

TRAINING A DALMATIAN PUPPY

You are now the owner of a Dalmatian puppy, whether you are new to the breed or have owned one previously if you will want to live in harmony with your pet. You will need to teach him/her to know their place in your household and that it is you who are top dog, pack leader, along with your partner and children and he comes at the bottom of the pack. At 8 weeks old he is a bundle of fun but within weeks he will be growing very fast and could become a hooligan before you know it. Your dog is going to become very boisterous, energetic and full on. But you know this already having done your research before deciding a Dalmatian is the dog for you. So how are you going to channel all this energy for the next 10 years and more.

There are so many activities for you and your dog to keep him happy and stimulated, these include Agility, Flyball, Canicross, Rally, Dalimiles and even training him to become a Carriage Dog. Your dog will need to be at least 12 months to start any light training for these activities, because he will need time to develop his bones and muscles which can take up to 18 months, to cope with the stresses and strains involved with them. You will though need your dog to have a degree of obedience to participate in any of them and 8 weeks is the best time to start.

Training your puppy should start after he has had a couple of days to settle in. A sit, down and stand are easy to start with by holding a high value treat (preferable soft and quick and easy to eat NOT the kibble that he has for his meals) over his nose. Moving your hand back for the sit, then down to the floor to make him go down and then move the treat away and up to put him back into a stand. Give plenty of praise as he achieves what you want and treat at the same time for each position.

Commands can be added later after he has learnt to follow the hand instruction. Your puppy will want to spend time sleeping after a bout of activity so when he goes to his bed treat him and give the command bed. He'll soon learn where you want him when a time comes that you want to send him to bed. When feeding, don't let him dive in, just hold his collar for a few seconds and command wait, he'll soon learn wait without being held. It is also a good idea to take his food bowl away whilst he is eating and giving it straight back, this will teach him not to be possessive or aggressive over food.

Some veterinary practices hold puppy parties suitable for puppies waiting for their final vaccination. This can be a good way to keep your puppy socialised with other dogs whilst waiting to start a proper training class, and information on this can be found on the attached documents. With any of these activities you do not have to end up competing with your dog but should find that the training classes alone are sufficient to keep your dog active and stimulated and also socialised with other dogs.

Finally, a bored Dalmatian who has nothing to occupy his time and exercise his brain can easily become a destructive uncontrollable dog.