



# The 12 Step **Guide** to the **Perfect** Dog

Oakwood **Canine** Services

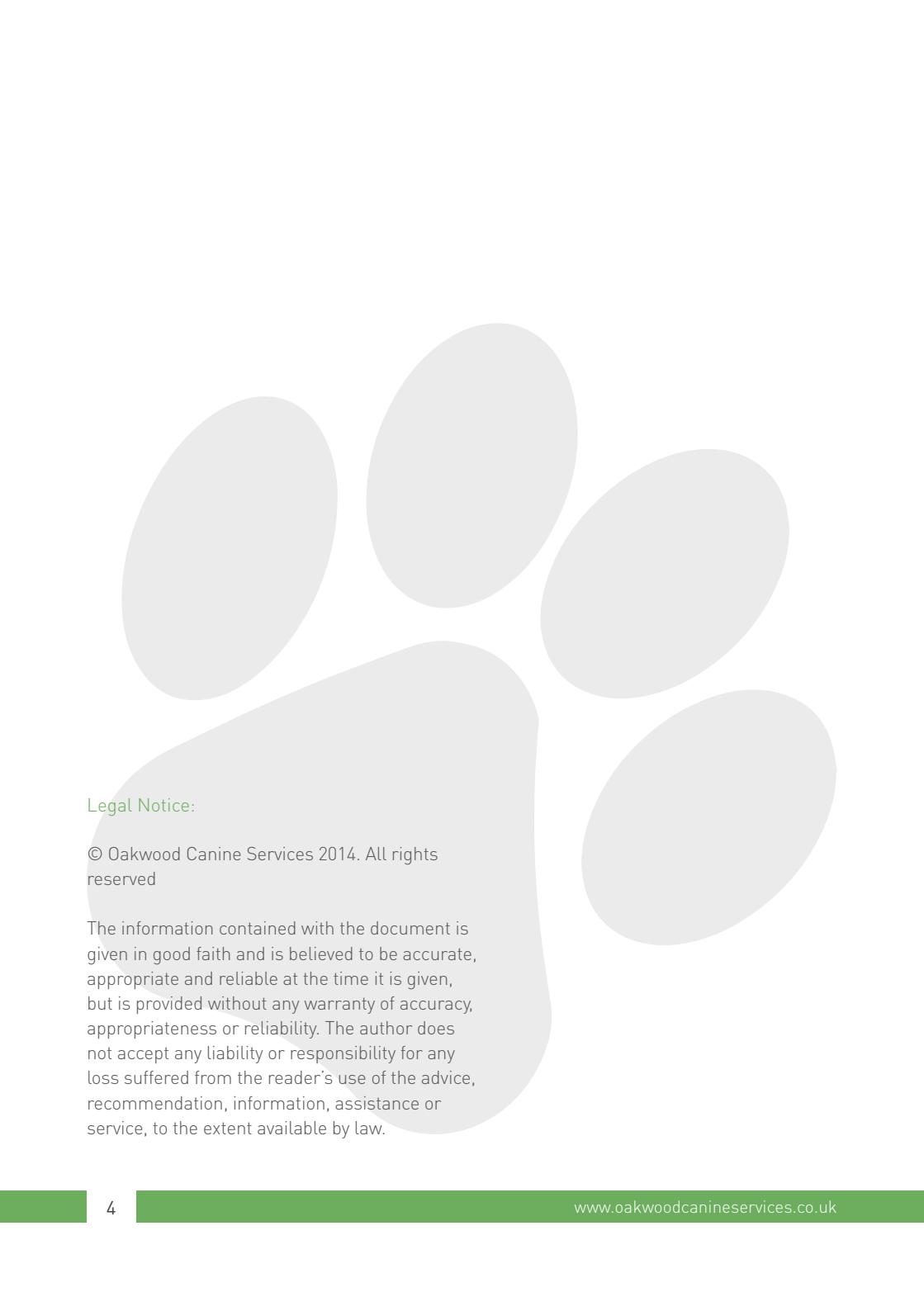
**by Steve Ormston & Gill Williams**



# The 12 Step **Guide** to the **Perfect** Dog

Oakwood **Canine** Services

by Steve Ormston & Gill Williams



## Legal Notice:

© Oakwood Canine Services 2014. All rights reserved

The information contained with the document is given in good faith and is believed to be accurate, appropriate and reliable at the time it is given, but is provided without any warranty of accuracy, appropriateness or reliability. The author does not accept any liability or responsibility for any loss suffered from the reader's use of the advice, recommendation, information, assistance or service, to the extent available by law.

