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AKC S.T.A.R.
PUPPY PROGRAM

AKC S.T.A.R Puppy Program Week #1 Homework

Clicker Work: 1 Click = 1 Treat

The clicker is a training tool to help your puppy offer a correct behavior for a reward. Teach your puppy the click equals a reward by clicking *once* and giving *one* treat. Remember, no rapid-fire clicking and don't give multiple treats for one click. **1 Click = 1 Treat!** Practice inside every room of your home as well as outside. Several quick sessions a day are best.

Crate Training Practice: The crate is great!

Your puppy needs to learn to crate quietly. Make sure your puppy is in a size-appropriate crate. For housetraining purposes, your puppy's crate should only be big enough for him to stand up, turn around, and lie down; anything larger can lead to soiling inside of the crate. To teach your puppy to be comfortable in his crate, feed him every meal in his crate. Stuff a KONG or other chew toy to keep your puppy busy in his crate. Crate your puppy frequently while you are home; your puppy needs to understand he cannot be with you at all times. Exercise your puppy and then allow him to nap in his crate. For your puppy's safety and for housetraining success, he should always be crated when unsupervised.

Housetraining Basics:

- Always take your puppy out to potty on-leash, even if you have a fenced-in yard.
- Take your puppy out to the same spot in the yard to start; because this area will smell familiar, your puppy is more likely to potty quickly.
- Don't make potty time into playtime; stand quietly and ignore your puppy until after he has gone potty.
- After your puppy goes potty, praise him lavishly. If your puppy doesn't potty in a timely fashion, take him back inside and put him in his crate. Let him stay crated until you can take him back outside again; don't allow your puppy to be loose in the house or he will potty inside instead.
- Teach your puppy to potty in your yard quickly, this will make potty breaks much easier on a rainy or snowy day.
- Teach your puppy to potty with a command such as 'go potty' or 'hurry up.'
- Once your puppy understands the verbal command and will consistently potty for you on-leash, you can start letting him potty off-leash (if you have a securely fenced-in yard).
- While out for a walk or in a new place, praise your puppy for going potty outside.
- If your puppy has an accident inside, chalk it up to a lack of supervision on your part. Don't punish your puppy.

Exercise: Too little isn't enough, too much is worse!

Your puppy needs proper exercise and stimulation to thrive. It's important to make sure your puppy gets enough exercise as well as enough quiet time in his crate to nap. **Don't** over-exercise your puppy. **Don't** allow your puppy to be by your side constantly; your puppy needs to learn how to be crated comfortably alone. An over-tired and over-stimulated puppy is difficult to train! Your puppy should have several short exercise sessions and then crated nap time.

Please track your puppy's daily exercise and nap schedule this week and bring to class next week for discussion.

What you will need to bring to class each week:

1. Your puppy! Your puppy should be nice and hungry, so don't feed him dinner before class. Please do your best to potty your puppy outside before class to avoid indoor accidents.
2. A regular buckle collar and a 4 – 6' leash. This collar will need to have an I.D. tag with your name and contact information on it. Your instructor will check your puppy's collar to ensure proper fit at the beginning of class. Your puppy may also wear a harness. Prong collars, choke chains, and retractable leashes are not allowed.
3. A variety of treats (something more enticing than your puppy's regular kibble) such as pieces of cheese, chicken, beef, training treats, etc. Treats should be cut into pieces no larger than a pea and in a secure bag or container.
4. Your clicker – remember to teach your puppy to associate the clicker with a treat this week. 1 click = 1 treat.
5. Potty bags in case your puppy has an accident. Please be courteous and clean up after your puppy outside.
6. Bring these things for next week only: Your puppy's daily exercise and nap schedule, your signed Responsible Dog Owner's Pledge paper, the grooming tools you have for your puppy, and your puppy's favorite toy.



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AKC S.T.A.R Puppy Program Week #2 Homework

Your instructor will check the fit of your puppy's collar. Your puppy should have an I.D. tag attached to his collar!

Puppy Playtime:

Puppies are active players; mouthing, mounting, rolling around, and wrestling is perfectly normal play. If you choose to allow your puppy to have playtime outside of class, make sure your puppy is well-matched with his playmate. Your puppy shouldn't appear scared (his tail tucked, active defensively, trying to get away, etc.) during play. This is an important time for his socialization – make sure you choose his playmates carefully to avoid bad experiences that will stay with him for his lifetime. We want your puppy to be excited and happy to see other dogs, not fearful.

