

Establishing a routine

As already mentioned, dogs are creatures of habit, and it's a good idea to establish a daily routine for your Cockapoo as soon as possible. This will also simplify house-training; indeed, your first job each morning should be to put your puppy in the garden and encourage it to relieve itself. Once it has finished, call the young dog back inside and praise it when it comes with you.

The next part of your routine will probably be to feed the young Cockapoo. When the food is ready, encourage the puppy to sit, rather than running around excitedly as you are about to put the food bowl down on the floor. A healthy puppy is likely to eat its food rapidly. After it has eaten, if the weather is fine, take your puppy back out into the garden for a while, so that it can explore there under supervision. Before long, however, it is likely to want to sleep: your puppy will soon recognize its own bed and curl up there, but initially you may need to put the young dog in its bed, stroke it and talk gently to it to encourage it to settle down.



This is a good time to get your Cockapoo familiar with a crate, so that it does not resent being confined there if it is tired. Using a crate will make life safer for your puppy while it is very young: it cannot slip out of a door unnoticed,

Puppies of both sexes will urinate at first by squatting, and only when males are approaching sexual maturity will they raise their legs for this purpose (and some females will do this also on occasion).



or end up injuring itself around the home. You can also be certain that your young Cockapoo won't be in any danger when you go out.

The senses and communication

Dogs perceive the world differently from humans, and rely on a combination of their senses. Cockapoos have a keen sense of vision and acute hearing, and their relatively broad nostrils give them a good sense of smell, as well. They can see in colour, although not as well as we can, but their vision is superior to ours at night, since they are able to see under conditions which would appear as total darkness to our eyes.

A Cockapoo has a reflective layer on the retina at the back of each eye, known as the tapetum lucidum, which helps to reflect available light and make images clearer, especially at night. Cockapoos also possess binocular vision, like other dogs. Because they receive overlapping images from both eyes, they can pinpoint the position of objects in front of them with great accuracy. This means, for example, that they can focus on, and pick up, a moving ball with ease.

A young Cockapoo puppy asleep in its pen. A young dog will soon feel secure in these surroundings, retreating here for a snooze when it is tired.

Their hearing is also significantly better than ours. They can detect sounds at a much higher frequency – which will be evident if you use a special dog whistle. The sound from the whistle will be inaudible to your ears, but can be heard by your dog even if it is some distance away and has disappeared from sight in undergrowth. While we can detect sounds up to 20,000Hz, Cockapoo's may be able to hear frequencies of up to 100,000Hz, which falls within the range of ultrasound. Nevertheless, just as our hearing range declines with age, so does that of the Cockapoo. In some cases, dogs may actually become deaf in old age, and their eyesight can fail, too, with whitish cataracts developing in their eyes.

A Cockapoo's olfactory ability will vary through its life. Young puppies have a very restricted sense of smell at first, but adult dogs can develop an acute sense of smell, some 100 times better than our own. If you look closely at the nostrils of the Cockapoo you will see that these are effectively mobile on their outer edges, which enables them to be flared. As a consequence, the dog can increase the volume of air that it inhales, triggering specialist scent detector cells lining the nasal cavity.

Dogs rely much more heavily on non-verbal communication to express their moods than many people think. Barking is the most obvious form of communication, the meaning varying according to tone. A deeper, determined bark is more indicative of aggressive intent than a frequent, short bark, which can mean either frustration or excitement. When you are training your Cockapoo, it is important to be aware of the signs of body language. An excited and enthusiastic dog will raise its tail and lift the position of the ears, giving its face an alert expression. If nervous or scolded, however, a Cockapoo will lower its tail and hold the ears back against the body in an attempt to look smaller and therefore less threatening.

The learning process

The Cockapoo's ancestors have instincts honed over generations, particularly as far as hunting and retrieving are concerned, and are easily trained. Cockapoo's are also very responsive to training. A puppy, in particular, is likely to make a good pupil, because at this relatively young age it will be more receptive than an older dog as it learns about the world. There are certain things to bear in mind when training a Cockapoo, however – not least of which is the fact that these dogs have a capacity for independent thought! This, again, is probably a reflection of their ancestry, since they frequently needed to act spontaneously when working.

Some puppies will learn more rapidly than others, and may well master



Smell is a very important sense for all dogs, and scent provides them with a great deal of information about their environment – both inside the home and outside – which will not be apparent to us.



some commands more readily. This is quite normal, although there are certain steps to take which will help the training process. To begin with, choose a locality where your puppy can concentrate without any distractions. Keep training sessions short; puppies learn by repetition, and so repeating the same thing frequently in several sessions every day will be much more effective than having a marathon session once a week, as a young puppy will soon lose interest under these circumstances. Even if your puppy does not always respond as required, be patient. Positive reinforcement is by far the most effective way of teaching a puppy: by giving encouragement, your puppy will fairly soon learn what is expected.

House-training

Follow the feeding guide given to you by the puppy's breeder, spacing the requisite number of meals throughout the day. Always give your puppy an opportunity to go out into the garden before and after a meal. It will soon learn what is required, although some puppies do appear to pick things up quicker than others. Although accidents invariably happen around the home, puppies are generally clean by nature. Initially, however, they will not indicate when they need to go out, but placing your pet outside regularly throughout the day should mean there will be few, if any, accidents. You can get training devices, including puppy pads, which can be useful for when the puppy is in the crate, but in general the best and quickest way to house-train a puppy is to anticipate when it needs to go outside, and thereby pre-empt any accidents around the home. Should these happen, however, it is very important to clean up thoroughly afterwards with an appropriate cleaning agent, otherwise a puppy will be drawn back to use the same spot again by the lingering scent, even though this may actually be undetectable to our noses.

Clearly, disinfecting the area is important, but such products must be used carefully, not least because they may cause permanent damage to carpets. In addition, some will actually reinforce the scent rather than eliminate it – especially pine-based disinfectants. It is therefore best to buy one of the products specially developed for use in cleaning up after puppies. You can also buy a product that attracts the dog to an area outdoors that you have specifically chosen for it to use. However, the potency of such products will be rapidly diluted by rain, and the outside area will need to be treated again to draw your puppy's attention to it.

Obedience training

Always use your puppy's name when calling it, and try to ensure that the young

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Puppy pads can help with house-training, encouraging the puppy to relieve itself in a particular locality, but the best solution is to start training your pet to go outside for this purpose as soon as possible.



Treats can be offered as rewards as part of the training process, but always use them very sparingly, and opt for healthy treats as far as possible.