

LONE STAR
RETRIEVERS
PUPPY GUIDE

Welcoming a new puppy and family member is an exciting time! They are puppies only for a short time, but this is also the most important and influential time in their life. Setting your new family member up for a lifetime of success begins as soon as they come home at 7-8 weeks old. Whether the pup will be purely a pet or a hard charging working dog (or both) we are here to provide you with the necessary tools and tips to set you up for the best possible outcome. We have raised numerous puppies for different services and believe wholeheartedly that the methods we discuss with you are the best.

Listed below are some simple DO'S and DON'T'S that we recommend following to raise a well-balanced & trainable dog.

- **DO** your research on the parents of your puppy. If you desire to have a successful hunting companion or competitive dog, the lineage of the puppy plays a huge roll.
- **DO** prioritize retrieving with your new puppy. The most important thing you can do while you have your puppy, is to build drive and a love of retrieving. We recommend small canvas puppy bumpers or paint rollers (NO STICKS OR BALLS). Short throws down a hallway (or another area where the puppy has no choice but to come back to you and they cannot run off with the item) are what we advise. Only 3-4 throws at a time to always leave the puppy wanting more! If they seem to lose interest after 3 throws, end on 2 throws. 2-3 short sessions daily. (Important: DO NOT HAVE OTHER DOGS AROUND WHILE YOU ARE RETRIEVING WITH THE PUPPY)
- **DO** socialize your new puppy. People, places and things! We recommend (once completely vaccinated) exposing your puppy to new sight and sounds as much as possible before training.
- **DO NOT** compare your puppy to other dogs. Every single puppy/dog are different and develop/train differently. Milestones will come at varying times and some training methods depend on each individual personality.
- **DO NOT** allow for other dogs to be your new puppy's "babysitter." Puppies will bond with the animal/person they spend the most time with. If your puppy spends lots of time with another dog, they will bond to that dog and are much less likely to work well for you or want to please you. Training becomes exponentially more difficult with dogs who have been "raised" by other dogs. Short play sessions with other dogs in the household are welcomed from a socialization stand point, but should always be supervised and very brief.
- **DO NOT** avoid working with your puppy because you are afraid to "mess them up." The puppy will need to form a bond with you if they are going to want to eventually work with you. Follow the tips we provide and PLEASE REACH OUT WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I bring my puppy for training?

Regardless of the program, formal training can begin as early as 6 months of age. Depending on the breed or circumstance our recommendations could vary.

Do I need to crate train my puppy?

100% yes! Crate training not only provides a solid foundation for potty training, but it ensures your new family member is content and comfortable when they are not with you. Whether you are at home or not, if your eyes cannot be on the puppy, they should be in a crate.

What if I don't have time to work with my new puppy?

If you have 5-10 minutes a day, you can follow our recommendations even at a minimum. Very short retrieving sessions and crate training are the foundation of our gun dog and competition programs. We do offer a Puppy Program beginning at 4 months of age (or when the pup is completely vaccinated) where we do all the heavy lifting of intro to retrieving, water, birds, and gunfire. You still have to do your part up to the start of the program, but we can take it from there.

Do I still need to do these things even if I don't want a competition level dog?

If you desire a solid hunting companion for years to come, yes. All of our puppies no matter their future purpose, begin life with the same tools. By following our recommendations, you are bettering the odds of receiving a much better product at the end of any of our training programs.

Is it okay to have my puppy fixed before they begin training?

Always listen to the recommendation of your veterinarian. However, in our experience dogs train better and have better overall success if they are left intact until training is completed. Hormones tend to contribute to drive and maturity, therefore, we highly recommend waiting until your puppy is older and done growing.

PRE-TRAINING CHECK LIST

Use this list to check off as many of the items as you can before your puppy goes to training.
The first 4 months of their life can decide how successful they are in the future.

- Retrieving**

- Swimming & Retrieving in water (the sooner the better and as much as possible!)**

- Crate Training**

- Socialization (people, places, things!)**

- Intro to birds (optional)**

- Intro to gun fire (optional)**

- Treat Training (teach puppy to “sit” and immediately give them a piece of their dog food. Teach their name by calling it and once they come to you, immediately give them a piece of food) (optional)**