Small steps, big wins.

Training a puppy isn't about getting it perfect. It's about little moments of practice, lots of rewards and plenty of patience (from both of you).



1 Start from day one

Your puppy is learning from the moment they come home, so start gently straight away. Their name, a sit and coming to you are brilliant first lessons.

2 Keep it short and sweet

Puppies have tiny attention spans. Aim for a few 3 to 5 minute sessions a day and finish while they're still keen.

3 Reward the good stuff

When they get it right, reward within a second or two with a small tasty treat, a fuss or a game. Behaviour that gets rewarded gets repeated.

4 Skip the telling off

Shouting or punishment can make puppies worried and slower to learn. If they get it wrong, calmly show them what to do instead.

5 Same words, same rules

Agree on one word for each cue (like "sit" or "down") and the same house rules, so the whole family is saying the same thing.

6 Toilet training, little and often

Pop them out when they wake, after meals and play, and as often as every 15 to 30 minutes at first (a phone alarm helps). Praise them the moment they go. Accidents happen, so clean up with an enzyme cleaner and say nothing.

7 Say hello to the world

The first few months are when puppies learn what's normal. Gently introduce new people, sounds, surfaces and calm, vaccinated dogs. Before their jabs are done, carry them out to see the sights.

8 Rest is part of training

Puppies need around 18 to 20 hours of sleep a day. A tired puppy struggles to learn (and gets bitey), so build in plenty of naps.

Puppy classes are brilliant

Look for a small, friendly class with a trainer who uses kind, reward-based methods. Your vet can tell you when your puppy is ready to join one.

This guide is general advice for new puppy owners. Every puppy is different, so if you're ever worried, your vet is the best person to ask.