



Pedigree Australian Cattle Dogs

# A guide to puppy training



## Early puppy management and handling

**How you treat and interact with your puppy now, and how you let your puppy behave now, will shape your puppy's behaviour as an adult dog.**

If you encourage over-excited play now (which may be cute in a baby puppy) you will find it is not so cute when your 10 month pup does the same thing with extra size and more jaw strength. Encourage puppy play only to a limit of what will be allowable in your adult dog.

Encouraging over-excited play now and reprimanding later shifts the goal posts, like telling off your puppy for growing, and for doing what you have said is allowable in the past.

Letting your puppy jump on you now but not when fully grown is too hard for your pup to understand. Your rules need to always be the same otherwise how will puppy know if you change them?

Speeding down the hallway may be cute at 8 weeks, but speeding inside as an adolescent may damage your furnishings, and chances are, you will not allow your pup inside again. Yet they were only doing what has made you happy in the past.

**Thinking about this now is especially important if you have children.**

A fast-paced 8 week old skidding into your legs when they are uncoordinated may be cute, but when your young children are knocked over, it won't be as cute. The bad news for dogs is they will get into trouble for doing something you had made them believe was okay.

Gnawing on your finger is cute when they are very small puppies with ineffectual jaw pressure, but your dog as an adult will be able to crunch easily through a decent size dog bone (much bigger than your finger) with not much more effort.

Stealing a sock and playing tug-of-war with you is great fun, and doesn't damage your sock when they are little. Or, pulling on the lead now may not pull your arm out, but 20kgs later it won't be pleasant.

**Your puppy already knows dog rules but in order to learn human rules you need to teach them. They need to be consistent and you need to be fair.**

**Teach the same rules to your puppy that you hope your adult dog will live by.**



**Generally,  
puppies jump up  
to get attention.**

## How to deal with jumping up

**If you don't want your adult dog to jump up on people, then the time to teach this is at the puppy stage - because it is easier to teach than to fix after the habit has started.**

The easiest way to prevent jumping is by showing your puppy that jumping does not benefit them, or that they won't be rewarded for jumping.

**No attention is the key** when they jump on you, but **as soon** as all feet are back on the floor, **reward** them. Soon they will learn that the only time they get your attention is when their feet (or bottom) are on the floor. It is as easy as that!

**It won't be as easy teaching your visitors to do the same.**

The usual scenario when your puppy jumps on visitors is you say 'please don't pat the dog while they're jumping'. The visitor will reach down to pat saying 'it's alright I like dogs'.

Or, they will pat the dog and then tell it to get down, which is still rewarding for puppy, so they will jump up again!

Then with the next visitor the same thing will happen, and there goes all your hard work.

Any attention is sufficient for some puppies. Attention can constitute not only patting, but pushing them off, speaking to them, looking at them or even telling them off... it's all still attention!

So you need to ask all the family, friends and visitors to ignore the dog and look away when jumping up, and the second all feet are on the floor, give the dog lots of praise. However, with really exuberant puppies, keep the praise low key, or in the excitement of the praise, they may jump up again!

This method will work with most new puppies, and sometimes with puppies that have started the jumping habit, but for serious jumpers it will take longer, as they need to relearn the rules. Your pup will learn more quickly if you apply some behaviour management.

Put your puppy on a lead to prevent jumping up, and train an alternative, incompatible behaviour. Something that can't be done at the same time as jumping up. Teach your puppy to sit on cue, then only give a pat or attention while your pup is sitting. Have your visitors do the same. **Dogs can't sit and jump up at the same time!**

Sit becomes almost a default behaviour. Sit to be fed, sit to go outside, sit to get your leash on before walking, sit to say hello to people, **sit to greet people.**

Another method could be to put the behaviour on cue. This means that when your puppy is invited to jump up, there is a reward, and when not invited to jump, there is no reward, which ultimately will mean that the pup will only jump up when invited.

This is good for people who might like them to jump sometimes when playing or interacting, without having to bend over to pat, but not at other times, when puppy is wet and you are clean, you are late for work, or when you have an elderly visitor for example.

**Remember - no attention from humans while puppy is jumping up!**



# How to deal with biting

**Bite inhibition** is the single most important thing you can teach your puppy. This means teaching your puppy that teeth can hurt, and that biting humans is completely unacceptable. The easiest and most reliable way to do this is in a way that your puppy already understands. After all, your pup's brothers and sisters taught this to each other when they were just 5 weeks old.

