

# Your Doodle Puppy's First Year Made Easy

Cover photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of [Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles](#).

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## About the Author Edie MacKenzie



Edie MacKenzie is considered one of the leading authors on the subject of hybrid dogs. Her *The Definitive Guide to Labradoodles* has been called “The Labradoodle Owner’s Bible” by Beverley Manners, cofounder of the Labradoodle, and her groundbreaking ebook *The Definitive Guide to Goldendoodles* (NLA) was the first book on this

wonderful breed. Edie has also written for Barron’s Educational Series, Inc in New York, with *Goldendoodles: A Complete Pet Owner’s Manual*, in stores October, 2009 and *Barron’s Dog Bibles: Golden Retrievers*, in stores September, 2010.

Her website, [www.discoveringlebradoodles.com](http://www.discoveringlebradoodles.com), is one of the most popular and informative Labradoodle sites on the web.

Edie’s current pack consists of Sonagh, a nine year old Chesapeake Bay Retriever/Golden Retriever mix,



Noble Vestal’s Sir William Walrus (a.k.a. Wally) a three year old Australian Multi-Gen Labradoodle,



...and Wally’s half brother, Chicago Labradoodles Murphy, (a rehome through IDOG Rescue) also a three year old Australian Multi-Gen Labradoodle.



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**Puppies!** Who can resist them? Is there anything cuter than a little puppy?  
HmMMM – nothing comes to mind!

Puppies tug at our hearts. They are cute, funny, snuggly and so entertaining as they frolic around the house and yard. I love puppies. However (and please don't let this get out!) I am not a fan of puppyhood.

Why the contradiction? Puppyhood is a lot of hard work. But worth every moment. How you approach and proceed through puppyhood will go a very long way in determining the dog you have for the next 15 years.

In this ebook, I highlight many of the things you can expect during your puppy's first year, the development phases your pup will go through and some tips that will help you along the way. The intent of this ebook is to give you an overview of what you may encounter during that first year and how best to be prepared for each event. In other words, the tools to survive your puppy's first year!

Why write this ebook? When we were adding Wally to our pack in 2007, we hadn't had a puppy in the house for over five years. I figured if an experienced dog owner and author was wracking her 'well over 40, darn close to 50' brain trying to remember all that puppyhood entailed, others must be searching for the same information, particularly first time doodle owners.

All the best!

***Edie MacKenzie***

## Are You Ready For A Puppy?

Congratulations! You've decided you want to welcome a Doodle into your home. Doodles are gaining a lot of popularity, because they are very intelligent, playful, and, depending on the Doodle, allergy-friendly dogs. They have oodles of energy and boast an entertaining personality. But have you honestly asked yourself "Am I ready?"

You see, Labradoodles and Goldendoodles aren't your typical dog breed. Beginning as a cross between a standard Poodle and either a Labrador Retriever or a Golden Retriever, Doodles are very smart and highly social dogs. You could even say they are somewhat "high maintenance" if they are not intellectually stimulated and properly trained. So, are you ready to pour your heart into nurturing this puppy love?

I would suggest keeping in mind Beverley Manners' response when I asked her what she thought was the **worst trait** of these marvelous dogs. *"Definitely, their incredible intelligence. Many people think they want a super intelligent dog, but what they often don't realize, is the more intelligent the dog, the more vital it is that consistent early training be given. An intelligent Labradoodle who is given nothing to challenge its superior intellect, soon becomes an attention-seeking, defiant brat child! It is important that anyone considering a Labradoodle, be prepared to put the work in, and commit to spending the time to properly train their puppy, from day one, throughout the first year. It's essential!"*



Tegan Park's Greta at her computer - Photo courtesy of Amy Nietz at Big River Labradoodles

And Labradoodle and Goldendoodle breeder Michael Waggenbach of Sunshine Acres makes the following statement, with which I whole heartedly agree, *“It’s really the environment they go into that’s going to determine what kind of dog they are ultimately going grow up to be. People often ask me ‘How are you going to know the kind of dog you’re going have?’ Well - you don’t. You, the owner, are the one who determines what kind of dog you ultimately have. If it flops, it’s really the owners fault.”*

Michael also echoes Beverley’s thoughts regarding the high intelligence of these wonderful dogs. *“Their high intelligence can lead to boredom. If they aren’t challenged that boredom makes for trouble. So I usually tell people if you are going to have a great dog, you have to keep them challenged. You can’t just let them stay home by themselves all day long in a crate and expect them to behave themselves, because they are going to figure out things to get your attention a lot quicker than another dog would.”*

The LAA Breed Standard has this note in the Temperament section: *“Can attempt to outsmart their owners if undisciplined.”*

I think Bentley's owner Pam summed it up best, *“Doodles are very smart, so have your wits about you.”*



Bentley Photo courtesy of his mom Pam

## Bringing a Puppy into the Family

When is the best time to bring a puppy into your family? This is a very personal decision for each family. A great deal depends on your family life. Your children may be clamoring for a puppy, but the final responsibility for the care, feeding and training will fall on the shoulders of the adults in the family. Now, that may mean supervising while the kids serve up puppy's dinner, help pick up the 'yard gifts', take the puppy for a walk or attend training class, but you, the adult, are still actively involved in every aspect of the puppy's life. You have to honestly ask yourself if there is enough time in your day to accommodate the puppy. And not just now, but five, ten and fifteen years down the road. For some families, the decision to add a puppy is an easy yes. Their life is very home based and the puppy will get loads of attention, training and exercise. For others, sports, work schedules, school schedules and any other number of activities outside the home may make the answer a no. The puppy would have to spend too much time alone and kenneled. Above all else, be honest with yourself regarding the amount of time you have to devote to a puppy.

***A dog is a lifetime commitment.***

## Before You Bring Your Puppy Home

### ***Locate a Veterinarian and Schedule an Appointment***

Before you bring your puppy home, locate a veterinarian AND an emergency veterinarian. Unfortunately, your puppy's health care needs may not always coincide with your veterinarian's office hours.

Schedule a preliminary visit with your vet. You may also need to schedule a follow up visit to complete your puppy's vaccinations.

### ***New Puppy Shopping List***

So you can easily take it shopping with you, you will find a download link to a shopping list of some of the things you will need to purchase before you bring your puppy home. Just click for the [New Puppy Shopping List](#).

### ***Things to Keep on Hand***

- ◆ ***Cleaning supplies and paper towels:*** You will want to get a cleaner that is specifically for clean and deodorizing pet stains. And you will want to load up on the paper towels!
- ◆ ***Old towels:*** for wet dogs and muddy paws. Sometimes you will be inclined to throw them out rather than washing them, depending on the mess you have cleaned up. If you can't get a supply from friends and family, a trip to Goodwill or Salvation Army can get you an armful of old towel rather cheaply.
- ◆ ***First aid kit:*** You never know when your puppy is going to get into something and need some quick first aid! Having supplies on hand

makes things just a bit less stressful when you have one of these inevitable emergencies.

***Upset Stomach Supplies:***

If your Doodle has an upset stomach that is resulting in diarrhea or vomiting, it is always wise to have your Doodle seen by a veterinarian. If the veterinarian recommends a bland diet, the following items are good to have on hand. These include:

- ◆ Canned pumpkin puree (make sure it is pure pumpkin with no other ingredients)
- ◆ Rice
- ◆ Ground chicken or hamburger.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

I keep the pumpkin and rice on the shelf and the hamburger in the freezer, just in case! There have been many times that this has saved me having to run out to the grocery store. Cook the rice and meat thoroughly and mix together in a large bowl. You can store this in the refrigerator for about two days. When you feed your puppy, give them a small amount of the rice and meat mixture with about a teaspoon of the pumpkin puree mixed in.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

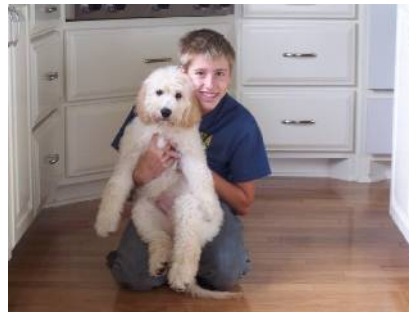
## Expenses? Do Tell!

### *Growing and growing and growing...*

As your puppy grows, you will need to purchase increasingly larger gear for them. Collars and harnesses are of particular importance. Your puppy will grow **fast!**



Marley at 5 weeks



12 weeks



21 weeks

Photos courtesy of his mom Kaia and his human brother.

- ◆ Kennel – Start with a smaller kennel with just enough room for you puppy to stand up and turn around. You can also purchase a larger kennel and block a portion of the kennel off. You want your puppy to only have enough room to spread out comfortably otherwise you will find your pup doing their business in one end and sleeping in the other.
- ◆ Collars / harnesses. Pay close attention to this as puppies can outgrow their collars and harnesses very quickly. You can expect to purchase three to four different sizes before your puppy stops growing.
- ◆ Feeding dishes
- ◆ Toys
- ◆ Dog bed

## ***Veterinarian Bills – Be Prepared!***

Veterinarian bills are a part of pet ownership. Make sure you set aside money for regular and unexpected visits. You may want to consider getting Dog Health Insurance as a way to offset some of your veterinary costs.

- ◆ Shots
- ◆ Flea and tick preventative
- ◆ Heartworm preventative
- ◆ Wellness visits
- ◆ Spaying and neutering (if not done by your breeder)
- ◆ The dreaded run to the After Hours Emergency veterinarian. I recommend calling before piling your doodle into the car. I have avoided several expensive after hour's visits by calling first and having the staff there give me instructions on what I could do at home until my vet opened in the morning. Sometimes, to a trained veterinarian technician, nurse or veterinarian, what appears to be a critical situation to us isn't.

## ***Obedience Classes – A Must!***

You will want to enroll you and your puppy in an obedience class once your vet clears them to attend.

## ***Puppy Play Groups***

Puppy play groups are a great way to help socialize your puppy without worrying about them getting knocked down by much bigger adult dogs. Many training centers offer these play groups to their clients and the public. Again, your vet must clear them to attend.

## ***Dog Walker***

Since puppies should not be left confined for the entire day while you are at work, you may want to consider having a dog walker come and let your puppy out to do their business, give them a some of exercise and a bit of play time.

## ***Doggy Daycare***

This is an excellent way to know your puppy is receiving attention, play and exercise during the day. Many Doggy daycares now have webcams so you can check in on your baby during the day! Once again, your vet must clear them to attend.

## ***Books, Books, Books!***

I highly recommend reading as much as you can about puppies, dogs and dog training!

Two of the best books I have ever read on dog behavior are Jan Fennell's book '[The Dog Listener](#)' and Cesar Milan's book, '[Cesar's Way](#)'.

In my opinion, these books are a perfect compliment to one another. Both authors focus on the need to learn your dog's language, which is the language of the pack. Both authors also emphasize how critical it is for the dog owner and their family to establish themselves as the alpha of the pack that is their family.

Cesar's book delves into the psychology of dogs and makes for truly fascinating and informative reading. His contrast of how dogs function with in a pack environment as compared with how they are treated here in the US was eye opening. I think his chapter on "how we screw up our dogs" is spot on! The expectation that dogs are little humans in a fur coat has made life miserable for countless dogs.

Cesar makes recommendations for changing your posture, attitude, energy and other helpful information on how to establish your pack leadership. Where I found the book to be somewhat lacking is in offering a step by step methodology that a less confident dog owner could follow.

This is where Jan Fennell's book, *The Dog Listener*, comes into play. Jan's book gives a wonderful step by step, day by day, methodology for establishing yourself as the alpha. Simple changes that make an enormous impact on your dog's behavior. I have seen these changes in my own dogs, especially Sonagh.

I recently recommended the following reading schedule to a friend and it worked out great for her.

- 1) Read the second half of the *Dog Listener*, the 30 Day Training Guide. This gives you solid building blocks for changing yours and your dog's behavior.
- 2) Read Cesar's book so you can really understand how and why these building blocks that Jan gives you work so well.
- 3) Go back and read the first part of the *Dog Listener*.

I really feel these two books are a great team!

