

Socialisation, Exercise and Training for your Dog



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PUPPY SOCIALISATION

Just like young children, puppies need an opportunity to learn appropriate behaviour and social skills. For a dog, the period of life between four and sixteen weeks of age is the most important time for socialisation to people outside of it's immediate family, other dogs, animals and new environments.

A lack of socialisation in this period can lead to behaviour problems later in life.

These include:

- Being timid and fearful
- Aggression towards other dogs or unfamiliar people

Positive exposure to new and interesting experiences will stimulate the pup's mental development and help to develop confidence. Because of the risk of infectious diseases, puppy socialisation should occur in safe controlled environments, and your puppy should be vaccinated by a veterinarian. Puppy socialisation groups at veterinary clinics are an excellent way to socialise your puppy. Socialisation must continue through the puppy's growth. Adult dogs require regular social activity as well.

EXERCISE AND PLAY

Providing your dog with enough exercise and play is an important responsibility for dog owners. It is also part of the fun of owning a dog.

Exercise is good for your dog's health and can help prevent some behavioural problems.

At least fifteen minutes should be set aside for walking, obedience training and play time with your dog every day, rather than just one long walk at the weekend. You might like to break your daily exercise time into ten minutes before and after work.



The exercise routine should be varied (i.e. walk, some obedience training, a fetch game with a ball, and time off the lead in an authorized exercise area). It's also beneficial if you vary the times when you exercise your dog.

For young, energetic dogs, sprinting to fetch the ball uses up a lot of excess energy. Older dogs will benefit from gentle walks and swimming.

Dogs need to exercise their minds as well as their bodies. Obedience training is a good way to provide mental stimulation for your dog. When walking the dog, time should be allowed for it to sniff and explore, rather than just concentrating on walking or jogging.

Parents must not let children walk a dog on their own, unless they are confident that the child can handle the dog in any situation that is likely to occur.

Riding a bicycle with a dog running along side it is dangerous for the dog and the cyclist and is not recommended.

Throwing a stick for a dog is not advisable. Many dogs have been injured running with sticks in their mouth. It is far better to purchase a commercially produced dog toy, i.e a ball or Frisbee.

If your dog is very excitable, short periods of play are best. Have sessions of play and then training, so the dog learns to stop and start play, calming down in between.



OBEDIENCE TRAINING

Training helps you to control your dog. Once the dog has done basic obedience training you will have a set of commands that you can use to control the dog in difficult situations. For example you can use 'SIT' or 'STAY' when waiting to cross the street, when the dog is jumping up at people or when you are answering the

front door.

If you go to obedience classes your dog will be able to socialise with other dogs and people in a controlled environment. This can help if your dog is timid or aggressive.

Your dog will learn to follow your commands, even in a distracting environment. You will also learn a lot yourself. You cannot train your dog effectively if you are not sure how to do so.

DOG EXERCISE AREAS

DOGS MUST BE HELD BY A LEASH IN ANY PUBLIC PLACE IN THE SHIRE OF CAPEL (EXCEPT IN RURAL AND DOG EXERCISE AREAS) AT ALL TIMES.

Council provides several dog exercise areas for use by residents and visitors of the Shire of Capel. These can be viewed online at www.capel.wa.gov.au.

All dogs need regular exercise and providing enough exercise and play is an important responsibility for all dog owners.

Exercise is not only great for the dog but great for the owner as well.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Although your dog can be exercised off-lead, you are required to carry a leash with you at all times.

If your dog becomes a nuisance to another person or animal you are required to place your dog on a leash.

We all hate stepping in dog poo so please clean up after your dog. Poo bags are provided free of charge in most areas of the Shire and at the Shire office in Capel.

BEACH AREAS

With the exception of Dog Prohibited Areas, all other beaches within the Shire of Capel are authorised dog exercise areas. Visit our website at www.capel.wa.gov.au or give the Community Rangers a call for a copy of our Prohibited Beach Areas Map.

Community Rangers are available to discuss this matter further. Our contact details are on the front of this brochure.