



Teaching Your Puppy to Tolerate Handling

Throughout your puppy's life, s/he will need to be handled by you and other family members, veterinary staff, groomers, and more. You can help your puppy learn to tolerate, or even better to enjoy, that handling.

Think about all the things you will do to or for your puppy that could possibly be frightening or uncomfortable:

- Trim nails
- Brush fur
- Brush teeth
- Administer ear or eye medication
- Wipe off paws
- Put on a _____ (harness/leash/coat/boots)
- Hold their collar

You can even help your puppy tolerate “scary” behavior from children or strangers:

- Reach over their head
- Tug on their tail
- Lean over them

The absolute best way to teach your puppy to enjoy handling is to pair each of these items with your puppy's favorite foods. For example, as your puppy eats a bite of food, look in his/her ear. When the food is gone, release the ear; repeat on the other side.

Maximize Your Training Efforts:

1. Use food that your puppy LOVES when training.
2. Lead with the food, so that your puppy is eating when you start touching them.
3. Introduce each item at a low level to start, and gradually move forward in baby steps.
4. If at any time your puppy looks nervous, return to the level at which they were completely relaxed and move forward more slowly.