## Is Your Home A Puppy Hazard Zone?

### *Puppy Proof Your Home*

- ◆ ***Close doors or set up baby gates*** to rooms you don't want the puppy to get into. Puppies are naturally curious and will explore. It is best to keep them confined to one room or part of a room, and gradually increase their range.

- ◆ **Get all plant, small pets** (gerbils, guinea pigs, fish, lizards, etc.), electrical cords and curtain/shade pulls out of puppy range. Covers for electrical cords are advisable.
- ◆ **Keep kids' toys picked up and out of puppy reach.** Puppies do not know the difference between their toys and your daughter's brand new Barbie doll.



Lucy Photo courtesy of her mom Anna

- ◆ **Remote controls and video game equipment** (which are often used and left on the floor) needs to be put in a secure location.
- ◆ **Lift up your wastebaskets!** Gross as it sounds, dogs love dirty tissues and other nasty things that are put in wastebaskets! It is like their own disgusting, nose level buffet. My adult dogs are five and ten years old and will still occasionally sneak things out of the wastebaskets.
- ◆ **Check your fencing** – make sure it goes completely to the ground. You would be amazed at how small a gap a puppy can fit through! In fact, I recommend keeping puppies tethered, even if the back yard is fenced, until they are fairly reliable on the recall. The game of 'Catch the Puppy' is not a good game to be playing with your young puppy. You need to stay in control as much as possible.
- ◆ **Keep all medications and chemicals securely hidden.** Dogs can counter cruise and a simple bottle of pain reliever consumed by a curious pup can have fatal consequences.
- ◆ **Remember, your puppy is going to grow!** What may pass for puppy-proof today may not be adequate in another month or two. Be aware of your pup's ever increasing range and curiosity.

- ◆ ***Bottom line is you have to be watching your puppy constantly.*** Any thing other than food that they chew and swallow has the potential to make them sick or, worse yet, kill them.
- ◆ ***Don't forget the tail.*** Not all puppy damage is done by puppy chewing. Make sure all breakable items are above tail level. One good swipe with a happy tail and grandma's crystal vase is shattered.



**Buffy a.k.a. Petunia** Photo courtesy of her mom Ilene and her dad Richard

## ***Toxic Plants***

Many plants that are common to our gardens and homes (including the dead leaves) can be poisonous to our dogs. Here is the ASPCA listing which is an excellent listing and resource: [Toxic Plants](#)

## ***Toxic Human Foods – Yummy Things That Can Kill You Puppy!***

There are human foods that are very toxic to dogs. Chief among them are onions, chocolate, grapes and raisins. It is very important that you make any children in your house AND neighborhood aware of this.

### ***Poison Control Center***

If you think your puppy has been poisoned **Call the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#)** The telephone number is (888) 426-4435. There is a consultation fee for this service.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of [Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles](#)

## **Bringing Home Your New Bundle of Fur**

**Vicki Tyson of Windsor Creek Labradoodles shared the following critical advice, “*A word about Parvo Virus for puppy owners ~***

*Parvo virus is a very serious viral disease of dogs and affects puppies much more frequently than it does adult dogs. Some important points to be mindful of in order to help protect your puppy from this virus include the following: Use good hygiene*

*methods at home to start. You want to be religious about sticking to your puppy's vaccination schedule too and keep your puppy away from other dogs and puppies of unknown vaccination status as well as from areas where such dogs could congregate. Before enrolling your puppy in any type of training class, be sure they've completed their last rounds of vaccinations which is usually around four months of age and get clearance from your vet first. Also, you'll want to make sure those classes ask for proof of vaccinations from all pets attending such classes. When taking puppy to the vet, keep them on your lap or in a travel crate, avoid having them walk on the floor at the vet's office and beware of taking them to pet stores at their young age. Probably most important is that you want to prevent your puppy from coming into contact with other animal feces that could be found in public places and yards for instance. There is no sure-fire way to prevent Parvo, but these precautions could very well help protect your beloved puppy from getting this virus!"*

### ***Transporting Your Puppy Home***

Transporting your pup home – no rest areas! Have a supply of paper table clothes with you and put one down for your puppy to use. Your puppy will not have had all its shots and therefore will not be protected from illness. It is critical that you do not let the puppy walk on the ground where other dogs have walked and eliminated until all of the vaccination shots have been administered.

The best way to transport your puppy is in a small kennel or travel carrier that is securely harnessed with a bungee cord or a seat belt. Unrestrained puppies, like unrestrained children and adults, can become missiles in the event of a car accident. You want to provide your pup with the maximum amount of protection.

There is a fairly good chance your puppy will get carsick. Be prepared with paper towels, towels and plastic bags. Most puppies outgrow their tendency toward carsickness, so this isn't something with which you need be overly concerned. (If

your puppy is still getting carsick after six months of age, talk with your veterinarian.)



Mayzie at 5 months enjoying her car ride Photo courtesy of her mom Emily

### ***Their First Wellness Visit***

Schedule a new puppy wellness visit with your veterinarian in the first two days your puppy is home. Bring along the vaccination schedule that your breeder has given you. This will help your vet determine what vaccinations your pup needs and when it is best to administer them. The vet will also want a stool sample, so be prepared...

### ***What's in a Name?***

When building a relationship with your puppy, you need to give him an identity all his own. Keep the name fairly simple; try to limit it to two syllables. When you first start calling him by his name, he won't realize what that sound means. Start using his name right away—and often—but only in a very positive manner. You want him to associate his name with good things. Practice calling his name several times a day. Each time he looks at you, reward him with praise or a treat. You want to be careful never to use his name when you are reprimanding him. Doing so will cause a fear or unhappy feeling when he hears his name, making him associate his name

with negativity. You will need to use your puppy's name a lot in training, so make sure he has a good and yummy reason to respond to it.

### ***Puppies Need Rest***

Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles offers this advice regarding your puppy's need for rest: *“Young puppies, just like young babies, need lots of sleep in order to develop healthy emotional and physical systems. RESTRICT the playtime of the children with the new puppy and give puppy its own chilling out time where the children learn not to disturb their new playmate. RESIST the temptation to cart your new puppy about to introduce it to your friends and neighbors during the first week. Puppy's tail may be wagging nonstop, and it may have a great appetite and not appear stressed, but change of home is stress, whether from around the corner or across the world. There will be plenty of time later for showing off your gorgeous new puppy. But in the meantime, be considerate and give puppy time to find its place in the world, and to bond with you...its new pack.”*



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

### ***You Need Rest***

The first few weeks with your puppy can be exhausting. Some people are blessed with puppies that sleep through the night right from the beginning. Frankly, I have never been one of those people! Be prepared to have your sleep interrupted for the first few weeks. If you can, allow time in your schedule for some short cat naps.

## ***Children and Puppies***

Getting a new puppy is an exciting time in a family's life. If you have young children, though, it is important to prepare them for life with a puppy. If you teach them the right way to treat the puppy from the beginning, the entire experience will be rewarding.

Here are a few how-to tips on preparing for your children for the new addition.

### **Picking Up The Puppy**

Many children want to constantly pick a new puppy up, but they should be taught never to do this alone. Puppies are wiggly little things and a child could easily drop and injure them.

Kendra Vestal of Noble Vestal Labradoodles was kind enough to provide the following photos to demonstrate the best way for your child to hold your new puppy.



**Not Recommended**



**Not Recommended**

Photos Courtesy of Noble Vestal Labradoodles, Carol Vizcarra, photographer

A child should always be seated with an adult present. Put the puppy in the child's lap and have your child offer the puppy a chew toy.



**This is how your child should hold your new puppy!**

Photos Courtesy of Noble Vestal Labradoodles, Carol Vizcarra, photographer

Because young puppies are usually teething, they tend to chew on everything around them. This includes young arms and hands, but you can prevent this by offering an alternative.

Teaching your child to be careful and gentle when holding the puppy will help both of them adjust beautifully.

### **Children and Puppy Snacks**

Make sure children understand that certain human foods can make their puppy very sick. Some can be potentially fatal. Children need to understand that sharing their snacks with their puppy isn't a nice thing to do like it is with other children. One way to avoid this is to have a special jar of treats that the

children are allowed to give the puppy. Only put a few in there at a time! Explain that puppies can get a bellyache from too many treats just like they can.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

### **Children Helping To Care for Puppy**

Children should be given some responsibility for puppy care, although you should not expect it to be solely their responsibility. Children are not mature enough to be trusted with a pet's welfare, so you should always supervise to make sure it is being done and done correctly.

Young children can be given simple tasks like feeding the puppy at certain times with Mom or Dad's help. Older children can be more involved in caring for the puppy, just make sure you check to be sure it is done.

Make a fun chart where your kids can put a sticker every time they complete their assigned task. This makes it amusing and you can easily see whether their job has been done for that day.

## ***Just Like Kids, Puppies Go Through Stages***

There are seven stages of puppy development (all the Stages are fully explained further along in the ebook). But if you obtained your puppy from a breeder or some other source you probably skipped stages one through three.

Stage four lasts from 8 weeks to 3 months and is characterized as the "I'm Afraid Of Everything Stage". Unfortunately, this is when most families get their new pet, and is why your puppy may seem to be terrified of normal things. Do not use loud voices or rough discipline. This is also a time of great learning, so begin teaching simple commands.

## ***Appropriate vs. Inappropriate Games to Play***

Everyone loves to play with a puppy and it can be great fun. But be careful what you are teaching them through your games. Children and adults alike should never play tug-of-war or wrestle with a puppy. This produces feelings of competition and aggression potentially leading to dangerous situations later in the puppy's life.

Playing 'chase' will also teach your puppy that it is OK to chase and jump on people. Good games like fetch and teaching simple tricks are fun and stimulating to your puppy. It also teaches him to obey you and your children, reinforcing good behavior.



**Archie, Bruno and puppy Chico**  
Photo Courtesy of Carol Vizcarra

## ***Introducing a Puppy to the Rest of the Pack***

Before bringing your new puppy home, make sure that your existing dog(s) are current on all of their vaccinations. The introduction is best done on neutral territory or the back yard. If you have more than one dog, introduce them to the puppy one at a time. Even though they may seem to get along, it is best to not leave them unattended or alone together for a couple of weeks.

## ***Introducing a Puppy to Other Pets***

[Cyberpet.com](http://Cyberpet.com) has some great information on introducing your puppy to other pets in the home. (*When you go to the webpage, read further down into the article.*)

## ***Where Should My New Puppy Sleep?***

Pam McCarl of [Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles](#) also offers words of wisdom regarding where your new puppy should sleep: *“Your new baby will be feeling disoriented. It has left the only home it has ever known and been deposited into a “new pack” situation. It will be looking for reassurance and company while it works out that it really belongs and is not going to lose you. We strongly urge you to place puppy’s crate beside your bed for the first few nights. This way you will hear puppy stir if it needs to go potty during the night. A couple of friendly fingers poked through into the crate will be greeted with a thankful puppy kiss at times of insecurity. The upside of this whole method is that you, your family, and your puppy will have a good sound night’s sleep! Gradually, after the first few nights, when puppy realizes that it has found its permanent and loving home, you will be able to move the crate to another part of the house if you wish. The crate should be just large enough for puppy to lie down and stretch out, but not large enough to walk around in. Puppies dislike soiling or wetting a small sleeping space.”*

## ***Let Your Puppy Get Settled and Be Cautious!***

Again, give your puppy a good solid week to acclimate to you and your family before you begin having friends come and visit. When friends do come, have them remove and leave their shoes OUTSIDE. (You don't know where those shoes have been!) Until your puppy has all of their vaccinations, you need to be very cautious. (If you missed it, see Vicki Tyson's warning on page 20!)



**Kyoko** Photo courtesy of his mom Ann

## **Feeding Your Puppy**

Your Doodle's diet is essential to keep him full of energy and good health! Learn from your breeder what diet your Doodle has been on, and then talk to your vet about how to adjust the diet as he grows.

