

THIS IS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE WHO ADOPTED A PUPPY FROM MANY TEARS. SHE HAS WRITTEN THIS TO HELP ANYONE CONSIDERING ADOPTING A PUPPY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS ENTAILS TO ENSURE THE PUPPY GROWS INTO A WELL SOCIALIST, LOVING AND OBEDIENT ADULT DOG

Puppies, take up lots and lots of time and hard work. Please just take a few moments to read this and make sure that if you take on one of these irresistible bundles on mischief you will give them the time that they need and deserve. I would like to introduce you to my puppy Pixie, she is a border collie puppy and is now 5 1/2 months old. This is a little diary of what I have done with my puppy and how much time that I have spent on her on a daily basis.

From day one when I collected Pixie I wanted her training to be consistent and reward based as I wanted my new member of my family to be well behaved and a joy to live with. I live in a lovely location, with fields adjoining my house. My house is a semi and I live next to a young child a children's playground is close, so Pixie needed to be polite to children and as I have three other dogs she needed to fit in with them and be able to walk nicely and have manners with my thirteen year old poodle.

All of the above has been obtainable with a lot of hard work and kind consistent training.

Food

I would suggest that you keep your puppy on the food that it comes with for at least 2 weeks before you start changing it and then do this gradually by adding small amounts of the food you will be using to the food your puppy is currently eating.

Crate training

This has helped with toilet training, and has given Pixie a secure base. It also has eliminated the risk of Pixie from harming herself when I couldn't pay 100% attention to her. Pixie really didn't like her crate to start with; it took lots of food, a pet microwave heat pad and patience.

Clicker training

I have done this from word go. It is an amazing tool! Click treat, click treat every behaviour that I liked. I soon had Pixie offering me lots and lots of different things. It has made toilet training a breeze.

Introducing a brush

I did this with treats and a very gentle brush, this was Pixie's most hated thing so I did it every day for a very short time, with lots and lots of treats and now she is more than happy to be brushed.

Introducing a Collar & Harness

I put a collar on Pixie when she was out of her cage again with lots of treats and praise, but when she was in her cage I removed the collar for safety.

I taught Pixie to wear a harness again with a clicker and treats very early on, as I feel more comfortable with her wearing a safe harness as I took her to Sainsburys and Waitrose most days for a few minutes in my arms to get used to people and cars which is very important as I wanted Pixie to be happy with other people saying hello to her and for her to see cars etc. Collies can be very prone to car chasing which I certainly didn't want that.

Treats

Pixie loves her food. I played lots of swap games with smoked bones and raw hide bones so that she understood that I wasn't going to be a threat to her and remove her bones, she is now more than happy to swap her bones with me and has never growled. I also used to add a couple of bits of food to her bowl as she was eating so she got used to me coming close to her food bowl but instead of removing her food I gave her more this has been brilliant as she has no food aggression.

Pixie has learnt something new every day! I have spent at least one hour a day training her, all be it clicker training or playing with her, a trip to the local supermarket or a trip to the local coffee shop, so that she has had one to one time just with me and does not rely on my other dogs for confidence. I have taken her out in the car every day, even for just a short trip. She has been to Pets at Home to see the rabbits and guinea pigs and to my friends stables to meet horses. I have walked her on harness and lead down the canal so she got used to push bikes and she is lucky enough to live with a cat (not that she thinks so as Tinkerbelle is more like a tiger!!) so she has learnt very quickly not to chase cats!!!

I enrolled Pixie in a local dog training puppy class so that she could meet other puppies and learn to sit down walk nicely and recall in a busy social situation, this has been invaluable as she loves other dogs, but will come to me even when she sees them. I still walk her with really tasty titbits and always make a real fuss of her when she comes straight back to me.

From reading this it sounds like my puppy is perfect! Well in my eyes she is!! She does normal naughty puppy things, but I am so proud of her she is such a lovely happy dog to own. I wanted a puppy that was up for lots of fun but has an off switch as well. I have spent lots of time socialising her as it needs to be done from 8 weeks onwards this is such an important learning time. All puppies are cute, but by the time they reach about 5 or 6 months old they are capable of biting pulling guarding and destruction, which is when they are often returned to the rescue centre. So if you are going to give a lovely puppy a forever home then please spend lots of time training your pup, surely it is a small ask as hopefully you will have your new friend for the next 15 years.

Love Karen and Pixie Xxxxx

