

## **The Golden Rules**

### **Training Tips provided by Lorie Jolly**

**1. You get what you ask for.** The puppies repeat actions that bring them rewards, whether you intend for them to or not. Rewards can be food treats, or petting, or simply attention. Even punishment can be a reward, if what the puppy wanted was your attention. If puppy barks, and you respond with the attention he's looking for, whether positive response or negative, he's gotten a reward for behavior that you might not like! Distraction is the best method to cure an undesirable habit. Substitute toys and chew sticks for expensive clothes or dangerous household items. And this puppy is a **retriever** - if he/she brings you your diamond necklace or a dirty sweat sock, show your appreciation and thanks - but substitute a chew toy!

**2. Mean what you say.** Be consistent. Be fair. And give one command. Mom: It's time to go to bed. Kid: (no response) Mom: It's time to go to bed. Kid: OK, in a minute. Mom: I told you, it's time to go to bed! Kid: yeah, yeah, I heard you (but not going to bed). What the dog hears is "blah,blah,blah..."

**3. Say what you mean.** Dogs will take their commands literally. If you say DOWN, do you mean "get off me" or "get off the chair" or "lie down on the floor" ? If you say STAY, do you remember to release your puppy?

**4. Train in the present.** Your puppy can only assume any punishment or reward is for his/her behavior at this time. If there is a "potty" accident in the house, and you find it sometime after it happened, you are not entitled to punish your puppy for this one - it's too late! And the "accident" is not the puppy's - it's your fault for not noticing your puppy's behavior (I'm sure they have developed some kind of body language to let you know what's imminent!).

**5. Punish yourself, not your puppy.** Harsh or repeated punishment doesn't work. If punishment doesn't work the first time, why would it work the second, third, or fourth time? Don't discipline your puppy (or adult dog) after he comes to you. That's the fastest way to turn COME into STAY AWAY or CATCH ME. Don't call your dog to you for something he doesn't like (eye drops, bath, crating) - go and get him instead. "If you're too busy or too lazy to go get him, give him lots of hugs and kisses when he comes on his own and then, after a minute or two, do your dirty work." Don't train when you're in a bad mood. If puppy decides to nibble on a no-no, remember this: He does not know better! Teach DROP or GIVE or LEAVE IT. "If he refuses to release his prize, grab his collar or collar tab, give him a gentel shake and a verbal NO and take the toy. If this refusal happens frequently, examine your relationship with your puppy. He's on his way to mutiny, and you need to re-establish your position as his leader with less cuddel stuff and more obedience."- Nona Kilgore Bauer. Notice what forbidden objects your puppy likes and spritz them with Bitter Apple or Tabasco Sauce. If he chews the no-no anyway, it's too late - you've already lost this round. Go to the puppy (don't call him), say DROP or LEAVE IT (use one), praise for releasing it, offer approved substitute.

**6. Crate when you can't watch.** "Despite rawhides, Nylabones, hard bones, carrots, wooly toys and squeaky toys, a puppy will still dismantle your woodwork or cabinet corners if he's left alone too long. Crating is your *guaranteed* ounce of prevention." - NKB

7-12 weeks: Bonding, Bonding, Bonding!

12-16 weeks: Teaching, Teaching, Teaching!

Is your house puppy-proofed? Electrical cords? Houseplants? Cleaning supplies? Antifreeze (windshield washer fluid is, too)?

Feeding: Some dogs will indicate when they have had enough and will not overeat. Other will not. Keep puppy in good weight but not overweight - bones and joints are developing. Snacks: watch it! "People food" can push up the calories. Marrow bones and carrots can satisfy that chewing need. At three months, you can probably eliminate lunch, dividing total food into two meals a day - certainly by 6 months. If your dog is getting training treats, reduce meal rations accordingly.

Is your puppy's collar getting too tight? Adjust it as that neck gets bigger, but only loose enough to get 1-2 fingers under it -- you don't want that little fur-face to slip out of it.

Did you send your registration in to AKC? Did you register that microchip?

Have you finished the series of puppy shots? Are you and your puppy enrolled in Puppy Obedience Class?

Home-schooling and Puppy Classes: Puppy classes are casual and fun and designed to allow the puppies to interact with other pups (BIG ones and itty-bitty ones) and with other people - as well as learn. The instructor's job is to teach you the exercise or behavior, and your job is to teach your puppy. After all, the teacher is with you and your puppy about an hour a week, you have the other 167 hours of that week with your puppy. The class teaches your puppy how to learn, and shows you how to teach. "If you want a well-behaved dog, you have to think like one and make sure that you're always one dog thought ahead of him!" Teach your puppy every day so you won't look like a jerk when you go to class.

**Age 3-6 months: Pre-adolescent Period. The Terrible Twos of Puppyhood.** This period is complicated (or enhanced, depending on how well you handle it!) by his gradual increase of independence and confidence. Your puppy will venture more from your side, following his nose and curiosity. If you are planning to spay/neuter your puppy, check with your vet. Through first 12 weeks, puppy sticks close to his leader (you) and his den (your house), but now the big, scary world isn't so scary - off he goes!

**Puppy FRAPS** (Frenetic Random Activity Period) - at about 4 - 5 months, "Puppy crazies" or "Zooms" - "a wild time when for no apparent reason he'll run like a demon possessed, through the house and over the furniture, spinning in circles, zooming back and forth across the yard for 5-10 minutes once or twice a day! He may even growl at imaginary beasts that exist only in his fuzzy madpup head."

It may last 2-3 months - he'll outgrow it along with his puppy teeth - maybe. Some of my kids still love to do huge zooms around the woods - Belle, Remy, Dandi especially! During this "pain-in-the-ankle" stage, don't just dump the kid out in the yard or stick him in the kennel/crate. Spend quality time with him learning proper manners - that's how he'll get to be a good citizen.

**Age 6-9 months - maybe to 2 years! The Terrible Teens of Puppyhood.** Often just after that cute puppy stage - discovering independence, confidence, and maybe arrogance. Challenges your authority. Becomes possessive. "Forgets" commands. Males mark their territory. Females just stare at you and then squat and wet the rug. This can go on until 2 years or so! Dog needs stimulation, companionship and activity. Avoid off-leash work or play in open or unsecured areas - occasional lapses in obedience could lead to disaster. Let's hope your teen-dog knows you're the boss *before* his hormones go into overdrive. Don't encourage aggressive play (no tug of war!), no free run of the house when you're not home (crate!).

**12 - 18 months** - Emotional maturity! - or not, if your puppy is one of those Goofy Golden retrievers like my "Rug" - he's still a puppy at 7-1/2 years! If your dog has a tendency toward dominance, you should demand *rigid* obedience compliance - *always* . Most problem behaviors are normal canine behavior; it's *your* problem, not the dog's. But you can reshape that behavior to acceptable human standards. Start now, when puppy is very (*very*) young .. It's easier to not work with bad habits.

And sometime along the way (now?), your adorable cute furry darling puppy is going to "fall apart" - his legs are too long, his nose sticks out, his tail drags on the floor - he's just growing! And all those parts are growing at different speeds. He/She will look silly for a few weeks, but then everything gets back in proportion - and that wonderful puppy will be back again, although most Golden retrievers will not reach full development until 2 or 3 years.