Beth Line of [IDOG](#) has some great advice regarding puppies and their food: *"It takes up to 4 weeks for a dog to adjust to their foods. It is really hard to know for sure if a food is working out for a dog if that adjust time hasn't been given. Soft stools can*

*also mean that the puppy is holding it for too long... so offer a few more potty times, especially if you are crate training.”*

If you have other dogs, make sure each dog has their own food dish. You will need to monitor what and how much your puppy is eating. Also, there may come a time when you will need to give medication in their food, and you will want them used to eating out of their own dish.

### **Feeding Schedule**

The following is a general guideline as to how often you should feed your Doodle:

- ◆ Ten Weeks to four months - three feedings per day
- ◆ Four months to twelve months - two feedings per day
- ◆ Over twelve months – If you want to, you can go to one feeding per day either morning or night.

### **What Type of Food to Feed**

The type of food that you feed your puppy should be discussed with your breeder. You will want to continue feeding them the same type of food once they are in your home. If you want to change the food, do it very gradually by mixing the foods with increasing increments of the new food matched by the decreasing increments of the old food. The change needs to be gradual. Each incremental change should last at least a week before changing the new food/old food ratio. Two weeks is even better. Watch your puppy and their stools carefully during this transition to make sure the new food is not causing any major irritations to their digestive system.

**Check your guarantee!** Many breeders specify that a certain dietary regime must be maintained in order for the guarantee to be considered valid.

To help you evaluate brands of dog food, [IDOG](#) has a [Dog Food Calculator](#) that you can use.

### ***How Much Should I Feed?***

There are many variables involved in figuring out how much to feed your puppy. Naturally as they grow you will need to increase the amount of food you feed, however, you need to take into consideration how big your pup is ultimately going to be. The quantities fed to a mini are not going to be the same for a standard. The type of food you are feeding also makes a difference. The higher the quality, the less you need to feed your puppy. And, as with humans, the less active your dog is, the less food they will need. Obesity in dogs can cause a myriad of health issues. It is always a good idea to have a conversation with your breeder AND your veterinarian on this subject.



**Kody** Photo courtesy of his mom Mary

## Who Knew Puppy Teeth Were So Sharp??

Bringing home a new puppy is always an exciting time. Introducing the new puppy to the family should be fun for both yourself and your puppy. One of the first challenges, however, to the excitement of the new puppy, is curbing inappropriate puppy behaviors.

### ***Preventing Biting and Mouthing***

Biting and mouthing is a common activity for many young puppies. Puppies naturally bite and mouth each other when playing with siblings and they naturally extend this behavior to their human companions. While other puppies have thick skin, humans do not, so it is important to teach your puppy what is appropriate, and what is not, when it comes to using those sharp teeth.

The first part of training the puppy is to inhibit the biting reflex. Biting might be cute and harmless with a 5 pound puppy, but it is neither cute nor harmless when that dog has grown to adulthood. Therefore, puppies should be taught to control their bite before they reach the age of four months. Puppies normally learn to inhibit their bite from their mothers and their litter-mates, but since they are taken away from their mothers so young, many never learn this important lesson. It is up to the humans in the puppy's life to teach this lesson.



Linus and Lucy at 10 weeks Photo courtesy of their mom Cindy

One great way to inhibit the biting reflex is to allow the puppy to play and socialize with other puppies and socialized older dogs. Puppies love to tumble, roll and play with each other, and when puppies play they bite each other constantly. This is the best way for puppies to learn to control themselves when they bite. If one puppy becomes too rough when playing, the rest of the group will punish him for that inappropriate behavior. Through this type of socialization, the puppy will learn to control his biting reflex.

Proper socialization has other benefits as well, including teaching the puppy to not be fearful of other dogs and to work off their excess energy. Puppies allowed to play with other puppies learn important socialization skills and generally learn to become better members of their human family. Puppies that get less socialization can be more destructive, more hyperactive and exhibit other problem behaviors.

In addition, lack of socialization in puppies often causes fearful and aggressive behaviors to develop. Dogs often react aggressively to new situations, especially if they are not properly socialized. In order for a dog to become a member of the community as well as the household, it should be socialized to other people, especially children. Dogs make a distinction between their owners and other people,

and between children and adults. It is important, therefore, to introduce the puppy to both children and adults.



**Stella** Photo courtesy of her mom Teresa

The best time to socialize a puppy to young children is when it is still very young, generally when it is four months old or younger. One reason for this is that mothers of young children may be understandably reluctant to allow their children to approach large dogs or older puppies. This is especially true with large breed dogs, or with breeds of dogs that have a reputation for aggressive behavior.

Teaching your puppy to trust and respect you is a very effective way to prevent biting. Gaining the trust and respect of your Doodle is the basis for all dog training and for correcting problem behaviors.

It is important to never hit or slap the puppy, either during training or any other time. Physical punishment is the surest way to erode the trust and respect that must form the basis of an effective training program. Reprimanding a dog will not stop him from biting – it will simply scare and confuse him.

Training a puppy not to bite is a vital part of any puppy training program. Biting behaviors that are not corrected will only get worse, and what seemed like harmless

behavior in a puppy can quickly escalate to dangerous, destructive behavior in an adult dog.

### ***Stop Biting Me!!!***

The first thing you want to teach your new Doodle is your skin is easily hurt and biting you is unacceptable behavior. This is called bite inhibition. Puppies have very sharp teeth and a weak jaw, so this means your puppy can cause you some pain when mouthing or biting you. Thankfully, it doesn't cause any severe damage.

An adult dog has a more powerful jaw and duller teeth. That is why an adult dog can cause significant damage when biting. So always remember, any dog will bite given the right or wrong circumstances. Should a small child fall on your adult dog or stick a finger in the dog's eye, don't be surprised if the dog bites. If you do a good job teaching your puppy bite inhibition, you should get a grab and release without damage.

It's relatively simple to teach a puppy bite inhibition and this is the method I've found to be the most effective. Every time the puppy touches you with its teeth, say "OUCH!" in a harsh tone of voice and immediately stop all play and attention. This probably won't stop the puppy from mouthing, but over time, you should see softer and gentler puppy biting.

The commands necessary to teach a puppy not to mouth are simple. Hold a small handful of the puppy's dry food, say "take it" or "gentle" in a calm tone of voice, and give the puppy one piece of food. Then close the rest of the food in your hand and say "off" in the same calm tone of voice. When the puppy hasn't touched your hand for a few seconds say, "take it" or "gentle" and give the puppy one piece of food. We are teaching the puppy "off" means not to touch. You should do this with the puppy before every meal for at least 5 minutes.



Chloe Photo courtesy of her mom Randi

### ***Does the Tooth Fairy Come for Puppies?***

As they grow, your puppy will lose their baby teeth. They will need to do a lot of chewing during this time, so it is very important to make sure they have safe chew toys that they know are theirs. It is also especially important to keep your stuff out of the puppy's reach! A shoe works just as well as a Kong as far as that teething puppy is concerned, so make sure your pup is chewing on the right things.

Usually puppies will swallow their baby teeth so you may find them in their stool. Occasionally you will find them on your floor – hopefully NOT when walking to the bathroom barefoot in the middle of the night! As with humans, when a tooth is lost, there will be some blood. You may find this on their toys. No need to panic! Perfectly normal, as long as it is a very small amount of blood. Since this old blood can be a breeding ground for nasty things, I advise washing the toy thoroughly before letting your pup chew on it again.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

### ***My Puppy Is Chewing Everything!***

Puppies need to be taught what they can and cannot chew. If you find your puppy with something they shouldn't be chewing, simply tell them 'No', take the item away and give them something that they can chew. If you find that your puppy is chewing furniture, walls and other things there are products that you can spray on the favorite chewing areas that will taste bad and thereby discourage further chewing. One such product is Bitter Apple. Now, you may have to try more than one product to find one that is distasteful to your pup. I actually once had a dog that liked Bitter Apple. No accounting for taste!

### ***Puppy Toys – Make Them Sturdy!***

Make sure your puppy's toys are durable! Puppy-hood is a time of intense chewing, so you will want sturdy toys for a number of reasons. The primary reason is safety. You do not want your puppy swallowing chunks of rubber, plastic, bone or stuffing! These, along with socks, underwear and a myriad of other things, can cause intestinal blockages which can be life threatening.

## ***Doggie Dental Care***

Yes, dogs need dental care, too! There is a selection of dental supplies at the pet store to maintain the health of your puppy's teeth. To keep those pearly whites white, start brushing their teeth as early as possible. The longer you wait to start brushing, the more resistant your Doodle will be. Ideally, your dog's teeth would be brushed everyday, but that rarely happens. Brushing your dog's teeth once or twice a week would be sufficient. If brushing your Doodle's teeth seems intimidating, talk to your vet about what options would be best for you and your puppy.

Most veterinarians will show you how to brush your puppy's teeth during your initial wellness visit. If this is not part of the wellness visit, ask to make an appointment with one of the veterinary technicians for an instruction session.



**Cody playing and showing his pearly white puppy teeth!** Photo courtesy of his mom Harriet

## Activities



Photo Courtesy of Noble Vestal Labradoodles, Carol Vizcarra, photographer

Kendra Vestal of Noble Vestal Labradoodles often gets asked, “How much exercise does a Labradoodle need?” *“Labradoodles only need moderate amounts of exercise. Exercising their minds is equally important. Walk your puppy a few times a week and allow them some playing time out in the yard. Remember the platelets of young puppies are still forming so you should avoid long walks on hard surfaces in the early months.”*

Hip dysplasia is a concern with Doodles and how you exercise your puppy in his first year can make a difference in the long-term health of your dog's hips. An active puppy is the sign of a healthy puppy, but too much exercise too early in life can cause problems later for your Doodle. Moderate exercise, mixed with a lot of play, is enough to keep your puppy happy—and healthy.

## ***Sidewalks and Roads – Not So Good!***

Sidewalks and roads are very hard – try to locate parks with walking paths with softer surfaces. Dogs under the age of 12 months should not be exercising on hard surfaces for long periods.

Let your veterinarian tell you when your puppy is ready for walks outdoors where other dogs have relieved themselves. Until they have sufficient immunization, it is critical to keep them in the safety of your own property. Areas clean of other dog excrement and urine are the rule for puppies. Any contact with strange excrement or urine before your puppy is fully immunized could result in a fatal illness.

A Doodle under twelve months of age should not be engage in strenuous, forced exercise such as jogging or walking for several miles on a leash. A new puppy will not understand the controlled pace of a leash and will not be comfortable walking on one at first. Too much leash walking too early on can cause the loose ligaments and fragile joints, leading to Hip Dysplasia, as mentioned earlier. Short periods on a leash and exercise free from the leash are best for younger dogs. So stay close to home and trot at a slow pace until your Doodle becomes used to it—and always be prepared to carry your pup home if necessary!

## ***Beware the Stairs!***

Yes, it is very cute when your puppy races up and down the stairs, but this is an unnatural angle for their developing hips. Use gates to keep your puppy from the stairs and carry them up or down for as long as you are able. Once you can no longer carry them, keep their movement on the stairs at a controlled pace until they are at least a year old.

Observe your puppy closely to make sure their play time and exercise does not consist of jumping off high objects and running up and down stairs until they are at

least twelve months. Even then, it should be in moderation to help prevent hip dysplasia.



Marley at 12 weeks Photos courtesy of his mom Kaia

### ***Is My Puppy Possessed? No! It's the Zoomies!***

Suddenly, one day, your darling puppy becomes possessed. They are running in circles at top speed, stopping occasionally to look at you with wild eyes, giving you a sharp bark, then returning to the wild paced running. Stay calm, your pup is not insane! Believe it or not, this quite is normal. Your puppy has the Zoomies (also called 'Puppy Crazies'). Just sit back and enjoy the show! Don't be surprised if this is a daily event that usually last for about five to ten minutes. I don't know if there have been any studies on why puppies do this, but it is not something that stops with puppyhood. My ten year old, arthritic dog will sometimes get the Zoomies. I think it is just an expression of joy, but that is just based on my very unscientific observations of all my happy dogs over the years.



