the gastrocolic reflex, and will help you predict the timing better.

They usually have to urinate right after playing or waking up from a nap, or after play or exercise. Watch for the cues of her walking away and sniffing the floor.

**Greeting and Submissive Urination**

If your puppy jumps up on you when you come in and pees, this is a form of submissive urination. Do NOT punish her for this! This is her way of acknowledging your leadership role and her submissive status. Punishing her at this time will only serve to instill confusion and anxiety in her for what is (to her) normal behavior.

Instead, tone down this happy anxiety by keeping your exuberance down and just giving the puppy a pat on the head to say “Hi”, or simply ignore her for the first five minutes after you come home.

**Overnight Crating**

Keep the puppy in the crate overnight. This is her den and this encourages her to “hold it” until she’s let out. You’ll have to get up early to let her out when she’s less than ten weeks old; after this, she should be able to hang on for six to eight hours.

**Pick Up the Water**

Pick up the water dish two hours after dinner. This allows the puppy to satisfy her thirst by eating dry food, and time to eliminate the water she drank before being crated.

**Word Association**

Associate a word with the act of defecation or urination. Say the phrase each time she goes so later you can ask her if she has to go and judge her answer by her response. Use the same word every time: “Pee-pee”, “Hurry”, etc.