# Step 1 - What is the 'right' dog for you?

**T**here are many things which need to be considered when you are looking at getting a dog.

Here are some examples:

- Breed
- Size
- Temperament
- Time Requirements

These are all very important, however the most important thing to think about is **your lifestyle**. Ask yourself the following-

- How much time do you have for daily exercise?
- Other than time for daily exercise, when else will you be free?
- What spare income do you have?
- How much space do you have?
- Are you a novice or an experienced dog owner?

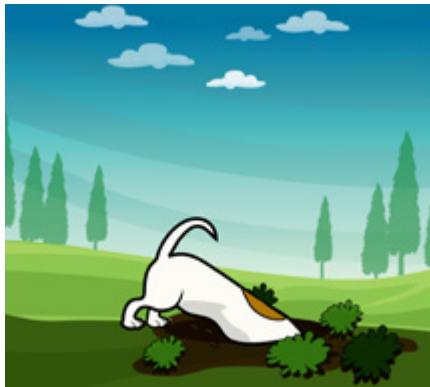
Answering the questions above, will give you a better understanding of the 'right' type of dog that will fit in with your current lifestyle. The biggest mistake that many people make is choosing a dog for their looks; without considering what the dog needs and if they have the time to meet those needs.

## Did you know?

Huskies have been bred to race and pull sleds; in some circumstances they will cover over 70 miles in a single day! **Would you really be surprised if you couldn't meet this dogs daily exercise requirements?**



Terriers have been bred to hunt and kill vermin; this involves digging them out of their dens or going underground after them. If you want a nice garden without holes in it, maybe think twice about the addition of a terrier to your household.



Once you have the answers to your lifestyle questions, create a shortlist of breeds that meet your requirements. To do this, research the web and speak to dog professionals. These should include: Breeders, Vets, Rescue Centres and Dog Trainers.

All will have different views based upon their own experiences and knowledge. For a balanced view, speak with as many as you can. Once you have chosen a breed, the next step is to find a dog.



Create a shortlist of breeds that meet your requirements. To do this, research the web and speak to dog professionals.

## Step 2 – Socialisation or Rehabilitation

Socialisation is the period from 3 to 12 weeks of a puppy's life. During this time the puppy needs to experience lots of situations that it may come across throughout its adult life. If a puppy doesn't get these experiences, they will be nervous when faced with new situations and environments. As they get older they will struggle to deal with everyday occurrences like meeting other dogs, or new people coming into their home.

Socialisation is something that can only be carried out with puppies, if you have taken on an older dog and they are struggling with some situations, you will need to carry out rehabilitation training rather than socialisation.

Once the 12 week stage has been reached, puppies need to practice and hone the skills they have already learnt. Puppy's socialisation experiences can actually regress, undoing all the important work that has been done. For this reason it is

important to keep introducing them to new experiences and environments; as well as revisiting and practicing interactions with new dogs and people.

### **Top Tip- Socialisation is about taking the un-familiar and making it familiar**

Puppies will naturally view un-familiar experiences in a negative way; it is our job to make them positive.

During Socialisation the puppy needs to experience lots of situations that it may come across throughout its adult life

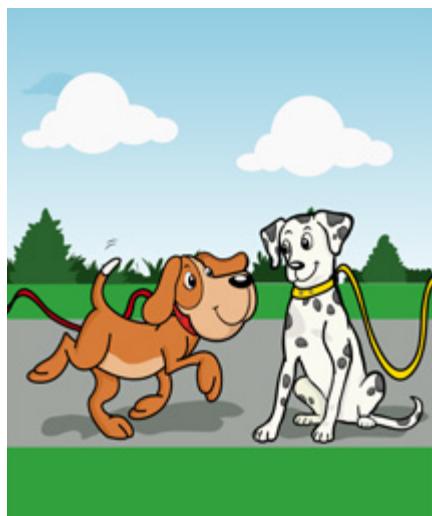


This step is very often overlooked as being vitally important. It is the biggest reason why there are so many nervous or reactive adult dogs. Take full advantage of this period and you can build really solid foundations for a dog that is going to be comfortable and confident around people and other dogs.

Remember that quality over quantity is key; do what you can to make sure each experience is perceived by your puppy as positive. By using tasty treats or positive rewards you can associate new situations with good things; this will speed up the process and also remove some of the risk of your puppy getting scared or worried.

After reading Step 2, you may be thinking your dog hasn't had enough socialisation in certain situations.... What do you do? Unfortunately, it is too late for

socialisation; this is something that can only occur when a dog is a pup. You need to start a rehabilitation programme, changing your dog's perception of the situations it finds scary, to being fun and exciting.



