

Raising Puppies, Part Six

Last month this column was devoted to crate training because proper confinement is one of the major keys to raising a puppy you can live with. If you use my method, you already know that your pup will spend a lot of time in their crate at least for the first one-and-a-half to two years.

Of course, we want the pup to like his crate and when used in the way I described, it will become their secure and safe place or den. Many owners notice their pups actually seeking out their crate themselves when they want to nap or if they are uncertain or frightened by something.

I also recommend feeding the pup his meals in the crate. This helps make the crate an even better place to be and keeps the pup from getting distracted and forgetting about eating. You want your pup to get excited about his meals and eat them all at one time.

Most people assume that in order to keep the crate a happy place for the pup that it


must never be used in anything other than a positive way. I totally disagree! I have found over the years that the crate can also be used as a perfect "time out" place, as a discipline, if you will, in order to extinguish unwanted behavior.

When used correctly, time out is one of the most passive, acceptable, and yet effective disciplines one can use. I use it for all kinds of different behaviors like, chasing the cat or harassing other animals in the household, getting into places or things that are off-limits, taking things that do not belong to you, as well as behaviors like jumping up on people or objects. These are only a few examples.

I think it is important to note at this point, that there are no absolutes and certainly there are many different ways to teach and discipline puppies. What works for one, may not work for another. That is one reason why my job is never boring and requires me to get very creative sometimes, especially with

Our Animal Friends

by Martha Norwalk



unusual puppies and problems.

In general, I do not use or recommend physical corrections with puppies, like scruff shakes or alpha rollovers. Not because they do not work because they often do, but because most people do not know how to do it and even with instruction there is always a good possibility that emotional or psychological damage may be done to the pup that will contribute to bigger and often aggression problems later on.


Time out pretty much always works. Sometimes it takes more repetition with certain individuals than others but when done

right, there really is no chance of doing harm. Anyone can make it work because it can be done very passively and does not require a wimpy person to act "alpha." In fact, it works better when there is no emotion involved. Here's how it works:

Let's use the example of chasing the cat in the house. Time out is the immediate consequence of unacceptable behavior. The instant the pup begins to chase the cat, you get up and calmly walk after the pup. It is very helpful to leave a leash attached to the pup's collar and to let them drag it around with them but only when you are there and supervising.

As soon as you are close enough, step on the leash to stop the pup, pick up the leash and escort the pup to his crate. Put the pup in the crate, take the leash off and close the crate door. Tell the pup something like "you are doing time out because you chased the cat" and visualize him doing that in your mind as you say this. Remember, the pup will get the picture in your mind.

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