Ginger at 6 months Photo courtesy of her mom Kim

## Things to Check Regularly

The purpose of this is three-fold. First, it is important to know what is normal for your dog so if something changes, you will recognize it. Second, your puppy can be sick or injured and because they are programmed to hide any weaknesses, you may not know it if you are not tuned into your puppy and their body. Third, regular checks of your puppy and all their orifices and appendages will desensitize them to being touched, making it much easier for you and your veterinarian to treat them when medical attention is required.

### *Those Big Floppy Ears*

One of the reasons why we love Doodles is because of their long, fluffy ears. However, it also means they are very prone to ear infections. Additionally, with the Labradors' tendency to get waxy, dirty ears and the Poodles' tendency to have hairy ear canals, they are extra vulnerable to ear problems. Frequent cleaning once a week

with ear cleaner will keep those ears free of waxy build-up and in great condition to hear that favorite word “Treat!” Gently shaving above and below the ear canal will help to improve airflow into the ear canal. There are mixed feelings about the effectiveness of plucking the ear hair in the ear canal. Consult your veterinarian. If you happen to notice a foul smell from your dog, it is most likely a yeasty ear infection, canker, or mites. These problems are more common when the temperature is warm and when wax and dirt mix with the inner ear hair. It is safe to stick cotton gauze soaked in a solution of 40% vinegar and 60% water deep inside the ear to wipe clean.

Shaving the hair on their necks under their ears very short will look a little odd, however it allows for better airflow into the ears which will help to keep them dryer. If done properly, it is not visible unless you lift up the ear.

Ear infections can also be a symptom of food allergies. Many have found that eliminating corn and wheat from their Doodle's diet resolves a high percentage of ear infections. Again, consult your veterinarian.



**Bear** Photo courtesy of his mom Tina

## **Eyes**

Make sure your puppy's are clear and have a normal level of discharge. If your puppy starts to have large amounts of discharge, there may be a problem. See your veterinarian.

## **Teeth**

You will want to get into the habit of looking in your puppy's mouth and checking their teeth. Discuss with your veterinarian and your breeder whether they feel you need to brush your puppy's teeth.



**Bentley** Photo courtesy of his mom Pam

## **Stools, Your First Clue to Ill Health**

You might not believe me now, but when you have a dog you become a keen observer of canine bodily functions and the resulting output. And if that isn't enough, you will discuss them, in detail, with other dog owners and consider it a perfectly normal topic of conversation. It is at this point, you know beyond a shadow of a doubt, you have become a bona fide dog person.

A friend (Beth Line of the International Doodle Owners Group to be specific) once told me, "Poo is the window to your dog's health." and I have found this to be very

true in my many years living with dogs. Very often when you call the vet concerned about your dog, it is because you noticed a change in the texture, frequency or urgency of her bowel movements. And yes, of course, you have to bring in a sample...

So, let's get into this less than pleasant, yet vital, topic.

## **Normal Stools**

Your dog's stools should be firm, well formed and consistent in shape and color, entering the world without undo effort. You will learn what is 'normal' for your dog and will be able to notice when things change.

## **Hard Stools**

If your dog is straining to move her bowels, her stool may be too hard.

Possible causes:

- ◆ Not enough fresh water
- ◆ Issues with the food being fed

Solutions:

- ◆ Make sure your dog has access to fresh water
- ◆ Make sure you are feeding a high quality food
- ◆ Add 1 tablespoon of 100% pumpkin, which is available canned, to your dog's food to help soften the stools.

If there is no improvement within 2-3 days, contact your veterinarian.

## **Soft Stools**

Most dogs have the occasional soft stool. Soft stools become a concern if they persist for several days.

Possible causes:

- ◆ Worms (you may also see rice like bits in the stool – these are bits of worms. I told you this was a disgusting topic!)

- ◆ Over feeding
- ◆ Food issues – possible sensitivity to an ingredient in the food.
- ◆ Rapidly changing your dog's diet can cause the stools to become soft. A dog's digestive tract can need several weeks to adjust to a new food. (see the chapter on Nutrition for advise on how to ease the transition from one food to another)
- ◆ You may be requiring your puppy to hold her bowels for too long.

Solutions:

- ◆ If soft stools persist for longer than 2-3 days, take a sample to your veterinarian for analysis to rule out a worm infestation or an infection.
- ◆ Consult your veterinarian regarding the proper amount of food to feed your puppy to make sure you are feeding the correct amount. I encourage you to pay attention to the guidance of your veterinarian over the instructions on the back of the dog food bag. Dog food manufacturers are in the business of selling dog food; your vet is in the business of keeping your dog healthy. Who would you trust?
- ◆ Add 1 tablespoon of 100% pumpkin to your dog's food to help firm up the stools.
- ◆ Feed your dog a bland diet for a few days to give her digestive tract a chance to rest. Slowly reintroduce her regular food.
- ◆ If the problem continues once your dog is back to eating her regular food, take a look at the ingredients to see if there is something causing her gastric distress. Allergies and how to isolate a food allergy are discussed later in this chapter.

### **Slimy Stools or Stools Containing Bubbles**

Unlike soft stool, slimy stools or stools s containing bubbles are not a usual occurrence.

Possible causes:

- ◆ Slime and/or bubbles can be indicative of a bacterial infection.
- ◆ Slime in the stools can also indicate the presence of worms or a larger gastric issue.
- ◆ Dogs can acquire parasites and bacteria by eating the feces of other animals. If you think your dog has been snacking on rabbit, goose, squirrel, deer or any other kind of wild animal fecal matter, let your vet know.

Solutions:

- ◆ If your dog's stools are slimy or contain bubble, you need to get a sample to your vet for analysis as soon as possible.
- ◆ Keep your dog from eating anything but her own food.

## Diarrhea

**A puppy or dog with diarrhea is at risk for dehydration and should be taken to the veterinarian.** There are any numbers of causes for diarrhea, but it is always best to get your dog to the veterinarian if diarrhea persists for more than a day. Watch for symptoms of an intestinal blockage which is discussed later in this chapter.

## Constipation

If you dog is straining to have a bowel movement and is unsuccessful, she may be constipated.

Possible causes:

- ◆ Lack of activity
- ◆ Changes in lifestyle or routines
- ◆ Eating things the body cannot digest.

Solutions:

- ◆ If constipation persist for longer than 2-3 days, take your dog to your veterinarian.

- ◆ Add 1 tablespoon of 100% pumpkin to your dog's food to help soften the stools.
- ◆ If your Doodle appears to be in pain, there may be a blockage in her intestinal tract and she should to be taken to the veterinarian as soon as possible. Symptoms of an intestinal blockage are discussed later in this chapter.
- ◆ If your vet feels a lack of activity is the root cause of your dog's constipation, then it is up to you to increase her exercise.

## **Flatulence**

While we have all laughed and gagged as a dog's flatulence has cleared a room, it isn't normal for a dog to be flatulent on a regular basis. If your dog's flatulence comes on suddenly and is accompanied by diarrhea, abdominal pain or a loss of appetite you should get her to the veterinarian.

Possible causes:

- ◆ Flatulence is typically caused by your dog swallowing large amounts of air while gulping her food.
- ◆ Flatulence can also be a reaction to certain foods.

Solutions:

- ◆ Gulping food can lead to serious problems for your dog, the worst being a condition known as 'Bloat', which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Feeding your dog smaller meals two to three times a day rather than one large meal, may mitigate the problem to a degree. See the section on bloat to find out how to slow down your dog's eating.
- ◆ Think back to what your dog may have eaten in the last twelve hours. Ask family members if they gave the dog a 'special treat' (read: human food). Human food is very often the cause. Feed your dog a low-fiber, very digestible diet and avoid feeding her any human food. Your vet can prescribe a special diet and medication if the problem persists.

## Scooting

Contrary to popular belief, a dog who is scooting their backside on the floor or ground does not necessarily have worms. Scooting can have several causes, including worms, all of which cause irritation to the anal area.

Infected or impacted anal glands are a source of irritation that is relieved by having the anal glands expressed. This is something you can do at home (if you have the stomach for it) or you can have your groomer or vet techs do it. If you are brave enough to do this at home, have your vet tech give you instructions on proper technique. Keep an eye out for any swelling at the base of your dog's tail as this can be an indication of infected anal glands which require veterinary care. Unless your Doodle has been recently shaved, this is something you have to check by feel.

If you see worm segments or something resembling rice grains on your dog's back end or in her stool, it is probably the source of the scooting and your Doodle needs to get to the veterinarian for an accurate diagnosis and proper medication. Do not try to treat worms on your own. Different worms respond to different dewormers and it is critical you know what type of worm you are dealing with and the dosing is size appropriate for your dog. More on the most common worms later in this chapter.

Another cause for scooting could be your dog has ingested something she is having difficulty passing through her anus. In my many years of dogs, blades of grass are the number one item to get stuck. Unpleasant as it may be, you decrease your dog's distress by removing the offending object.

Lastly, the lovely long, curly Doodle fur we all love actually poses a problem in the rectal area. If fecal matter gets caught in the fur, it can create a foul smelling and uncomfortable mat. I recommend keeping the fur trimmed fairly short in this area. If you take your Doodle to a groomer, request a 'sanitary trim' which takes of this area.

## ***Paws and Pads***

Check your puppy's nails and pads frequently to make sure all are in good order. This will also get your puppy used to you handling their feet, which will be very important when you need to trim their nails. Keep your pup's nails and the fur between the pads trimmed. Here is a great nail trimming tip from Neeta's owner Janice, *"My grooming and nail trimming attempts had become more and more frustrating. I decided this morning that I was going to conquer this problem and waited until she was settled down after her morning romp. We sat on the floor with all the tools including the nail trimmer and a large container of training treats. Each time she calmly let me do any grooming, she got a treat and things went amazingly well."*



**Wee Neeta Napping** Photo courtesy of her mom Janice

## ***Skin***

Do an overall check of skin, looking/feeling for bumps and parasites like ticks and fleas. Being familiar with your puppy's body will help you identify anything in the future that doesn't seem right.



Beau, Fletcher and Spenser Photo courtesy of their mom Zivi

## Grooming

One of the great things about Doodles is they seldom have body odor and their coat tends to be nonporous and resistant to dirt, so they rarely need a bath. Giving your Doodle baths too frequently will actually diminish the natural oils in the coat, which protects it from dirt. Most of the time, you can let the mud/dirt dry and a good brushing will clean them right up. Of course, you will need to bathe him if he gets feces or other undesirable matter on himself.

To maintain the beauty and health of your Doodle's coat, get into the habit of brushing him regularly. The only tools you need are a slicker brush (which is medium-sized, with hard bristles), a double-sided comb, and a pair of scissors.

To make sure your expectations are set, Australian Multi-Gen Breeder Dixie Moore of Dixie's Doodles states, *"I always try to tell people their coats are pretty high maintenance – don't expect your dog to sit there and not mat. And that's probably the biggest drawback of the breed."*

So start your grooming by setting him up on a high surface, rather than the ground, for easy brushing. With the slicker, brush in short firm strokes against the lay of the hair first. Then with the comb, brush each layer of hair in the direction it grows. Do this for all sections of hair, and then repeat with the fine side of the comb. Brushing

the hair too frequently makes the coat extra fluffy and frizzy. It will eventually settle back into place, but it could take several days. Therefore, it is better to brush thoroughly once every few weeks to a month. Expect a good thorough brush through to last about an hour.



Cody Looking so handsome after a trip to the groomer. Photo courtesy of his mom Harriet

While the hair is fluffy from brushing, you could trim about one third of it if you prefer. This is also a good time to trim around the collar, neck, the ear flap near the cheek, under elbows, and between hind legs. Trimming between the eyes is one of the first trims that a Doodle owner would do and it is the one location that should be consistently done.

Your Doodle will most likely have one of the following coats. Follow the guidelines for a more specific maintenance routine:

- **Hair:** Requires minimal care. Don't clip. Brush thoroughly once a month.
- **Fleece:** Soft, wavy and spirally. Brush thoroughly every 2-3 weeks. Spritz with water to restore the curl.

- **Micro Fleece:** Super soft, thinner than the regular fleece coat. Mats fall out of the coat, so it may seem as though they are shedding. Brush thoroughly every 2-3 weeks. Spritz with water to restore the curl. Keep clipped to 3” or less in length.
- **Wool:** Brush thoroughly once a week. Spritz with water to restore the curl.