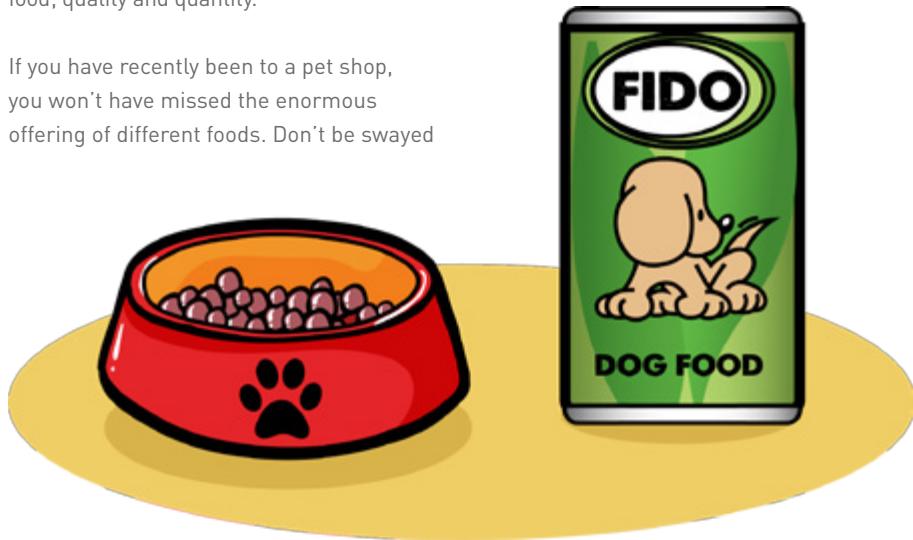
## Step 3 – Diet

Quite often overlooked as being an important aspect of creating a balanced dog, however, it is something that should be taken seriously. The behaviour and characteristics of a dog can be dramatically altered just by swapping the food they eat.

With so many different brands of food on the market, it can be very difficult to pick the right one for your dog. There are two main things to consider when purchasing food; quality and quantity.

If you have recently been to a pet shop, you won't have missed the enormous offering of different foods. Don't be swayed

by expensive advertising and marketing campaigns, telling you that a particular food is the ultimate choice, offering everything your dog needs and more. These foods are generally some of the worst you can buy, providing little in the way of real nutrition but overloaded with indigestible fillers, colours and additives.



You can also be cunningly deceived by the description of the food. An example of this would be a food being sold as 'Turkey and Rice'. You wouldn't be blamed for assuming that this food is made up of mainly Turkey and Rice, however you can be very much mistaken. In some cases the quantity of Turkey in the food may be as little as 10%, with another 30% being Rice. The remaining 60% will be a blend of bulking agents, generally a mix of grains sold as 'cereals'.

These cereals make your dog feel full initially but unfortunately in many cases don't provide the necessary amount of nutrients that your dog requires. The reason for this is; a dog's digestive system can't breakdown and absorb the fibre in the grains, only pass them as waste. As a result, you will need to feed your dog

more to provide them with the required nourishment, very much a false economy.

The best way of understanding what is in the food is simply by looking at the ingredients. With so many different options available, it would be unfair to favour one or two particular brands, although the maxim, 'You get what you pay for' is more often than not a good guide.

Another thing to consider when feeding your dog is choosing wet or dry food. Like many other questions, you will find a mix of opinions, arguing the toss for both. The main things to recognise is the difference in ingredients, just like dry kibble.

To give you a basic understanding of what to look out for when reading the list of ingredients, please refer to the table below:

Look For	Avoid
<b>Meat</b> - Clear description - I.E Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Salmon/ Meat Meal	Meat and Animal derivatives
<b>Minerals</b> - (Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Potassium, Iron, Copper, Zinc, Manganese, Selenium)	The word Cereals (Used as an umbrella to cover many different grains)
<b>Vitamins</b> - Vitamin A, B Vitamins, Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Vitamin E, Vitamin K	High Moisture Content (Mainly in wet foods)
<b>Small amount of cereal which will provide necessary fibre</b>	Saturated and Hydrogenated fats
<b>Healthy Fat/Oil (Omega 3 and 6)</b>	Excessive grains

# Step 4 – Training (Social Skills)

**T**raining covers so much that it is impossible to condense all aspects in to one step. For this reason training has been split into three separate fields - **Social Skills, Behaviour and Obedience.**

Through interactions with other dogs and people, social skills are learnt from a very young age. As the owner of a dog it is important to be selective when introducing other dogs to your own. It is imperative that the experience of meeting and greeting other dogs is considered to be positive by your puppy.

The breeder of a litter of puppies is key to early progress and should spend time introducing the dogs to new people and if possible other dogs. Any interaction that is deemed to be inappropriate should not be practiced and where possible should be avoided. A couple of examples would be –

- Puppies play biting humans, trying to nibble their hands and clothes.
- The Puppies pestering or aggravating other dogs.

Behaviours like this may seem innocuous and sweet early on but as the puppies grow, they will start to cause issues.