**When your puppy bites you in play, just yelp or say ouch, and stop playing for 20 seconds. No need to say no, yell loudly, use physical force, or to reprimand. All you need to do is temporarily withdraw your attention. Biting people = play stops.**

Your puppy already understands this, and now just needs to learn that humans are more delicate than littermates, and that they shouldn't bite us as hard. Your pup will learn really quickly that to keep playing, they need to be very careful with their teeth. Eventually you can phase out any mouthing play altogether.

**Biting humans is completely unacceptable**

## Why do we teach bite inhibition like this?

### Ease of understanding

Your puppy already knows about not biting too hard from littermates, but just doesn't know how hard is too hard for people.

### Safety

Punishing for biting appears to work in some cases, but only if you are bigger and stronger than your dog, which means that it usually doesn't work for children. Everyone including children can employ the ouch method, which helps prevent them from being bitten too.

Punishment can have some adverse effects and actually just suppresses behaviour, which means it can reappear, often when your dog is stressed. When your puppy learns to regulate biting, that learning works, even when your pup is stressed.

### Kindness

Punishing your puppy for play-biting means hurting your puppy for playing! Not a nice thought is it? It means punishing them for just being a dog. All puppies play-bite with each other, it's just that puppies have less sensitive skin than us. That is the message we need to get through. That these are our rules, not littermate rules. Humans are delicate!

### Reliability

Dogs can bite up to 8 times per second. Teaching bite inhibition becomes a reflex and clicks in at 1/5 of a second. If you tread on your dog's tail accidentally or your child trips and falls on your dog, which response would you prefer?

**Punishment can have some unfavourable effects:**

**Bright puppies** can learn who they can get away with biting and who not to bite, meaning, who is capable of punishing them and who isn't. Young children are not capable of punishing and are therefore at risk from dog bites.

**Excitable and active puppies** can learn that it is a great game to nip in fast, then run, play tag and keep away. Lunging at, or calling puppy back for reprimand is a sure way of ruining your pup's confidence and keenness to come when called.

**Stronger natured puppies** can become annoyed and defensive at being struck or restrained and can learn to stick up for themselves and therefore learn defensive aggression.

**Timid puppies** end up being very hand shy or completely scared and distrustful of humans altogether.

**Most importantly telling puppy off can only ever suppress the conscious bite, whereas bite inhibition becomes more instinctive, and usually continues to work even in frightening or painful situations.**



## Some play-biting rules for humans



**Never let puppy mouth or bite articles on your person.** Biting clothes or shoelaces gives you no clues about the force of the bite, and so, you have no feedback to give the puppy about biting too hard.

**Yelp at the time the bite occurs,** as this indicates to your puppy that it is the bite that is the reason for you stopping the game. It becomes the marker for what is happening - the hard bite.

**Stopping the play** or contact only needs to be for 10-30 seconds, just long enough for the puppy to stop and think about what they did.

**After the 10 second time out,** before you recommence your game, ask your puppy to sit so you can praise them for having done something right, then play.

**Playing should be on your terms.** You dictate the rules, you start the game and you finish it, this keeps the 'family social order' clear in your puppy's mind.

**Redirecting puppy** to biting something appropriate like a toy can also be beneficial. It gives your pup a legitimate outlet for natural puppy play biting, and helps your pup learn to be very careful about biting people.

**Calming may be needed** to moderate the level of puppy's excitement. If the level is climbing too high, it's a good idea to do some settling exercises like sit, mat, or stay, and then recommence the game when they are calm. This teaches your puppy to be careful when excited, to pay attention, but most importantly, that when they are asked to stop, that doesn't automatically end the game.



## What you need to know generally about dogs

All dogs bark, chase, chew, dig, defecate, play, jump up and lick superiors. These are all very normal doggy behaviours. Trying to suppress normal doggy behaviours can often backfire.

**The aim is to teach your puppy what the human rules are, and why they are relevant.**

To teach your pup what is okay to chew, where to poo, where to dig, what are puppy toys and what are human belongings, what to bark at and for how long. To guide all that energy and natural dog inclination into areas that both you and your dog can live with.

To help teach your pup to be a happy well adjusted canine member of our human society.



**Don't ever forget that these are OUR rules, and your puppy doesn't know them yet. It is up to us to show and teach our puppy what is right, not wait until they have made a mistake and then tell them off for guessing incorrectly.**

**Enjoy your puppy - and help your pup become a happy, well-adjusted adult dog, that is a pleasure to have around.**