One of the most common problems with grooming a Doodle is dealing with mats in the coat. Mats develop when only the top layer has been brushed and not the layers underneath. **It is critical that you brush out the coat completely before bathing your puppy.** Bathing will make the mats harder and tighter, and brushing them out will be nearly impossible. If you bath a dog whose coat is even slightly tangled and it's a curly dog then the water will tighten the curl and cause it to turn into a mat where before there was no mat. For that reason it is important to go over the dog with a slicker brush and then a wide tooth comb before a bath so little snarls and knots don't turn into mats.

When mats happen, move the top layer out of the way and brush the remaining layers in downward strokes. Next time just be sure to brush all the way through. If your dog's coat tends to fluff after brushing, squirt a little water on the coat. Brushing your dog's hair thoroughly every few weeks produces fewer mats than brushing more often, but not as thoroughly.

You will notice that when your puppy reaches adolescence (8-12 months), he will “change coat.” When this occurs, you will need to comb him at least 3 times a week, for approximately 6-8 weeks. Normal monthly grooming can resume when the fine tangles are no longer evident. Often there will be a second round of coat change around 10 – 12 months. Many Doodle owners will opt for shaving their Doodle during the coat change phase.



**Buffy** Photo courtesy of her dad Richard

Here's a great grooming tip for the new puppy owner from a Doodle owner on [The Doodle Zoo](#) forum: *"Get your puppy accustomed to being groomed as soon as possible. This includes brushing/combing as well as nail snipping and teeth brushing. The best advice I've gotten for cooperative grooming is to get the pup off the floor (in "the dog's space") and onto a table of some kind. The dog sees this as being in "people space" and becomes much more cooperative. An expensive grooming table is not necessary, just be sure there is a nonslip surface (like a bath mat or non-slip drawer liner stuff) on whatever table or surface is being used. My puppy has not blown out his puppy coat yet, but I am glad he is comfortable being groomed, because I know he will go through a few weeks of daily grooming once the coat change begins to happen."*

[IDOG](#) has wonderful grooming instructions that you can take with you to your groomer or use yourself as a reference.

You can find it here: [Grooming Instructions](#)



Finnegan at 3 months



Finnegan at 7 months

Photos courtesy of his mom Karen

## Training

### ***Motherly Advice From Edie***

If you read nothing else about training your Doodle, I want you to read the next bit of important advice! These are two pearls of wisdom from my many, many years of training and living with large, active lab/retriever mixes.

***First of all, treat your puppy from the day you bring him home as if he's already full grown.*** What do I mean by this? Your cute little 15-20 pound puppy is going to quickly grow up into a large dog. Don't allow or sanction any behavior in your puppy you would not allow in a full grown dog. For example, it's sooo cute when your new puppy jumps up on you to get attention. It's obnoxious, not to mention

dangerous, when six months later your now large eight month old puppy has just knocked someone to the floor!

When I brought home Sonagh at eight weeks, I knew she was going to be about 100 pounds when she was fully grown. From the day she entered our home, we treated her as a 100 pound dog. And we made sure anyone else visiting our home did so as well. That's the key. Your dog needs to know the rules apply to all humans, not just you. Yes, we have rules for our house guests. One rule is, when anybody comes into our home, they can't pat the dogs unless the dogs are sitting. Now, when people come into our home, Sonagh's 95 pound backside is going like crazy, but it's on the floor. She is sweeping the tiles with her tail, but she's not jumping up on anyone.

**My second pearl of wisdom - you have to be in-charge.** If you tell your dog to sit, make sure they sit. Do not let them ignore you! Gently, but firmly, follow through on the command given even if it doesn't seem to matter any more. You may think, "I'll get him the next time." **Wrong Answer!** If you do this, you begin to establish a bad pattern by not following through with the command. Now your puppy thinks listening to you might be optional. This will make training your puppy more difficult than need be and more importantly, may put them in danger! There will be times in your dog's life when it's critical to their safety they obey your commands. Make sure obeying you is not optional!

Consistency is critical. Even if you are tired or in a hurry you (and all the other humans in the home!) must maintain the rules of the household.

You are responsible for making the commitment to train your Doodle to behave properly at home, when guests are visiting, and away from home. Your puppy does not know right from wrong unless he is taught. This is only accomplished with dedication and repetition, repetition, and more repetition!

## ***Dogs Do Not Fail... Owners Fail Their Dogs***

Labradoodle and Goldendoodle breeder Michael Waggenbach of [Sunshine Acres](#) says it best, *“Training is vital because, if they aren’t challenged, that boredom makes for trouble. So, I usually tell people if you’re going to have a great dog, you have to keep them challenged. I tell people, a well trained dog makes for a happy family.”*

He also adds, *“When you take a puppy home, many times people have this glorious idea they will take this puppy home and it’s going to be perfectly trained. It’s not! They need to do training! And there are people who give up after three days of not sleeping. They think they have the worst dog in the world! So, I think it would be good to set these expectations straight. When you take a puppy home, it’s not going to be everything you want it to be.”*



*Puppy Love Labradoodles 2006*  
Evey at 5 weeks Photo courtesy of her mom Cathy and her breeder

### ***Who's The Boss? It Needs To Be You!***

Throughout the training process, your puppy is going to receive a lot of attention from you. This is good—they need it and they love to receive it. Just be sure not to give into your puppy when they *demand* it. Your puppy will try to get your undivided attention by barking, nudging, or jumping to get you to pet them or play with them. If they do this, ignore them. (Even if you really want to just get down on the floor and play with them!) If you let them be the boss by giving in to their request, you are telling them it is okay to exhibit this undesirable, demanding behavior. Wait a few minutes (or however long you want), and if they have calmed down, then play with them or give them a belly rub on *your* terms.

Puppies can tend to be demanding around mealtime too. If your puppy is waiting for you at their food bowl, don't feed them. Feed them according to the schedule you have already planned.

Your puppy will most likely want to be up on the furniture with the rest of the family. It is a personal decision for each family whether or not to allow them up there. If you decide to let them on, teach them good manners in exchange for the comfort. If you want your puppy off the sofa, say "OFF" and toss a treat on the floor. Repeat this many times and before you know it, your puppy will always get off the sofa expecting a treat. But, once they learn the command, you don't need to give them a treat every time.



Beau Photo courtesy of his mom Zivi

### ***Don't Waste Valuable Time – Begin Training At Home***

You want to enroll your puppy in obedience classes as soon as your veterinarian clears them for participation, however, most puppies can't attend formal training classes until their vaccinations are complete at about 16 weeks. This gives you almost eight weeks with your puppy in your home and this is very valuable training time you do not want to miss.

Begin training immediately at home. Life with an out of control puppy is no fun. The following section will help tremendously!

## **Edie's Favorite Training Course**

I looked a long time for a training course that I felt was comprehensive and effective for puppies as well as older dogs. Countless books on puppy training are available; however, if you have tried to read a training book and work with a puppy at the same time, you know just how awkward this can be! There are very few audio programs.

An audio program allows you to be able to work your puppy AND use the tool at the same time simultaneously.

First time dog owner or an experienced one, like myself, will find a tremendous amount of value in Chet Womach's 'Dog Training Secrets'! For those on a tight budget, this course is significantly cheaper than attending training classes. For those that can afford the time and the money to attend classes (and I highly recommend you do!) Chet Womach's 'Dog Training Secrets' can be an excellent compliment to those classes. It is like having the trainer in your home with you, all the time. Anyone who has taken a training class has had the experience of attempting to train their dog the next day and drawing a complete blank on how the behavior is to be trained!

The audio is very instructional but with a conversational feel. Very approachable. (You can also print off a transcript of the audio.)

It is very easy to download the files and then put them on your MP3 player or burn them to a CD so you can have 'Dog Training To Go'. How fun (and effective!) would it be to go to the park and train your dog with all of the distractions that a public place offers?

**Rather than bore you with my segment by segment review of each audio file, I will touch on some of the high points.**

- ◆ I like that it is very segmented so you can tailor the training to your specific needs.
- ◆ These are regular guys, not some polished up training wannabes. They know their stuff; understand operant conditioning and how it can be applied across a broad spectrum of training needs.
- ◆ Good discussion of rewards and how to maximize the effectiveness of using treats and/or rewards. The discussion on how to time feedings to benefit your training is very valuable to anyone who is training a dog or puppy!

- ◆ They emphasize multiple short, productive, training sessions. I appreciate that they make the distinction of age and attention span. IE – puppies work best in 30 second to two minute sessions!
- ◆ I love that they discuss how they have learned from their failures and that they share that information with their listeners. (I always feel better if I am dealing with people who can admit to and learn from failure, don't you?) I like the fact that there are solutions given to different 'failure' scenarios.
- ◆ They also emphasize that there are different methods to teach a command. This is critical because dogs, like people, don't all learn at the same pace using the same methods. I have seen this first hand in my three dogs and it is incredibly helpful to have options when you are trying to train a particular behavior and the method that has always worked for you just isn't working for a particular dog.
- ◆ How training can be incorporated into your daily routine and doesn't have to be something formal.
- ◆ Make sure to listen to the 'Final Tips'! Chet makes some excellent point here that will enhance your training skills and the effectiveness of your training.

**Videos: There is also a nice blend of audio instruction and video. The three videos are of training to 1) Stop Nipping 2) Leave It 3) Stop Barking, all of which you can derive a greater benefit by seeing.**

### **Nipping video**

- ◆ This video gives a very realistic perspective of the time it will take to train your puppy not to nip. Nipping is a very instinctual behavior in your pups and it take a while to train them out of it.
- ◆ Chet offers a very good lesson in replacement behavior.
- ◆ This is an excellent eight minute video and I recommend that the entire family watch it **BEFORE** you bring home your new bundle of fur.

### **Leave It Video**

- ◆ I laughed when Chet shows us how NOT to do it!
- ◆ This is actually the one place where I do things a bit differently than Chet, however, that is only because I was taught a different method. Chet's method-

ology works just great (I tried it out on my puppy just to be sure!) and I have filed away in my mental archives for future use. You never know when you may need an alternative method!

- ◆ I really like the concept of resetting the puppy's mind set so he isn't perpetually in training mode. I have incorporated this into my puppy training and it has paid big dividends.

### Stop Barking Video

- ◆ Very helpful to be able to actually see the process. I love that Chet is honest in showing where he makes errors in timing. I think this is an excellent teaching tool as it lets the viewer understand how important the timing is and, just as important, how to manage things if the timing is missed.

Overall, I think this is an excellent program and highly recommend it! It will serve you well whether you use it as your only training program or as a supplement to your training classes. To read more about or to order Chet Womach's 'Dog Training Secrets' click on <http://www.ediemackenzie.com/recommends/ChetWomack> .

(You can also copy and paste the link into your browser.)



Bentley maximizing the uses for his kennel! Photo courtesy of his mom Pam

## Crate Training

A crate is one of the best things you can provide for your puppy. It serves as their own private “den,” where they will retreat to and feel safe and secure. Before bringing your Doodle home, place a couple of toys and treats inside. This will help them link the crate as a positive location. Once they are home and meet the family, guide them to the crate and encourage them to explore and sniff around their new space.

There are many positive benefits of crate training to consider.

### ***Benefits of Crate Training***

- It provides a safe place to be away from others (dogs *do* get annoyed with people!)
- It allows the dog to do a complete shut down and provides a place for good **solid** rest. Often a dog not crated will have a high amount of “monitoring” and watching the house type behaviors.
- It can help prevent undesirable behaviors such as chewing and destroying.
- It can facilitate house training (dogs are naturally reluctant to soil the space where they sleep).
- It makes for a comfortable bed in a comfortable sleeping environment. It prevents them from roaming around the house at night.
- It serves as a temporary playpen when you aren't able to monitor the puppy.
- It can be moved easily from room to room.

- It provides a safe way to ride in the car or airplane.