Training Commands for the week: (Remember, use the HAND SIGNALS only this week – NO verbal commands yet!)

- **SIT: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy sit politely beside you.**
Hold one treat under your thumb with your palm facing up. Slowly lure your hand over your puppy's nose and up back over his head. Keep your hand low to prevent jumping. As his head rocks back, his behind should go into a sit. Immediately click & treat (now called C & T) when your puppy sits.
- **STAND: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy standing still.**
With one treat, lure your puppy into a sit (as explained above). When he sits, do NOT C & T; instead quickly place your palm at his nose, slowly luring him from a sit into a stand. C & T! Your hand should be flat at the puppy's nose - and keep it stationary. We don't want him walking, but simply standing up in place.
- **DOWN: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy lying down beside you.**
Ask your puppy to sit but do not C & T. With a treat in your hand and your palm facing down, slowly lure his head down toward the floor by bringing your treat from his nose to his toes. When he is lying down, C & T! Remember, you don't have to see the complete behavior all at once - C & T any movement toward a down!
- **ATTENTION: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy's attention on you.**
Stand up straight. Touch a treat to your puppy's nose and then move the treat between your eyes. When he looks at the treat, C & T! Slowly increase the amount of time your puppy is looking up at the treat by talking quietly to him. This will help keep your puppy's focus on you and tell him he's doing the right thing! This week at home, work on getting 5 seconds of solid eye contact.
- **DROP IT: The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to drop an object on command.**
Offer your puppy a toy and once he puts his mouth on it offer him a treat instead. When he drops the toy, click and give him the treat. At this stage of training, always offer your dog a trade instead of just grabbing something from his mouth. Practice this exercise with two toys (trade one toy for the other) and two chew toys / bones.

Grooming / Gentle Handling Basics:

- Your puppy needs to be handled daily – **no exceptions!** Your puppy must get used to having his collar touched. Your puppy also needs to learn to accept a gentle collar grab and be comfortable under gentle restraint.
- Don't wait until your puppy is 'older' to start grooming or handling exercises. If your puppy is a breed that will need frequent professional grooming, he should have his first professional appointment before 4 months of age in order to have him acclimated to the grooming process. Short, frequent grooming sessions are best.
- Wipe your puppy's eyes and clean his ears frequently. Brush your puppy daily and make grooming a routine.
- If your puppy fusses or pulls away, do not allow it. Only stop the exercise when he is calm and not resisting. Remember, you are not hurting your puppy, you are teaching him to quietly accept being handled and groomed.
- If you don't feel you can trim your puppy's nails without cutting into the quick (and making him bleed), have a professional show you how to correctly trim his nails. Your puppy will need his nails trimmed very frequently. If your puppy's nails are touching the floor when he is standing, they are too long.

Exercise Plan: Your instructor will review your puppy's daily exercise and nap schedule. Try to follow your instructor's recommendations this week and see if it helps improve your puppy's behavior.



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AKC S.T.A.R Puppy Program Week #3 Homework

Puppy Playtime / Socialization:

Continue to socialize your puppy with other vaccinated and temperament tested puppies and dogs. Your puppy should go somewhere new (off of your property) each day and meet as many different people as possible. Make sure your puppy is getting used to strange noises (traffic, sirens, a noisy playground, etc.) Practice your obedience commands in each new place you take your puppy. Remember, your puppy will be more distracted in new places. This is normal!

Training Commands for the week: (Remember, use the HAND SIGNALS only this week – NO verbal commands yet!)