As the pups get slightly older and you take them from the litter, the next stage will be mixing them with other puppies and dogs. An ideal environment will be; puppy playgroups/socialisation groups. These are the perfect setting; your dog will have the opportunity to mix and interact with an array of breeds, ranging in size and shape. All with differing play styles and confidence levels.

Here your dog will learn a lot, they are getting a perfect socialisation opportunity and you can also practice meeting other dogs and people in a controlled way, all

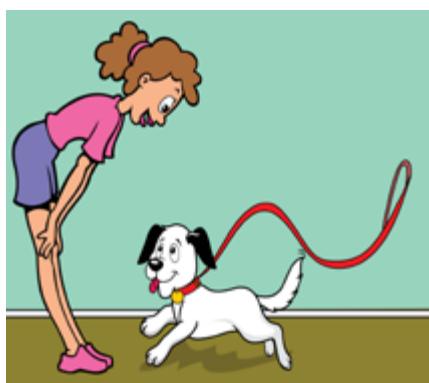
under the watchful eye of a trained expert who will lead and guide you all the way.

Playgroups are becoming more and more popular; this is great for convenience, although you need to be careful who you take your advice from. Like with lots of other areas in life, doing your research before you go is invaluable in ensuring you get the expected level of knowledge and experience. There are many stories of people going to play groups and receiving poor advice from the supposed expert. With one or two experiences there is the potential to create a problem that will last a life time and will involve hard work to overcome.

What you are looking to do in this environment is practice the things you will encounter in the real world, I.E taking your dog for a walk or to the vets.



Take the time now to decide what social etiquette you would like from your dog. Would you like them to jump up at strangers? Do you want them to pull on the lead to get to other dogs? Or would you like them to meet another dog calmly, have a polite sniff and then move on?



Many of the decisions you will make will be by accident. It is very easy to let things go when your pup is small and cute but very difficult to stop them once they have grown. For example - If your puppy gets attention when jumping up, this behaviour will be reinforced and eventually become a habit.

**Top Tip – Preventative measures are easier than a cure. Don't let your puppy practice any behaviour you wouldn't want them doing as an adult.**

# Step 5 – Behaviour Training

**Y**our dog's behaviour will largely be pre determined by their genetics.

Naturally they will display innate characteristics that are renowned with the species. An example of this would be, sniffing the ground before they toilet. Your dog will also exhibit more breed specific tendencies, like a Border Collie naturally herding other animals, or a Cocker Spaniel picking things up and carrying them around.

The information above is literal, which means that everything you do with your dog when they are a puppy will determine how they will develop. If they have many positive, rewarding experiences and learn what is appropriate and what is inappropriate; more than likely, they will turn into the loving companion that most dog owners want.

In exactly the same way, if they experience negative, uncomfortable situations and are not shown what is expected of them; they will undoubtedly

become hard to live with, potentially dangerous animals.

More than likely you will have heard the adage – 'Fight or Flight'. This is the principal of how a dog will react when confronted with a situation considered by them to be scary. The first reaction will always be to run, to move away from what it is that they are fearful of. If a dog feels that this is not possible, they will in essence fight. The word fight can be broken down to varying degrees of action. A dog will use the lowest form of aggression that is effective. To understand this, think of a scenario where a dog is eating a bone. Each number below signifies a person moving closer to the dog.

**The dog's first reaction will always be to run or to move away**

1. Out the corner of an eye the dog looks. This is the first signal that the dog is aware of the presence of the person.
2. Dog picks the bone up and tries to move away. The environment doesn't allow the dog space to move.
3. The dog freezes and stiffens.
4. The dog gives a low growl as a warning signal.
5. The dog bares teeth and increases the pitch of the growl.
6. The dog moves away from the bone slightly and barks loudly.
7. The dog lunges and jabs the person using the muzzle.
8. The dog finally is left with no option other than to bite to keep the food.

This may seem extreme but dogs unlike humans don't think a logical manner. They base their feelings on past experiences. The situation above would be completely avoided if the person approaching stops and walks away at number 2.

Alternatively the experience of the person approaching could be made positive by throwing treats from a distance. With time,

the dog would learn the person is not a threat to their resource and ignore people walking past.

**Top Tip – Increase your understanding of dog body language. This will help you avoid potential problems from occurring.**

Dogs can learn to do some fantastic things; they are very adaptable and can be quick learners. What is important is that they are shown what is expected of them. Just like humans they need to be taught how to behave in different social situations, don't expect your dog to work it out for themselves.



# Step 6 – Obedience Training

In principle, is teaching the dog to follow your command. It is an extremely useful tool for creating a dog that is easier to manage and better to live with.

There has been a big transition in the way that dogs have been taught over recent years. Through lots of research and experimentation, it has been proven that dogs respond better to positive reinforcement.