Crate training promotes positive discipline and routine for your puppy. It is your responsibility to teach your Doodle (no matter what age they are) the crate is the best thing in the world and a great place to be. You must make sure every interaction your dog has with his new den is a pleasant one. If you leave the house and your puppy is not in a crate, he will not know how to act. A puppy does not have the understanding to know what behaviors are permitted when unsupervised. They do know "how to act" it just isn't behavior that we humans find acceptable. Most destructive behaviors are due to boredom, need for chewing during teething, or not being completely trained yet.

Do not go out and buy a crate, take it home and shove your Doodle into it, close the door and leave. Give your dog a few days to get used to his new den. Don't put it in the basement or some other out-of-the-way place. Make it part of the environment. Surround it with treats. Encourage your dog every time they go near it "good dog." Whenever possible, place the crate near or next to you when you are home. This will encourage the pup to go inside it without his feeling lonely or isolated when you go out. A central room in the home such as the living room or kitchen, or a large hallway near the entrance is a good place to crate your puppy. You may want to consider having more than one crate. For example, you may want to have one in the kitchen for daytime use and another in the bedroom for nighttime use.

### ***Vari-Kennel vs. Wire Kennel***

A Vari-kennel is a plastic kennel that comes in an array of sizes. This is an enclosed and more of a den-like style of environment. A wire kennel is a more open style kennel that also comes in an assortment of sizes. Both kennels are safe, functional choices for your puppy's home. Another important thing to know about crates is that they should have two latches on the door, a top and bottom latch. A single latch in

the center can be dangerous. A dog desperate to get out of a crate can force their head into the upper or lower area and get stuck and can cut off the air flow and die. The metal for the crate needs to be of a high quality. Weak metal can bend easily and has the potential of injury or allowing the dog to escape.

If you choose the wire kennel, make sure to cover the outside with a sheet or blanket to create a den-like space.



Chloe Photo courtesy of her mom Randi

### ***How to Crate Train***

It is advisable to first crate your Doodle for short periods of time while you are home with them. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your puppy. Getting them used to your absence from the room in which they are crated is a good first step. This prevents any association being made with the crate and you leaving him alone.

Upon your Doodle's arrival and after settling him in with family introductions, guide them to their crate. Have some yummy treats or toys tucked inside. These surprises create a positive association with the crate. Close the door with your puppy on the outside. The goal is to get your puppy so interested in getting inside their crate that they paw and beg you to open the door. Open the door and let them enter the crate. When they enter, praise them with words such as "good Doodle" or "yes" and lots of loving pats. Let them out and ignore them. You want to downplay the exit so they don't interpret "outside" of the crate being better than "inside." If they don't enter right away, do not try to force them in. At this early stage of introduction, only inductive methods are suggested. The exception is overnight. You may need to place your pup in their crate and shut the door upon retiring.

Repeat this exercise several times. Each time increasing the amount of time the pup is in the crate with the door shut. Your puppy may show signs of agitation such as whining, barking, or scratching the door with their paws. In this case, their next confinement should be shorter than the previous. Again, you want this to be a positive experience, so give them an extra treat.

After introducing your puppy to the crate, begin feeding them their regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate. If your puppy is readily entering the crate, put the food dish all the way in the back of the crate. If your puppy is still reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as they will voluntarily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed them, position the dish a little further back in the crate. Once your puppy is standing comfortably in the crate to eat their meal, you can close the door while they are eating. To begin with, open the door as soon as they finish their meal. With each feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until they are staying in the crate for 10 to 15 minutes after eating.

When your pup has this routine down, start adding the word “crate” or “kennel” as they enter. Keep practicing this, holding the treat for longer periods of time and keeping inside the crate for longer periods of time. Now, move further away from the crate and repeat several times. Soon, your pup will know to go to the crate no matter where you are in the house. Doing this also reinforces that the puppy will get a nice treat when you leave, reducing the anxiety associated with being left alone.

The next couple of days should be spent practicing these crate exercises. While your Doodle is in the kennel, practice going in and out of the room, checking in every few minutes to get them accustomed to you coming and going. One great way to get your puppy used to being inside the crate without your full attention is to place the kennel in the kitchen while you prepare dinner. Stop periodically to drop them a treat and give plenty of positive praise while they remain in their kennel. Then step out of their line of sight to enjoy your meal in the dining room. Set aside some time during the evening or weekend to leave your puppy in their crate for 30–45 minutes.

Upon your return, quietly and calmly open the crate and direct him outside to the designated potty area. Be sure to keep the crate in the kitchen, mudroom, or anywhere close to the outside door. If the crate is in the bedroom on the third floor, your Doodle will never make it outdoors before eliminating. Finally, take the time to sit and settle down with your puppy to encourage proper greeting etiquette. Repeat this process a few times before you leave for longer periods of time. Always make sure your puppy empties his bladder before you leave and keep the TV or stereo running. This creates a comfortable and familiar atmosphere for your puppy to relax. Again, weekends tend to be a time where you are around to practice. Come Monday morning—POOF!—you disappear for many hours. So start slowly and build up to longer periods of time away from your puppy while you have the time.



**Bentley and his buddy** Photo courtesy of his mom Pam

### ***Furnishing Your Puppy's Crate***

Until your Doodle is fully house trained, avoid putting towels or bedding into the crate. Such items can act like a sponge for your puppy's urine and prolong the potty training process. Even an old towel might encourage the beginnings of wrongful chewing. Always include safe chew toys to enforce what is okay chew. Do not leave a bowl of food or water inside the crate while the puppy is unattended. This will only fill his belly and bladder, leading him to eliminate in his kennel. That being said, if your puppy is to be confined for more than two hours you may want to add a small hamster-type water dispenser.

Once your Doodle is fully house trained, then you can add a soft towel, blanket, or article of clothing with your scent. The puppy could chew these items, so remove any pieces he has torn off. If the puppy accidentally urinates on these items (after you thought he was house trained), remove the items until he no longer relieves himself in the crate.

## ***Cautions About the Crate***

The crate serves as a wonderful training tool, yet there are some rules to keep in mind.

- ◆ **The crate should never be used for the purpose of punishment.** (Brief time outs are okay; just don't verbally punish the pup by scolding.)
- ◆ **Be careful not to overuse the crate.** This is not where your dog should live. If crating time is excessive, your dog may not have sufficient time for exercise and social interaction with family members. Without this time, other problems may be created such as fearfulness of people and new things. It may also cause aggressive behaviors.
- ◆ **Don't force your dog into his crate.** This will create fear and resentment. Tossing a treat in is a much easier way to get them in the crate.

## ***When Not to Use the Crate***

- ◆ Your puppy is too young to have sufficient bladder or sphincter control.
- ◆ The puppy has diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by: worms, illness, intestinal upset such as colitis, too much and/or the wrong kinds of food, quick changes in the puppy's diet, or stress, fear or anxiety.
- ◆ The puppy is vomiting.
- ◆ The puppy has not eliminated shortly before being placed inside the crate.
- ◆ The puppy has not had sufficient exercise, companionship, and socialization.

Always see to it the crate is in a temperature-controlled environment. You don't want you puppy to get too hot or too cold.



Chloe Photo courtesy of her mom Randi

### ***Separation Anxiety***

When using the crate, you may find your puppy has a case of separation anxiety, and confinement may escalate the problem. Behaviors resulting from separation anxiety include:

- ◆ Continuous barking for 30 minutes or longer. (Use a tape recorder to find out.)
- ◆ Urination or defecation in the crate.
- ◆ Damage to the crate.
- ◆ Moving of the crate.
- ◆ Wet chest fur from drooling and salivation on the floor.
- ◆ Consistent destructive behavior when puppy is left alone.
- ◆ Following you from room to room.
- ◆ Frantic greetings upon your return.

If your puppy has excessive separation anxiety problems, you should talk to a professional trainer about solutions.

By taking your time and letting your dog become acclimated to the crate, you can have an invaluable training tool and your companion can have a place to call his own.

### ***Important Tips about the Crate***

- ◆ Always remove your puppy's collar before entering the crate. It can get caught on the bars or mesh wire. If you must keep the collar on for identification purposes, use a safety "break away" collar.
- ◆ If your puppy messes in his crate while you are out, do not punish him upon your return. Simply wash out the crate using a pet odor neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle, Nilodor, or Outright). Do not use ammonia-based products, as their odor resembles urine and may draw your dog back to urinate in the same spot again.
- ◆ Do not allow children to play in your dog's crate or to handle your dog while he is in the crate. The crate is your dog's private getaway and his space should be respected just as yours is.

### ***Tethering and Stationing***

Tethering and stationing are very valuable training tools which I think is best explained by Beth Line, Director of the [International Doodle Owners Group](#). Click to read Beth's excellent article on [Tethering](#).



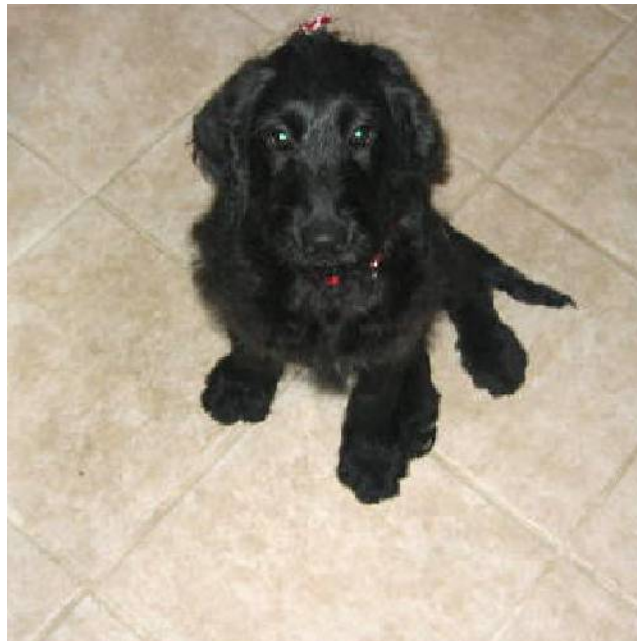
Stella Photo courtesy of her mom Teresa

## House Training Your Puppy

Words of Potty Training Wisdom from Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles, *“Baby puppies need to eliminate quite frequently. The time it will take to teach your puppy to go potty in the designated part of your yard will depend not on your puppy, but on YOU. Vigilance is a must.*

*Puppies will go poop or pee after eating, drinking, playing, or on waking up from a sleep...plus some extra times in between! CARRY puppy outside each hour and a half during the day, and put down in the spot where you want it to eliminate. WAIT. Give puppy time to get over the excitement of being outside (the fun of chasing a leaf or seeing new and stimulating things may take its mind off what it is out there to do) or when you take puppy back inside, first thing it may do is pee or poop...inside. This is NOT what we want to happen. When puppy eliminates outside, praise him/her. If there is an accident inside, DO NOT PUT PUPPY'S NOSE INTO ITS OWN MESS. This serves no useful purpose other than to confuse and frighten the puppy.*

*Restrict the area your puppy has to run about indoors to one room or part of one room, unless you are prepared to watch it EVERY MINUTE. Crating for two or three hour periods during the daytime will help puppy to strengthen its bowels and bladder and to teach it that it does not always go immediately when it feels the inclination. Puppies are neither “clean” nor “dirty” with elimination. They are creatures of habit. So the fewer mistakes that happen indoors, the sooner your puppy will become reliable indoors.”*



Miss Yankee Doodle Labradoodle Photo courtesy of her mom Debbie

### ***Clean Up on Aisle 5!***

*OOPS!* Accidents will happen! It just comes with the territory of owning a puppy. Chewing, digging, tracking in dirt, knocking over breakables and relieving themselves inside are just a sampling of the accidents you can look forward to experiencing. However, if you make the commitment to become a very forgiving person and develop a foolproof sense of humor, these accidents are a small price to pay for all the joy your puppy brings you and your family.

