

Honey Creek Shepherds

Positive Puppy Training

The following Article was written by Rose Ingram, a German Shepherd breeder and a professional at obedience training and showing her dogs.

You've just brought your adorable little puppy home. He is sleeping and then he yawns and stretches. How cute you think. Just couldn't resist him. And oh, that puppy breath! You just want to hug him and hold him and stroke his little head.

After a week of sleepless nights with a crying pup and stepping into things you do not want to discuss, you begin to wonder whether or not this was a good idea. It seems like every day he chews up something important while his toys lay virtually untouched.

Life with a new puppy:

1. They are happy to see you but insist on chewing on you to prove it.
2. They are tired at night but want to cry until you give in and let them sleep with you in your bed.
3. The new toys are great, but your shoes and other personal items smell like you.
4. They cannot understand why you see pottying as a crime. After all, it is normal.

Tips to help you and the new member of your family:

1. Don't allow your pup to use your body parts (fingers, arms, toes, ankles) for chew toys. Tell him "No" and offer him a toy. If you must be firm, rap him on the nose or squeeze his muzzle. He already understands this as his mother would use her mouth to squeeze his muzzle when she had enough of his rough play.
2. Don't let your puppy sleep with you. This is a bad practice with lots of poor outcomes. First of all, dogs look for pack order. God made them pack animals and this is what they understand best. They need a leader not an equal. Sleeping in your bed with you makes you equal. Training an equal is much harder than training a subordinate.
3. Don't allow your personal items to become the dog's toys. They will never learn what is theirs and what is yours. Even your old shoes that you no longer care about should not be given to the dog. He will not know the difference between your old shoes and your new ones. Pick up your things so the dog does not have access to them. Wrap his toys in your dirty laundry for a little while to get your scent on the toys before you give the toys to him. This way they will smell like you. Play with your dog and his toys. This makes his toys more appealing.
4. Keep your puppy crated when you cannot tend to him. Also, he should sleep in his crate at night. You can keep the crate near your bed if you like. If he whines while in there, tell him "Quiet" and rap on the side of the crate. You may have to do this several times but it works. If he is very young, he may need to potty in the middle of the night but this should only be for a few weeks at most. Take him out to potty as soon as you let him out of the crate. If possible, always take him out the same door of your house. Before you let him outside to potty, give him a verbal cue. I say, "Let's go potty." Dogs learn words quite easily. Soon, he should be telling you that he has to "go" by "dancing" around in front of the door he uses to go out to potty. Praise him when he goes potty outside. Your pup will learn to hold himself much faster if he is crated at night and when you are busy and cannot watch him. Pups need to potty when they wake up, a short while after eating, and after playing. Use these cue times to your benefit.