In years gone by people favoured other methods, some of which would be considered by many to be rather cruel. An example of this would be striking a dog for doing something that the human considers to be wrong. Another method that didn't appear to be so negative was the use of a choke chain, which was used to stop the dog from pulling. The irony with this equipment is that many people didn't realise it could do so much damage. It was ignorance in its purist form.

For efficient progress when training a dog, you need a basic understanding about how dogs learn and how to use these methods when teaching them. This is rather a complex, scientific subject and many books and articles have been written to explain the theories. The fundamental techniques can be separated into two camps-

## Reinforcement & Punishment

**Reinforcement** - When a behaviour is followed by a reward. The behaviour is then more likely to occur again.

**Punishment** - When a behaviour is followed by a consequence. The behaviour is less likely to occur in the future.

It has been proved that dogs respond better to positive reinforcement.

An example of each-

- Pluto the puppy runs to his owner and sits at their feet. The owner tells Pluto he is a good boy and gives him a biscuit. – **This behaviour has been reinforced with a reward, the food.**
- Pluto is playing and starts to get over excited, trying to mouth his owner's hands. Pluto is taken by his lead to the nearest door and placed in a time out. – **This behaviour has been punished by the removal of attention, therefore decreasing the likelihood of the behaviour occurring again.**

There are variant degrees of each technique that will determine whether or not the behaviour is either successfully repeated or stopped. When reinforcing a behaviour you can increase the value of the reinforcer; using chicken instead of dry kibble or using the dog's favourite toy instead of one they have access to all the time.

When punishing the behaviour, the severity of the consequence can be increased. A

verbal reprimand can be used instead of a timeout or a physical punisher in the way of a lead correction.

It is essential to appreciate the negative effects punitive techniques can have on your dog and the lasting impact it can create. As said before, always complete research and consult a professional with legitimate experience prior to using anything that could negatively impact your dog.



# Step 7 – Exercise

s a necessity for all dogs. The amount of exercise they need will be mainly affected by three things:

1. The breed of dog you have
2. The age of your dog
3. The physical capabilities and medical condition of your dog

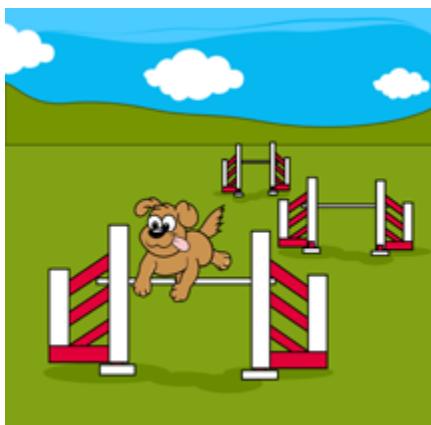
How you provide physical exercise for your dog is completely up to you. There are many different ways you can fulfil their needs: Walking around the streets near your house, playing games in the garden, taking your dog to the local park, swimming at the beach (usually just the dog in this country), Agility, going for a run with your dog to name but a few. The list is plentiful and the only limits are your imagination, time constraints and the three points above.

## **Exercising a Puppy -**

A subject that attracts very differing opinions, especially for larger breeds. One view point is that large dogs should

have very limited exercise, restricted to on lead only. The reason people take this view is due to the potential risk of exercise causing skeletal issues with young dogs which means they will suffer from joint problems later in life. The other side of the argument would be that without regular, extensive and high intensity exercise, energetic dogs can become difficult to live with and in certain circumstances unmanageable.

There will be arguments for and against each standpoint and sometimes a balance of the two would be most suitable.



### What about my dog?

Knowledge of your dog and the breed history will assist you in deciding what exercise your dog will need and how to provide it. Almost all the breeds that are popular today have a history of working for a living; specifically designed to be highly motivated, energetic animals having the stamina to work for a full day.

This considered it is no surprise that trainers and behaviourists identify many 'bad behaviours' to be directly related with boredom and pent-up energy.

With adult dogs that you have no medical concerns about, you can give them a wide range of activities to participate in, as mentioned above. Not only will these exercises give them an opportunity to tire themselves, many offer a really beneficial way to increase the human-canine connection.

### Top Tip – Train a robust recall

Having a dog off lead is not completely necessary but a distinct advantage when exercising. It makes it a lot easier to fulfil their exercise requirements in a shorter period of time, without you having to run or cycle along side them. When exercising a puppy or a dog off lead, a strong recall

is invaluable. This will stop them from approaching dogs and situations that you assess to be dangerous. A recall will fall under the obedience category and should be positively reinforced where possible.

Although giving a dog plenty of exercise is essential, be wary of doing too much. With some dogs you can actually create a problem by playing and interacting with them at a high intensity too frequently. What happens is the dog comes to expect the exercise or worse is in a constant state of high arousal, meaning you never get any respite. This is common in Spaniels and Collies who have very strong working connections and thus a motivation to be constantly active.