- **SIT: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy sit politely beside you.**
- **STAND: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy standing still.**
- **STAND FOR EXAM: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy tolerate an exam.**
Your puppy needs to be comfortable being examined by a groomer, the vet, or by you & your family. For this exercise, give him the hand signal for "Stand." Have a really great treat in your hand and allow your puppy to nibble on it. While he's focusing on the treat, take your free hand and run it down your his back. Lift each leg, touch his ears, face, stomach, tail, etc. Keep your hands very slow and calm - it will make him feel more secure.
- **DOWN: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy lying down beside you.**
- **ATTENTION: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy's attention on you.**
Hold the treat at your nose like you've been practicing. Now we want to teach your puppy he gets the C & T when he looks in your eyes, not at the treat! Hold the treat 3 inches away from your face. Your puppy will look at the treat. Allow him to figure it out on his own! Don't call or talk to him, have patience and when he looks in your eyes, C & T! Next, hold the treat at arm's length away from your face, C & T when he looks in your eyes.
- **DROP IT: The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to drop an object on command.**
- **OFF: The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to respect your space.**
Hold a fist full of treats at your puppy's nose and wait. Keep your fist still! It is normal for him to paw, lick, and chew on your hand. The second your puppy stops nosing your hand and pulls away, C & T! If during this exercise he nibbles your hand too hard, tell him "OUCH!" Only C & T when your puppy is not touching your hand.
- **RECALL: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy come when called.**
Practice this exercise ON-LEASH only to begin. Wave a treat in front of your puppy's nose while saying his name and "COME" in an excited voice. C & T on the FIRST step he takes toward you. Your puppy should learn quickly that this is a fun game; act excited and use praise every time you practice recall! NEVER call your puppy to do something he doesn't enjoy (such as nail trimming, going into his crate, etc.)
- **WAIT: The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to wait for a command.**
We'll start by teaching your puppy to wait for food from your hand. Take his collar with your left hand and hold a flat palmed right hand with treat & clicker about a foot away. When he stops pulling for the treat, C & T! Work with the "Wait" command with his food bowl and toys. Don't allow your puppy to grab from your hand.
- **POLITE LEASH WALKING: The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy walking politely beside you on-leash.**
Hold your leash & clicker in your right hand and a treat in your left hand. Stand directly in front of your puppy and place the treat at his nose. Move backward 4 - 5 steps and encourage your puppy to follow by keeping the treat low and in front of his nose to prevent jumping. When he has followed you for 4 - 5 steps, C & T! Slowly increase to about 15 steps. Keep this exercise short, exciting, & fun! Practice in every room of your home and outside. Once your puppy is following you consistently, add the pivot. Show your puppy the treat (as explained above) and after taking 4 - 5 steps backward, turn to your right so your puppy is now on your left side. Hold your hand close to your left thigh and keep your puppy focused on the food. When he is beside your left leg, C & T!

Peaceful Parting: Your puppy needs to be comfortable being under control by another person. There will be times you will need to leave your puppy in someone else's care (for a grooming appointment, the vet's office, daycare, etc.) You want your puppy to be calm and confident during these times, not fearful or in distress. Have someone hold your puppy while you calmly back away. Only return to your puppy when he is calm and relaxed. Practice frequently.



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AKC S.T.A.R Puppy Program Week #4 Homework

Your instructor will check the fit of your puppy's collar – your puppy is growing fast and it's important he has a well-fitting collar. Your puppy should have an I.D. tag attached to his collar at all times when outside. If your puppy isn't already microchipped, have it done at spay / neuter time.

Puppy Playtime / Socialization:

Practice calling your puppy out of play like we do in class. Remember - only allow your puppy off-leash in a safe area. Your puppy should continue to go to new places and meet as many new people as possible.

Training Commands for the week: Add the verbal command with the hand command. Say the command only once!

- **SIT:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy sit politely beside you.
- **STAND:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy standing still.
- **STAND FOR EXAM:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy tolerate an exam.
- **DOWN:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy lying down beside you.
- **ATTENTION:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy's attention on you.
- **DROP IT:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to drop an object on command.
- **OFF:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to respect your space.
To remind your puppy that jumping isn't allowed, tell him "Off" and turn your back on him if he jumps on you. Do not turn around until he is no longer touching you. Do not step on your puppy's toes, push him off, or touch him physically – doing these things will give him attention and reward his jumping. Only by ignoring him and giving him no attention for jumping up will he learn that it is not acceptable. If your puppy is jumping up on something else (a counter, table, etc.) tell him "Off" and immediately ask him to sit. If he attempts to jump up again, give him a time-out in his crate.
- **POLITE MEETING:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to offer a "Sit" instead of jumping up.
Make sure you have a treat in your hand when a person approaches. Ask your puppy to sit – he must stay sitting in order to be patted. Do NOT allow anyone to un-train your puppy by patting him if he's jumping! If your puppy jumps up, give him the "Off" command and immediately ask him to sit again. Only C & T once he's sitting.
- **RECALL:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy come when called.
- **WAIT:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to wait for a command.
- **POLITE LEASH WALKING:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy walking politely beside you on-leash.
- **LEAVE IT:** This is an exercise to keep your puppy safe from forbidden items.
Your puppy will never get an item that you deem as a "leave-it" item! Place an item such as a tissue, paper towel, or other tempting forbidden object under your shoe. (No open toed shoes for this exercise!) Wait for your puppy to ignore it and then C & T! Toss the treat a short distance from your foot to give yourself time to pick it up. Once your puppy has stopped trying to get the item under your shoe, show him your "leave it" item. Tell your puppy to "Leave it" and place the item on the ground, several inches from your foot. If he ignores the item, C & T! If your puppy does attempt to get the item, quickly cover it with your foot and start over.
- **UH - OH:** This negative marker simply tells your puppy he's not earning a C & T.
Your puppy is not a robot and will not always follow every command you give. If you ask for a command and he doesn't obey, tell him "Uh - oh!" and turn your back on him, ignoring him for a few seconds. Then try the original command again. Don't give up – work with your puppy until he obeys your original command.

