

Training your pup is an essential part of owning a dog and can be started at any age and should continue through adulthood. Obedience training ranges from puppy to advanced and knowing the stages will help you continue to build a relationship with your dog while adding on to their skills to help them grow into a well-mannered addition to your family.

**Remember:** Training doesn't stop after you leave class. Training is a continuous process throughout your pup's entire life.

**Puppy Skills:** Building a foundation for dog obedience starts as soon as you bring your puppy home. Many think they must wait until your puppy is old enough to start a structured class however there are many things you can do at home to start your puppy off right.

**When you get your puppy home:**

- Start to get him used to his collar as well as walking on a leash. Remember this is new to your pup so be patient and use praise and reward as your puppy acclimates to their new equipment.
- Get your pup used to human touch. This may seem like a no brainer, but we want you to go beyond petting and snuggling your puppy. Get your puppy used to you handling their feet, looking in their mouth, touching their ears. We want you to handle your puppy and not just pet them. Have intent with your touch. Touch each toe daily, brush your pup frequently, and don't forget the reward and praise!
- Focus on the essential skills you will use as your puppy grows up. Will you allow your puppy on the furniture? If you don't want your puppy to jump on guests at a year old, don't let them jump on them as a puppy. Begin to work on the basic like sit, focus and crate training.

**Remember:** What is cute at 8 weeks won't be cute at 8 months or even 8 years! Be consistent with what you are asking from your puppy.

- Socialization is extremely important for a well-mannered dog. When puppies are 6-16 weeks, they are at the ideal developmental stage to socialize them to all aspects of our life and a human centered world. Let them explore:

- New people and places
- A friend or family members fully vaccinated dog
- Cats
- Car rides (What dog doesn't like a trip to Starbucks for a pup cup!)
- Sounds, sights, and situations they will experience in life

**Remember:** You will want to make sure your puppy has been fully vaccinated prior to bringing them to areas where large amounts of dogs congregate.

**Remember:** Your puppy will go through an adolescent stage from 8-18 months where additional socialization and training will be important.

- Enroll in an age-appropriate training class. At The Bark Club we offer two AKC Virtual Home Manners classes. This is a great way to get your puppy off to a great start while earning their first AKC Title. (All breeds welcome)  
<https://www.barkclubco.com/barkclubtraining>

**Basic Obedience:** Basic obedience will introduce simple skills to your puppy such as sit, down, come, stay place and focus. These are the skills necessary for your dog to progress into more advanced training. Having the basics will lay the framework for more complicated commands.

- Basic obedience continues to help your pup with socialization skills as well as teaching them to remain calm and relaxed.

**Remember:** Training should be a way for you to strengthen your bond and deepen your lifelong relationship with your dog.

- Training should be fun! Introduce training games and teach them new skills while you play.
- Keep training sessions short. You do not have to spend hours a day working with your pup. They will lose interest and so will you. Several one-to-five-minute sessions throughout the day is great.
- Incorporate training into the normal things you do daily. Ask for a sit before feeding. Use good manners when leashing or exiting a door. Don't allow jumping when guest enter your house.
- Use your dogs' meals during training. Your dog doesn't always have to eat their dinner from a dish. Use it throughout the day for your training sessions.

**Remember:** If you are not having fun, either is your dog!

- Enroll in a basic obedience class. At The Bark Club we offer S.T.A.R. Puppy. This is an excellent first in-person training class for your puppy. And provides a

great lead in to earning the Canine Good Citizen Title. (All breeds welcome)  
<https://www.barkclubco.com/barkclubtraining>

**Intermediate Obedience:** At this level of training, we will focus on perfecting basic obedience and layering commands. Intermediate classes will continue to build your relationship with your puppy while adding distractions and allowing distance between you and your dog.

- Intermediate training will focus on proofing the skills your puppy previously learned. You will work towards adding distance, distractions, and duration to your basic commands. Can your dog sit inside your home on command? Great, let's start to work in the front yard or another location with low level distractions.

**Reminder:** If your puppy does not have the skill down 100% inside your home with little to no distractions do not expect them to be able to preform that same skill at your child's soccer game or the park. Training is done in stages, and you will need to build your dogs skills slowly and in stages.

- Add a few tricks to your puppy's intermediate training routine. (The internet is a great resource to find basic tricks to add to your training routine)
  - Roll Over
  - Sit Pretty
  - Shake
  - Spin
  - Wave
  - High Five
  - Bow
  - Play Dead

**Reminder:** Remember when we said training should be fun? Not only are tricks fun they are great entertainment when you have guests over.

- Intermediate dog training will begin to phase out treats. You have been using treats for two very important things during the beginning stages of training. You have used them as lures to entice your puppy into different positions as well as a reward to reinforce a correct response. At this stage we will begin to teach both the owner and dog not to become dependent on treats. Over time it will be important for your dog to preform the requested command not contingent on if they will receive a treat afterwards.
- Enroll in an intermediate obedience class. At The Bark Club we offer intermediate training classes for you and your pup to take the next step.  
<https://www.barkclubco.com/barkclubtraining>

**Advanced Training:** Once your dog has mastered their intermediate skills your dog is ready for the highest level of obedience training. Advanced dog training focuses on perfecting your dog's skills and ensuring they will follow your commands under any

circumstance. Our advanced training classes prepare your pup for the AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test. Advanced training should create long lasting trust between you and your pup and ensure you'll be a good neighbor to everyone around you. Advanced training also gives you the foundation to pursue other training activities such as sport, agility, competitive obedience and more.

- By this stage in your training journey, you should have a clear understanding how to communicate with your dog. By now you have put many hours into your training journey and invested in the bond you share with your dog.
- This stage of training helps your dog be well mannered in any situation. It will help build on the skills necessary to handle themselves with grace in a crowd or be welcomed at the groomer or vet.
- The CGC Certification is often a prerequisite for your pup to pursue many therapy dog certifications.
- Teaching your dog basic commands when he is young, and reinforcing his intermediate training makes advanced training much easier. Advanced training requires your dog to perform basic commands that you have built on throughout your training journey and help your dog face real-life circumstances more confidently and effectively.

**Remember:** Training builds confidence, provides mental stimulation and strengthens the human-animal bond.

- Enroll in an advanced obedience class. At The Bark Club we offer We offer advanced training classes to prepare your pup for the CGC test. We also offer the test at our location following the completion of the class. (The class is not required to take the CGC test however it will ensure your pup is ready for that step in their training journey. <https://www.barkclubco.com/barkclubtraining>