# Step 8 – Mental Stimulation

C can be used in a number of ways for many different reasons. It is certainly not a long term alternative to daily physical exercise but can be used as a great addition to your normal routine.

As it has been touched on in previous steps, some breeds of dog have been selectively bred for their energy, motivation to work and their stamina. If you use physical daily exercise as your only tool to tire the dog, it will make for a demanding schedule. However you can utilise other methods to make life a great deal easier and more rewarding for the dog.

## What to do?

There are an abundance of different products on the market that are fairly cheap but very useful aids you can utilise on a daily basis. Below is a short list of equipment with a brief explanation of how to make the products work for you.

**Treat Balls** – Generally a sphere, with a small hole that dispenses food one piece at a time. Sometimes weighted at the bottom, meaning the ball moves back to the original position when rolled. – Put your dog's kibble inside, instead of in a bowl and let them move the ball to get it out. What would normally take two minutes to eat out of a bowl will take a great deal longer in the treat ball.



**Rope Knot / Hard Plastic Chews** – Give these to your dog and allow them to chew. It is a natural stress reliever for dogs to chew and surprisingly the texture of the chew is also important. A dog's mood will determine which they want to chew. Be careful if you have a dog that will ingest items, your choice here becomes more important.

**Rubber Kong** – These come in a range of sizes and colours. The colours signify the firmness of the rubber. Depending on the age and size of your dog will affect which one is right for you. – A revolutionary piece of equipment for domestic dog owners. Versatile and durable the Kong is a must have. You can stuff them with all types of different treats and even freeze them to make it a greater challenge for your dog. The Kong will occupy and tire your dog but can also be used as a reward following training sessions, very useful.

**Interactive dog puzzles** – These are brain-teasing games specifically designed to challenge your dog. The puzzles vary in difficulty meaning your dog can start off with the easy ones progressing to the more difficult. In each puzzle, small treats are placed in little compartments. The dog has to figure out how to remove the treats

by moving different parts of the puzzle with their paws and muzzle. – The puzzles are really useful for increasing your dog's brain power as well as tiring them. The majority of the puzzles require supervision as certain parts are designed to be removed and could be chewed and swallowed.

**'Go find it'** – Another interactive game, where you hide small treats from your dog and they use their nose to find them. This can be set up in the garden or in the house. You can use small plant pots with a hole in the bottom or the coloured sports cones to hide little treats under. A great game for the dog as they will use their naturally strong sense of smell to locate the treats.

**Natural chews and bones** – Great for occupying the dog and actually very tiring too. The dogs will also clean their teeth while chewing.

There are many ways you can occupy your dog and you should try to vary the methods. When bringing up a puppy, mental stimulation can be used in place of physical exercise for the period up to their vaccinations.

# Step 9 – The Teenage Years

**S**cientifically known as 'secondary socialisation' this is the period where puppies carry on maturing and make the transition to adult hood. Dogs will mature physically, improve co-ordination and refine their existing skills.

Depending on the breed of dog this period will usually start from 3-4 months of age and carry on up to 18 months for giant breeds. During this time, dogs will gain their permanent teeth and reach sexual maturity; between 6-16 months for bitches and 10-12 months for males.

Naturally there will be an onset of different behaviours. Dogs will have an inclination to roam and mounting other dogs can become prevalent with males. Both bitches and males can become territorial and you can clearly see a difference in personality as they change mindset from playful pups to more independent adults.

During this time, dogs will increase in confidence and underlying issues can come

to fruition. A dog that was once slightly shy and nervous can become outwardly aggressive with the change of mind set and chemical alterations.

Many dogs will also start to push their boundaries and depending on the reaction of adults or other dogs, it is quite easy for new behaviours to be formed and practiced.

With so many changes taking place this is a critical time of the dog's life and one that should be approached with much thought. It is very easy for training to regress, dogs will often appear to be ignoring commands that you know, they have already learnt. Parts of the house, things that you haven't even considered to be a problem may start to get the attention of the dog. If left unsupervised, dogs could quite easily land themselves in mischief, either destroying or becoming obsessed with certain things or areas within your property. Examples of this would be; a certain patch in the garden where they start to dig or an area in the kitchen they begin to chew.



It may sound negative but often, this period is best approached as 'damage limitation'. Trying best not to undo the good things your dog has learnt and preventing them from learning new bad habits. It may appear to be counter productive but limiting the amount they get to play with other dogs can also help. Quality over quantity is the best approach during secondary socialisation. Your dog will have hopefully had enough positive and rewarding experiences earlier on in their life that reducing the time they are with other dogs is not going to cause a problem. If you have used a day crèche or day-care for your dog, you will be better off stopping this service until they have matured.