Other things to practice this week:

Peaceful Parting: Practice getting at least 10 steps away from your puppy while someone else holds / restrains him.

Grooming: Your puppy should allow you to brush his entire body, pick up his feet, clean his ears, and wipe his eyes.

Handling: Your puppy should remain calm while he is held, picked up, gently restrained, and while his collar is handled.

Pass the Puppy: Your puppy should remain calm while being handed to / passed off to someone else and patted.

Massage: Your puppy should remain calm while you rub and touch his entire body.



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AKC S.T.A.R Puppy Program Week #5 Homework

Training Commands for the week: Add the verbal command with the hand command. Say the command only once!

- **SIT:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy sit politely beside you.
- **STAND:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy standing still.
- **STAND FOR EXAM:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy tolerate an exam.
- **DOWN:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy lying down beside you.
- **ATTENTION:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy's attention on you.
- **DROP IT:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to drop an object on command.
- **OFF:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to respect your space.
- **POLITE MEETING:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to offer a "Sit" instead of jumping up.
- **RECALL:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy come when called.
- **WAIT:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to wait for a command.
- **POLITE LEASH WALKING:** The goal of this exercise is to have your puppy walking politely beside you on-leash.
- **LEAVE IT:** This is an exercise to keep your puppy safe from forbidden items.
- **STAY:** The goal of this exercise is to teach your puppy to stay in place.

We will teach your puppy to "Stay there and don't move until I release you!" To work on stay, remove all food from your hand. Ask your puppy to sit. Once he sits, instead of a C & T, pause and quietly stand in place for a few seconds. If your dog holds the sit, C & T! Practice the same exercise in the Stand position and the Down position.

- **UH - OH:** This negative marker simply tells your puppy he's not earning a C & T.

It's time to wean your puppy from the Clicker and rely more on verbal praise!

When teaching a new behavior we use **CONTINUOUS REINFORCEMENT**. Each time your puppy offers a behavior he receives a C & T. This type of reinforcement is ideal for the early stages of training because it results in quicker and more consistent learning. Every time you teach your puppy a new behavior continuous reinforcement should be used. Once your puppy is familiar with the behavior, he is ready for **VARIABLE REINFORCEMENT**. Now, each time your puppy performs a behavior, he may receive a C & T or a release word. A release word is a marker to tell your puppy he offered the correct behavior! This release word will take the place of the C & T; you will give your release word and praise!

- **When to use CONTINUOUS REINFORCEMENT (CLICK AND TREAT):** If your puppy is still uncertain about a behavior, in a new place, around new people, or other distractions. Use Continuous Reinforcement when teaching any new behavior.
- **When to use VARIABLE REINFORCEMENT (RELEASE WORD):** When your puppy is consistent in a behavior in every setting (home, outside, and with distractions) and if your puppy seems to be bored with a behavior.

Either C & T or use your release word - NOT BOTH! Be unpredictable - don't follow any set pattern. Don't choose a release word that you say regularly in order to avoid confusing your puppy. Everyone should use the same release word.

Other things to practice this week:

Reactions to Distraction: Your puppy will need to be confident and calm if something startles him. Practice adding small distractions (a door slam, TV suddenly turning on, etc.) during training sessions. C & T calm behavior.

Peaceful Parting: Practice getting at least 10 steps away from your puppy while someone else holds / restrains him.

Grooming: Your puppy should allow you to brush his entire body, pick up his feet, clean his ears, and wipe his eyes.

Handling: Your puppy should remain calm while he is held, picked up, gently restrained, and while his collar is handled.

Pass the Puppy: Your puppy should remain calm while being handed to / passed off to someone else and patted.

Massage: Your puppy should remain calm while you rub and touch his entire body.

It's time to take the AKC S.T.A.R Test!

Next week we will give you and your puppy the test! Please make sure your puppy has his collar and I.D. tag on for the test. Practice everything we've gone over in class in order to prepare to successfully have an AKC S.T.A.R. puppy!