As a new Doodle owner, you will quickly learn one of your first priorities needs to be house training—if your puppy has not already been house trained. For your peace of mind, you will need to be very patient during this process. Every puppy is different. It could take a few weeks or it could take several months for a puppy to be fully house trained. It will depend on your training persistence and consistency. From the first day you bring your Doodle home, you want to train him to eliminate outside of the house. Dogs will usually not want to go where they eat, sleep, or spend most of their time. Fortunately, they naturally develop preferences for going in certain places or on certain surfaces like grass. But, if you don't proactively train them to go outside, they will choose a convenient place inside—such as new carpet or valuable rug. The keys with house training are consistency and reward.

It is very important for you to be aware of how often your puppy needs to eliminate. If they have been eating, drinking, or playing excessively, they will most likely need to go more. You must give your puppy plenty of opportunities to eliminate. You should not expect them to hold it for a lengthy period of time. One way to help you predict their need for a bathroom break is to keep a record of your puppy's urinating and defecating times for several days in a row. Determine the minimum interval between elimination. Subtract 15-20 minutes from this period of time and you have your puppy's temporary "Safety Zone". This is the duration of time they can generally be trusted to hold his urine after they are taken for a walk or has "gone" on their newspapers, provided he does not drink a lot of water during this time. Make sure however, they are still closely supervised any time they are not confined to their crate or confinement area.

### ***How Long Can My Puppy Hold It?***

How long a Doodle can comfortably hold their bladder is dependent upon the size of the puppy and their age. Generally speaking, at two months a puppy should be able to hold its bladder for two hours. At four months, four hours; six months, six hours; and at seven months, most puppies are able to hold their bladders for eight hours. If

your 4-month-old puppy can't go more than two hours without a mistake, then you must work within their schedule and give them timely potty breaks.

### ***Consistency is Key***

Within the first couple of days your puppy is home with you, you should try to develop a routine of sleeping, eating, playing, and naps or “down time.” This will not only help you discipline your puppy, but it will help them develop patterns. For example, you know your pup should always go outside when they first wake up and before they retire to their crate. They should also go out within 30 minutes of eating. Scheduling meals at the same time everyday, and using the record described above, will help you know when to let them out.

When you are about to take your Doodle outside, say a trigger phrase such as “Do you want to go outside?” or “Do you want to go potty?” or “Hurry up!” Say the same thing *every* time you take them out and always say it with a lot of excitement and a happy look on your face—even if it's at 5:00 a.m.!

It is important when you take your puppy out, you stay with them until they do their duty, remembering that not all puppies empty their bowels or bladder on the first go. You may need to stay out a bit longer until your puppy has had their second or third elimination before they are finished. This means you could be outside for quite awhile, so dress appropriately if you don't want your neighbors to see you in your jammies! You will get to know your puppy's habit fairly quickly.



Bentley is ready for afternoon tea in the garden! Photo courtesy of his mom Pam

Also, you will find when a puppy is taken to the great outdoors, they will want to do everything *but* their business outside. With so many smells and interesting things to explore, they will get easily distracted. It is your responsibility to make sure they associates going outside with “going outside” rather than “play.” To help this, continually say trigger words such as “go outside,” “go potty,” “hurry up,” etc. If this doesn’t do the trick, try putting them on their leash. This way *you* control where they go. Take them to a specific area you would like them to go. Take them to that same spot every time they go.

### ***Praise & Reward Works Like Magic***

When your pup eliminates, praise them plentifully in your regular tone of voice. Although you may feel like jumping up for joy and loudly expressing how happy you are, there is no need. In fact, it could startle your pup. Simply praise them and reward them with a yummy treat the very instant they eliminate. If you delay the praise, for example when they walk back into the house, you are praising them for walking in the house, not eliminating outside. Praise and reward them every time they eliminate until they are fully house trained. So make sure you have plenty of treats on hand.

## ***Prevent Accidents***

There are proactive steps you can take to help prevent your Doodle from eliminating inside.

## ***No Access to Inappropriate Areas to Eliminate***

Keep your puppy away from risky areas or surfaces such as rugs and carpeting whenever possible. If your puppy suddenly runs out of the room, they may be looking for a secret spot to eliminate, so close doors to rooms where they may be tempted to go.

## ***Supervise, Supervise, Supervise***

Supervise your Doodle constantly. Keep them on a leash, use doggy or baby gates, close doors, etc. Be alert. If they are having frequent accidents in the house, they may begin to develop preferences for those locations, which will make it harder for them to learn where to eliminate outside. And if you're not watching them, you won't be able to reprimand them at the scene of the crime. Every time your dog eliminates in your house it enforces a habit. A bad habit. Your puppy's initial elimination sites may also become their favorites so be sure you get on the prevention bandwagon as soon as possible. It makes sense that a puppy that is not house trained should not have full run of the house. **THE PUPPY MUST BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES.**

## ***Caught in the Act***

If your dog is ever "caught in the act" simply say in a loud voice (no yelling!), "Outside!" (once is enough) and whisk your dog off to their elimination spot outside. Then, in your normal, neutral voice tone say "Let's go outside," or "let's go potty." Guide or carry them to your preferred spot to let them finish as you say your

standard phrase. Do this even if it appears they are "done." If you insist on using that rolled up newspaper, whack it on your head three times and say, "Bad owner! I will never let that happen again!"

If you find a puddle or pile simply clean it up with a pet-odor neutralizing or enzymatic cleanser. If one is not available use white distilled vinegar, soap, and water. There is nothing else you can do about it. **Do not** use ammonia-based cleansers. Ammonia smells like urine to your dog. If you want you can hit yourself with the newspaper again but cleaning up the mess is probably punishment enough.



"Are you talkin' to me?" Stella Photo courtesy of her mom Teresa

### ***After-the-Fact Discipline Does NOT Work!***

Never discipline (verbally or otherwise) your puppy or dog after-the-fact for house soiling accidents you did not actually witness. (Even if you should see your puppy eliminate on the floor or carpet, harsh physical punishment is never recommended.)

## ***Never Discipline Submissive Urination***

When a puppy feels overly excited, or is feeling submissive, they could involuntarily urinate. Typical triggers of submissive urination are: eye contact, verbal scoldings, hovering over, reaching out to pet your puppy's head, animated movements, talking in an exciting or loud voice, as well as strangers/visitors approaching your puppy. Don't punish your puppy for this behavior or the problem could get worse. Don't worry; they will eventually grow out of this.

## ***House Training Problems***

If you find you are having a hard time house training your puppy, ask yourself these questions:

- *Did I leave them in there too long?* If “yes,” take them outside more frequently.
- *Is the crate or room too big?* If “yes,” block off part of the extra space.
- *Are they drinking too much water out of boredom or habit?* If “yes,” consider giving them less water and involve them in activities to break the boredom.
- *Do they have a urinary tract problem or other medical condition?* If “yes” or “maybe” talk to your veterinarian.

## ***Alternative House Training Methods***

There are two popular ways to help house train your Doodle: the “bell” method and the “speak” method.

## ***Bell Method***

Hang a small bell (saved from Christmas or purchased at a craft store) at the height of your puppy's nose, by the door you will be taking your puppy in and out of for elimination. Each time you take them outside, physically take their nose or paw and "ring" the bells then open the door. Your Doodle will soon get the correlation between the two and will run to the door and ring the bells themselves. There are a few downsides to using the bell method:

- The bells can't be heard all over the house.
- Some pups don't like bells and won't use them.
- Some pups will want to play with the bells for fun.
- If you are a house guest, or if you stay in a hotel, you'll need to bring your bells along.

## ***"Speak" on command using treats***

Another valuable tool to use once your puppy has a handle on house training is teaching your puppy to "speak." When you go to take your pup outside and you are at the door, say "Sammy, you want to go *outside*? What do you say? Can you *speak*?" When he "speaks," say "Yes, good doodle!", and open the door and take them outside. Use the same exercise to go back inside the house. This is such a great command for your puppy to learn because it can be used anywhere, at any door. Be aware, sometimes puppies think this is a game you are playing. If your puppy just recently went out to eliminate and is trying to get another treat out of you, you can ignore his bark. But only ignore it if you are absolutely sure he doesn't need to go. Sometimes, puppies will wait by the door but not bark. In this case, ask "Sammy, you want to go *outside*? If they sits up or perks up, say "What do you say? Can you *speak*?" then let them out.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

## Puppy Jumping

I haven't met a puppy yet that didn't try and jump on people. This behavior can be cute when they are small but as I stated in the beginning of this section, it isn't cute when you fully grown dog has just laid someone flat!

If your puppy is very young, a collar should suffice. However, an older puppy may need more 'encouragement'. So, if you don't have one, get your puppy a Gentle Leader. You can find one at your local veterinarian office or pet supply store. Bring your puppy with you and have someone help you properly fit the Gentle Leader.

Now here's how the training starts: Before company comes, take your puppy for a good, vigorous walk, making sure they stay in a heel the whole time. (If your puppy

is too young for a walk, a good game of fetch to get rid of some of their puppy energy should do the trick.) You want to be in charge of the walk, not your puppy. No sniffing and exploring on this trip. This does two things: 1) it uses up some of your dog's energy 2) it establishes your leadership.

Next, when company comes, pick a spot you want to establish as your puppy's "company spot." This can be 4-5 feet back from the front door. Next, have your puppy in their Gentle Leader or collar with the leash clipped to it. Then put them in a sit/stay and step on the leash so your dog can't get their head any higher than a normal sit position.

Praise them for sitting nicely and give them a special treat you use ONLY when guests are coming. Try some dried liver bits - disgusting to us but candy for dogs. Have someone else answer the door while you continue to manage your dog. Keep them focused on the treats, their sit/stay and your praise.

You may even want to develop a command for this activity. If you tell your dog "Company!" they will eventually associate their "company spot" and the desired behavior with this command.

It's just that simple.

Now I'll be honest, you will need to practice this quite a bit before you can expect a calm puppy when people come into the house. So make people coming and going from your home a regular thing rather than a special event.

One of the other factors in this equation is how your guests react to your puppy. You can help coach them so they can change their behavior. This will help with your puppy's behavior, because their excitement over the bouncing, jumping puppy is being conveyed to your puppy and they are, in turn, reacting to it.



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

## Socialization

It is unfortunate, but the number one reason for death in puppies today is euthanasia. This is especially sad when you realize these deaths could have been avoided with proper training. Lack of early socialization will lead to aggression, which could then lead to a potentially dangerous dog. Puppy play sessions are a very important part of any puppy training session. Most good puppy preschool training programs provide time in each session for this type of dog interaction.

Introducing your puppy to new experiences and new locations is also an important part of puppy training. Teaching your Doodle to be obedient and responsive, even in the face of many distractions, is very important when training dogs and puppies.

Get your puppy socialized right away!

**Your puppy must have all their shots and be cleared by your veterinarian for these activities!**

## ***Doodle Romps***

Many areas around the country have fun-filled events called Doodle Romps where all types of Doodles and their families are invited to a day of socializing and running around! ROMP – Responsible Owners Mannerly Pets, usually consists of a minimal charge, but maximum fun. It is best to wait on taking your Doodle until he has had plenty of basic socialization, otherwise it could be a bit overwhelming. You can locate a Doodle Romp in your area by going to [IDOG](#) and the '[Where You Live](#)' section.

## ***Dog Parks***

I highly recommend you do not force the dog park on your new Doodle. Not all puppies are prepared for such an overwhelming experience. Not only can this be potentially dangerous, scary, and counterproductive to your training, your puppy can be stepped on, bit, or rolled, leaving him with negative, long term effects. If your Doodle shakes, shivers, or hides—he is not ready. Generally, I would recommend waiting until your Doodle is 12 months old. In addition, a puppy not fully immunized should never attend one of these parks.

## ***Dog Walkers and Daycares***

Doggy daycares are a great place to socialize your puppy. However, eight hours a day is a long time for a new puppy to spend at daycare. I recommend a half-day two or three times weekly as a good place to start. Not all daycares are created equal. Before enrolling your puppy, go visit a few daycares and ask questions. Is the daycare clean? Are the employees educated and trustworthy? Are they licensed? Is there an area designated just for puppies? What is the employee-to puppy ratio? What are their emergency procedures? Can they provide references?