Mental stimulation exercises will be extremely beneficial, giving needed outlets for built up energy and frustration. It is

also useful to have calming sessions with your dog. Instead of playing frantically and letting them get excited, sit on the floor and calmly stroke your dog slowly and firmly. This is almost like a massage and is great for strengthening your bond too.

One main point to consider during this period is neutering. This can calm your dog and lengthen the period of their puppy like behaviour. There are many things to consider and it is unprofessional to use a blanket statement that all dogs should be neutered at 5-6months. Always seek advice before deciding what to do. It is important that your dog is in the right emotional and physical state before neutering; otherwise it can create adverse effects to their behaviour and physical condition.

**It may appear to be counter productive but limiting the amount they get to play with other dogs can also help**

# Step 10 – A bit of me time

Just like humans, it is healthy for dogs to have their own space sometimes, on other occasions it may be necessary if you need to leave the house for an extended period. With this in mind it is very important to get a new dog used to being left straight away.

Dogs are social creatures and enjoy the companionship of humans, especially their owners. It is quite normal for a puppy to follow their guardian around and seek comfort with their presence. This can be perceived as being cute and adorable by the human, however if this behaviour is not regulated, it can lead to issues such as; Separation Anxiety or Separation Stress.

This subject should even be considered in relation to deciding on the best time for bringing a dog into your home. What you may consider to be the best time could potentially trigger separation issues in later months.

Consider a family deciding to get a new puppy during the summer holidays. The

mother and father in the family might take time off from work to be at home with the puppy and children for around 6 weeks.

Each day the puppy wakes up and has the company of multiple people. The puppy gets constant attention from the kids and the adults. This is fantastic for toilet training and teaching the puppy a level of obedience. The family take the pup out on regular walks and are able to attend the local dog club giving him plenty of opportunities to play with other puppies.

This cycle continues for a number of weeks and everything seems to be going really well. Finally the summer holidays are over and the children and both parents have to go back to work.

The first morning back, everyone is up and frantically running around getting ready, the pup is whipped round the block for a quick walk and then popped back in the kitchen while, Mother and Father make sure the kids have all their essentials for

the new term. Everyone comes in to the kitchen and says their goodbyes and within seconds they're gone... Silence... The puppy has not experienced this before, until now the only time the pup had been on his own was at night, when everyone goes to bed and he was already exhausted from the long day of play and excitement.

The puppy pines for his family to return, he starts barking, crying, whimpering and whining. Suddenly after what seems like eternity someone returns and his actions of pining have been reinforced. This routine is repeated daily and the problem gets worse and worse.

For the positive reasons mentioned above the summer holidays or Christmas can be the perfect point to bring a puppy into the family. You will undoubtedly have more time and the puppy will benefit from this time with more opportunities for socialisation and training. However a very conscious effort needs to be made to give the puppy practice of being left alone, even if this is not needed at this time. Using the aids mentioned in the step for mental stimulation, are effective tools to keep the puppy occupied as well as creating a positive association with being on their own. This progression should be gradual and shouldn't be rushed. Ideally the puppy

wants to have had lots of stimulation and exercise before you leave them, thus increasing the chances of them sleeping.

If your dog takes himself off to a quiet spot and goes to sleep, this should be recognised and rewarded without making a fuss. Promote the association of being in a crate with good things. Give them their rewards in the crate and make it a warm and comfortable place to be. You can then have them in the crate when you are cooking, cleaning or watching TV. Having the dog separate from you will create balance allowing you to enjoy your own space as well as giving the puppy plenty of opportunity for sleep, something that is very important indeed.



# Step 11 – Grooming and Vet Care

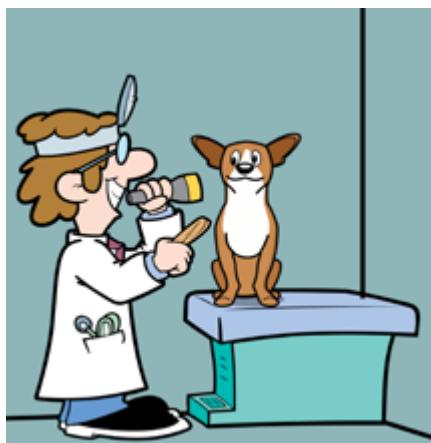
**I**t may seem obvious but these two quite often get overlooked by people bringing up a dog. The only time they visit the vet is when something is wrong and the only time they go to the grooming salon is when the dog needs bathing and, or cutting.

This may seem logical to us but not to the dog. What happens is that environment is quickly paired with a negative association. As soon as it looks to them that they're heading to either location, panic kicks in and they start

to become stressed and uncomfortable. In most circumstances the human then pushes the dog through the door and forces whatever the procedure is upon the dog. This whole experience is a vicious cycle that gets worse on each occasion.