Hiring a dog walker to let your puppy out and play is a great way to socialize and train your dog. This will keep your puppy on track with house training while you are

away for long periods during the day. Be sure to interview and ask questions like: Are you the only dog walker who will be coming to visit? How long will you visit and play with my puppy? Do you bring other puppies over to play? Are they bonded and insured? Are they members of a dog walkers association? Ask for and call all references.

### ***Obedience Classes***

Obedience classes are a must for puppies. It serves several purposes. It allows the puppy to socialize with other puppies and it trains the owner to train the puppy. It also gives the owner access to a training professional who can answer questions and offer alternative training methods if the current methods are not effective with that particular puppy.



**Bear and his human sister Amy. Bear is training to be a service dog for Amy.**

Photo courtesy of their mom Tina.

## Beth Line on Alpha Dog Behavior

In order to have a peaceful environment at home your dogs need a clear understanding of who the alpha in the family is - and their subsequent role in the family.

Once again, [International Doodle Owners Group](#) founder Beth Line provides some valuable insight. According to Beth, *“In a dogs world there is a pack order: a hierarchy. To help integrate a dog into our human home a clear understanding of pack order will be a great step to a calmer and more peaceful existence for the dog and for the humans. It is their nature to assess the pack order. In our home, the dogs are far happier having a clear understanding that they are below all humans in the home. Showing a dog “who is in charge” does not require a heavy hand or even harsh responses. Establishing or confirming the pack order in a non-aggressive manner (Alpha Affirmation) is a lifestyle. “*

*“What we do every single day communicates to the dogs. Our body movements and position, our reactions to situations, our tone of our voice, who eats when, who gets attention, who gets groomed, who leads when there is a walk ... all these things we do with our dogs communicate – every moment of every day.”*

*“When we arrive home our dogs can expect to not get attention when we come in. We first, will sit our things down, we will get a drink, visit with the other humans in the home. Once we have all the “important” stuff done we then will call each dog over and say hello and give generous hugs to each –one at a time. This is difficult to do especially if you have an adorable puppy eager to see you or when you have an excited pup jumping all around you. Once they figure that they have to wait, we will find that the dog soon learns that jumping and acting out is not how attention is achieved. The alpha determines when the attention will be given.”*

*“In our home feeding time is a very low-key event. The dogs are certainly very eager to eat their meal but there is a process. We prepare their food on the counter in the kitchen. We will have a snack ourselves as we fix their food. They all lay down as we do this; they see we are eating “their food”. Once the alpha of the home eats their food then the lower ones in the pack may eat. The alpha of the pack eats first.”*

*“We also take great care to assure the safety of our dogs. When going to an unknown place – basically any place outside our front door – we, the alphas of the home, go out first to make sure that it is safe for the rest of the pack to come out. We do not let our dogs enter in any place without us first going through. We are to make sure that it is okay before they come in. If there is any threat to a situation we want our dogs to come to us so that we can protect them, we don't want them to have the responsibility of protecting us. If we have a disturbance on our property and the dogs are reacting, We get up and will walk outside to “handle” the situation. It is not our dogs' job to do this. The alpha protects the pack.”*

*“We also work very hard to make sure that the humans are leading any walks. Unless we tell them they are free – they are to remain beside or behind us. If in an open fenced area and they are free – we often notice that they continue to monitor us and will actually be running circles around us as we are walking. We also expect the dogs to move out of our way at all times. The alpha leads the pack.”*

*“The tone of our voices and the mannerisms we have and our position of our body's say so much to a dog. It was difficult for me to establish pack order when we got our first dog, because I am much smaller than my husband and I certainly have a softer, higher pitch voice. I had to make sure that when I was teaching the dogs that I stood straight and tall. I used a calm but very firm tone in my voice. I worked on being very consistent and smooth with my body movements and my voice. As a person becomes more excitable, movements more abrupt, tone of voice becomes higher and louder – this communicates to the dog that the human is not the alpha.*

*This is also the reason why a dog will think they are above a child in the pack – children tend to behave this way naturally. A dog will often just take over the role of alpha in that type of situation. When a dog does believe that they are the alpha in the family, many of the behaviors we all have problems with will start to be exhibited. Demanding attention by jumping or insisting on attention, excessive barking, guarding food, and destruction of things in the house can often be attributed to a dog that believes he is the leader of the pack. And frankly, most dogs would rather not be the leader; they often become stressed under the pressure of trying to lead a pack of humans in a human world.”*

*“Everyday in our home we strive to continue to lead our pack in a confident, calm and consistent manner. When we start to notice a behavior in our dogs we don’t like we can often look back over a period of time and notice that we had become lazy with the daily alpha affirmations. Once we get back on track the dogs immediately start to adjust once again to having us humans lead their pack. Our home once again becomes calmer and happier.”*



Beth Line with 5

month old Sherman

and her boys

Photo Courtesy of Beth Line, Director of [International Doodle Owners Group](#)



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

## Puppy Development Stages

A Doodle goes through seven major development periods.<sup>1</sup> What they see, how they are treated, and what they learn during their earliest stages will have a huge impact on how their physical, mental, and psychological health. By learning how your Doodle develops during each period, you will have a better understanding of how to care for him.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.idog.biz>



Photo courtesy of Pam McCarl of Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles

### ***Period 1: Puppy Toddlers (3-6 Weeks)***

At this time, your Doodle is still with his litter and mother. He is learning to explore out on his own and is learning basic doggie behavioral patterns. For example, learning different body postures when playing, biting (and receiving bites), and barking to communicate and socialize with the other dogs. At five weeks, the mother is teaching basic manners, such as being submissive to her leadership and acceptable behaviors. If a puppy has not learned to accept her leadership and discipline at this young age, training will be more difficult as he gets older. A pup should remain with his mother and litter mates during this time period. If he does not, he will most likely be more aggressive with other dogs, and even people.



Photo courtesy of Vicki Tyson of Windsor Creek Labradoodles

### ***Period 2: Socialization Period (7-12 Weeks)***

Most puppies arrive home at between 8 and 12 weeks of age. This is the most critical period of your puppy's life. During this period, your puppy will learn a lot—very quickly. Everything he is exposed to (behaviors, treatment, people, etc.) will be permanently engrained into his mind—making him resistant to future change. It is essential the owners are very cautious about what the puppy learns at this time. At this point, your puppy will be very ambitious to learn and he is watching this owner to learn how to behave. If he comes into your possession during this period, you need to establish new rules with him immediately upon his arrival. Don't allow him to do anything unacceptable. The longer you wait to correct him or train him, the harder it will be.

Within the first four weeks of their arrival they should meet as many different people as possible: men, women, and children of all ages, loud and even shy people. Have a new-puppy-party inviting all your friends and family over to meet, greet, and handle your puppy. Don't try to keep your home quiet and unnatural. Let your Doodle seek out and hear loud sounds like hairdryers, vacuums, blenders, doorbells, car horns, knocking, and even the noisy neighbors. Try turning on the vacuum in another room

and let your puppy's curiosity get the best of him. If he seems scared, runs away or shies away, back off and try again later.

During this period, you and your Doodle will be forming a bond and learning each other's personality. You will learn your puppy's temperament and how he acts around other people. He is learning how to adapt to a new culture of humans. It will be critical for you to expose your puppy to new environments, people, sounds, other animals, etc. during this period, other wise fear and insecurity could set in. At ages 8-11 weeks, your puppy will go through a fear imprint period where any negative experience (anything painful or frightful) will have a bigger impact on him than if it would happen at any other time. This period is the most important time for socialization, so make it a positive training experience for him. Let him explore new places and meet new people.



Marley at 12 weeks Photo courtesy of his mom Kaia

### ***Period 3: Seniority Classification Period (12-16 Weeks)***

This is the period when aggressive training should begin. This is the time when your puppy will test you to see who the leader of the pack is. He will bite at you, and this is normal. However, it is up to you to teach him biting is wrong and you need to

discourage it. Your pup will particularly want to bite when you are playing tug or war games or wrestling, so avoid these games during this period. His reaction will be to growl (which is a warning to back off or he might bite), and then bite. When he does mouth, quickly and firmly say “NO!” or “No Biting!” You can still play with your puppy during this time, just avoid any “dominance” type games.



**Evey at 7 months** Photo courtesy of her mom Cathy

#### ***Period 4: Flight Instinct Period (4-8 months)***

This could be described as a bit of an independent and perhaps even rebellious period for your puppy. He will be likely to wander off around the house, not necessarily sticking right by your side. He will also be likely to ignore you or run in the opposite direction when you call his name. If he does this, he can't be trusted off leash. You will have to keep him on a leash, or in a confined area, until he consistently responds to your command.

### ***Period 5: Adolescence Period (7-10 months)***

This will be a challenging time for you. Your puppy will really exhibit his independence during this phase. This is the time where you want to take your training up a notch and get aggressive with it to develop the dog you desire. He will be very energetic during this phase, so apply that towards training, exercising, and playing.



**Cody at about 1 year** Photo courtesy of his mom Harriet

### ***Period 6: Second Fear Imprint Period (6-14 months)***

Remember that the first fear imprint period occurred during the socialization period? This is similar. It occurs as begin adolescence and it is usually more prevalent with males. It will appear your Doodle is going through a shy period. This new shy behavior will be surprising, after dealing with such a rambunctious puppy for several months. If you notice shy behavior, don't force him to do or approach anything that frightens him. Also, don't overprotect him like a baby. Rather,

desensitize him to these frightening situations gradually and use treats as a reward to praise him.

### ***Period 7: Mature Adulthood (1-4 Years)***

Your Doodle could show signs of aggression or assertiveness at this age. Examples are barking when someone approaches the house or barking at other dogs. You will need to train him how to react in these situations. When someone comes to the door, teach him how to accept strangers into your home. Reward good behavior with treats. When he barks at other dogs, teach him to ignore them if he can't be friendly towards them.

At this point, you should have a clear idea how successful your training has been. If you haven't already found a reputable puppy training course, this might be a good time to find one, or even a private class. 1-800-PET-DOGS is the number for Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). This is a great place to find a local training facility and personal trainers. There is not a set of standards or requirements of training ability or experience required to be on this list. Make sure you interview trainers thoroughly and get recommendations.

## Conclusion

Your puppy will try your patience – that's what puppies and dogs do! There will be peaks and valleys, but this is all very normal. Establish a network of local resources; your veterinarian, your trainer and experienced dog friends. Use online support as well. [The Doodle Zoo](#) is an excellent online forum with very knowledgeable participants, many of whom are breeders or own multiple Doodles. They are always willing to help new Doodle owners!

Just hang in there, because it will be worth it. Give your wee puppy an ear scratch and tell them, with your help and dedication, they're going to be an incredible Doodle some day!



**Marley at 12 weeks** Photos courtesy of his mom Kaia

## Resources

### ***New Puppy Shopping List***

[New Puppy Shopping List](#)

### ***Contributing Breeders***

[Sunshine Acres](#)

[Windsor Creek Labradoodles](#)

[Eden Valley Manor Labradoodles](#)

[Dixie's Doodles](#)

[Noble Vestal Labradoodles](#)

### ***International Doodle Owners Group***

[IDOG Home Page](#)

[Grooming Instructions](#)

[Dog Food Calculator](#)

[Where You Live](#) for Romp Information



### ***Training Programs***

[Chet Womach's 'Dog Training Secrets'](#)

### ***Recommended Books***

[The Dog Listener'](#)

[Cesar's Way'](#)

### ***Doodle Organizations and Forums***

[The Doodle Zoo](#)

[Doodles & Friends](#)

[The Goldendoodle Website](#)

[Australia Labradoodle Association, Inc.](#)

[Australian Labradoodle Association of America, Inc.](#)

[Australian Labradoodle Club of America](#)

### ***Create a First Aid Kit***

[EHow – First Aid Kit](#)

[Dog Owner's Guide – First Aid Kit](#)

## ***Toxic Foods and Plants***

### [Toxic Plants](#)

[ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#) The telephone number is (888) 426-4435.

There is a consultation fee for this service.

## ***Just For Fun***

[DogCast Radio](#) (hear Edie's Labradoodle interview in Episode #13)

[The Bark](#) (Edie's very favorite dog magazine!)