If you see your dog looking uncomfortable it is because they are. You need to stop and re-assess the situation. It is always better to approach situations slowly and in small doses rather than making them into one traumatic event.

A puppy will have to make a number of trips to the vets during the first few months of its life. Some of the visits will be harmless but on others they will require injections and may be micro-chipped. It is imperative to make the experience as pleasant as possible. A good idea would be to pop to the vets with your puppy to make the initial appointment. Give them treats and praise while in that environment and you will be taking steps towards creating a better association. Let the nurse and





the receptionist meet the puppy, this will be a good opportunity for socialisation but will also strengthen the feeling of the vets being a nice, safe place. Between each injection, visit the vets in this way; therefore outnumbering the bad unpleasant experiences with good ones.

Depending on the breed of dog you have and the style you want their coat, will determine how often you will visit the groomers. With some dogs, a trip can be as frequent as once every 6 weeks; with others it may be once a year. Either way, like the vets this

environment needs to be seen by the dog as positive. This can be more difficult to achieve due to the length of time they will need to be there. Each appointment may be one and half hours long. If they don't see this as a nice place to be, it becomes extremely daunting and very stressful for the dog to cope with. Some dogs get so nervous that they will urinate and defecate on the floor or even on the grooming table.

The same approach needs to be taken to make it a pleasant setting but with more intensity and greater rewards. The process

should be started slowly and ideally following this pattern-

- 1.** Go to the salon with your pup and introduce them to the staff. Encourage them to give him/her treats and a cuddle.
- 2.** Book a weekly visit at least, where you will take your pup and have them stand on the table and in the bath while you and the groomer give them treats and praise. This session should be 10 – 15 minutes long.
- 3.** After a couple of sessions take yourself away from your pup and allow the groomer to do all the work. It is a good idea to start introducing the different equipment including clippers, scissors and the hairdryer.
- 4.** When your puppy is comfortable, book them in for a bath. Have them dried with a towel and for a few seconds at a time with the dryer. All the time giving them praise and reward.
- 5.** Repeat this process until they have had their first full groom.

This process should be completed in conjunction with your own routine of grooming at home. Endeavour to make the experience as positive as possible, always finishing on a good note. If your dog has any matts or knots ensure greater care and time is taken when trying to remove them. You don't want to jeopardise your hard work by hurting your pup.



Endeavour to make the experience as positive as possible, always finishing on a good note

# Step 12 – Body Language

As previously stated throughout the last 11 steps, having an understanding of your dog, is a vital part of creating the well rounded, balanced companion that you can call 'The Perfect Dog'.

Please take time to study all the images and look out for the many different signals that dogs display in every day life. It will amaze you, how much they are actually trying to tell us.



Alert



Angry



Anxious



Curious



Friendly



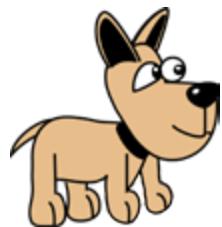
Pet Me



Polite



Pretty Please



Relaxed



Respect 1



Respect 2



Sniff



Stressed 1



Stressed 2



Suspicious



Threatened



Threatened Last Warning



# What Now?

You now have a good idea of the basics and have plenty of things to work on. Always remember to stay calm and as patient as you can, raising any animal is a slow process but a rewarding one when done correctly.

Things can always get better. If after reading any of the steps you feel as though you need to start a behaviour rehabilitation program with your dog; don't panic. Contact your local experienced Dog Behaviourist and start to make changes.

## Oakwood Canine

17E Lake Enterprise Park, Bergen Way,  
Sutton Fields Ind. Est. Hull  
HU7 0YQ  
[info@oakwoodcanineservices.co.uk](mailto:info@oakwoodcanineservices.co.uk)

01482 823555





**W**orking with thousands of dogs and their owners, Gill and Steve have tried and tested all the techniques of this book with great success. Their personal aim is to educate the masses, giving them the tools and the support they need to create what will be for them, 'The Perfect Dog'.

You have just got your new puppy, the family couldn't be more excited...However a few months pass and things start to go wrong. Your puppy has picked up some bad habits and is starting to test your patience. They don't respond to any of your requests and almost seem like they're ignoring you on purpose!

Some dogs can grow up to be a handful, others become almost unmanageable if the owners don't take the right steps during their puppyhood.

Follow the rights steps and there is no reason why you can't create the perfect pooch who will be the ultimate addition to your family. What's not to love about dogs, they are funny, affectionate, understanding and have a love for life that will rival any other creature on this planet!

**Follow this guide and you will certainly  
be taking the right first step.**

**OAKWOOD**  
canine services

