



## **Dealing with Common Puppy/Kitten Behavior Issues**

Bringing home a new puppy or kitten is a wonderful experience, but it also comes with its share of challenges, especially when managing their behavior. Understanding and addressing these common behavior issues early on can make the transition smoother for you and your new furry friend. In this month's blog, we will explore typical puppy and kitten behaviors, their causes, and effective solutions to help you navigate this exciting journey of pet ownership.

### **Common Puppy Behavior Issues**

#### **Chewing**

Puppies have a natural inclination to chew, which serves multiple purposes such as alleviating teething discomfort, exploring their surroundings, and combating boredom. During the teething phase (typically from around 3 to 8 months old), puppies' gums can become sore, prompting them to seek relief through chewing on objects.

To manage chewing behavior, be sure to provide a variety of safe and durable chew toys specifically designed for teething puppies. Choose toys made of materials that are gentle

on their teeth and gums, such as rubber or nylon. Make sure to check the toy for any damage that can result from chewing. You want to make sure your puppy does not ingest any pieces of the toy they may have broken off.

Rotate toys regularly to keep them interesting. Supervise your puppy closely when they are out of their crate or play area to redirect any inappropriate chewing behavior. If you catch them chewing on something they shouldn't, calmly redirect their attention to an approved toy. Avoid punishing your puppy for chewing, as it can lead to fear and anxiety.

## **House Training**

Accidents are common in puppies due to their developing bladder control and the learning process involved in understanding where it is appropriate to go potty.

Crate training is highly effective for house-training puppies. Use a crate that is large enough for them to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably, but not so large that they can go potty in one corner and sleep in another. Establish a consistent bathroom schedule, taking your puppy outside to their designated potty area after waking up, after meals, and before bedtime.

Use verbal cues such as "go potty" to associate the act of elimination with the command. When your puppy goes outside, reward them immediately with treats and praise to reinforce the behavior. Accidents indoors should be cleaned with an enzymatic cleaner to remove the scent, reducing the likelihood of repeat incidents.

## **Barking**

Excessive barking in puppies can stem from several reasons, including boredom, seeking attention, or feeling anxious or threatened.

Identify the triggers that lead to excessive barking, such as doorbells, passing people or animals, or being left alone. Once you understand the trigger, you can work on desensitizing your puppy through gradual exposure and positive reinforcement.

Teach your puppy quiet commands like "quiet" or "enough" by rewarding moments of silence with treats and praise. Provide mental stimulation through interactive toys, puzzle feeders, and obedience training sessions to keep their minds engaged and reduce boredom barking. Consistency in your responses to barking behavior is key to helping your puppy understand what is expected of them.

## **Jumping on People**

Puppies often jump on people as a way of greeting and seeking attention, especially when they are excited.

Discourage jumping by teaching your puppy an alternative greeting behavior, such as sitting calmly or offering a paw. When your puppy jumps, turn away and ignore them until they have all four feet on the ground. Immediately praise and reward calm behavior, such as sitting, to reinforce the desired greeting.

Consistency is crucial—ensure all family members and visitors respond to jumping in the same manner. Avoid inadvertently reinforcing jumping by pushing or yelling at your puppy, as this can escalate excitement and reinforce the behavior.

## **Leash Pulling**

Puppies often pull on the leash out of curiosity or excitement to explore their environment.

Use proper leash training techniques to teach your puppy to walk politely on a leash. Start by introducing them to wearing a collar or harness indoors, gradually attaching a leash, and allowing them to drag it around under supervision to get used to the sensation. Use positive reinforcement, such as treats and praise, to reward loose leash walking and calm behavior. If your puppy pulls, stop walking and wait for them to relax and come back to your side before proceeding. Consider using a front-clip harness, which redirects their attention back towards you when they pull, encouraging them to walk beside you more comfortably.

## **Common Kitten Behavior Issues**

### **Scratching Furniture**

Kittens have an instinct to scratch, which serves several purposes including marking territory, stretching their muscles, and maintaining their claws.

Provide multiple scratching posts made of different materials such as cardboard or carpet to appeal to your kitten's preferences. Place scratching posts near areas where they tend to scratch furniture.

Encourage the use of scratching posts by rubbing them with catnip or playing with toys around them. Discourage furniture scratching by covering the targeted areas with double-

sided tape or aluminum foil, which cats dislike. Trim your kitten's nails regularly to reduce the potential damage from scratching.

### **Nighttime Activity**

Kittens are naturally more active during the night due to their nature, which can disrupt your sleep patterns.

Engage in interactive play sessions with your kitten during the evening to help tire them out before bedtime. Use toys that encourage chasing, pouncing, and climbing to mimic hunting behaviors and provide mental stimulation. Gradually wind down playtime to signal that it's nearing bedtime. Create a quiet and comfortable sleeping area for your kitten away from high-traffic areas and household noises. Consider using a cozy cat bed or blanket-lined box where they can feel secure and undisturbed during the night.

### **Litter Box Issues**

Issues such as accidents outside the litter box or aversion to using it can arise for various reasons. Keep the litter box clean by scooping it at least once a day and completely changing the litter weekly. Use unscented litter in a box that is large enough for your kitten to comfortably turn around. Place the litter box in a quiet and accessible location where your kitten can reach it easily and feel safe using it. Address any stress factors that may deter litter box use, such as changes in routine, new pets in the household, or noisy environments. If accidents occur, clean them thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner to eliminate odors that could attract your kitten back to the same spot.

### **Aggressive Play**

Kittens may engage in rough play, including biting and scratching, which is usually a result of excess energy or a lack of proper socialization.

Redirect aggressive behavior towards appropriate toys, such as feather wands or interactive toys that encourage chasing and pouncing. Avoid using your hands or feet as play objects to prevent reinforcing biting behavior. Provide opportunities for socialization with other well-mannered pets or gentle humans to teach appropriate play boundaries. Use calming techniques like gentle handling and soothing tones to diffuse overexcitement during playtime. If your kitten becomes too rough, calmly end the play session, and redirect their attention to a quieter activity.

### **Preventative Measures and Training Tips**

#### **Socialization**

Early and positive socialization experiences are essential for both puppies and kittens to grow into confident and well-adjusted adults.

Expose them to various people of different ages, animals of various species, and environments in a safe and controlled manner. Gradually introduce new experiences to prevent overwhelming your kitten or puppy, and always ensure positive interactions with treats, praise, and playtime.

### **Positive Reinforcement Training**

Reward-based training methods are effective in teaching desired behaviors and strengthening the bond between you and your pet.

Use high-value treats, verbal praise, and extra playtime as rewards for good behavior such as using the litter box, sitting calmly, or responding to basic commands like "sit" or "come." Consistency and patience are key to reinforcing learning and encouraging your kitten or puppy to repeat positive behaviors.

### **Creating a Routine**

Establishing a consistent daily routine helps puppies and kittens feel secure and confident in their environment.

Schedule regular feeding times, ideally two to three times a day for kittens and three to four times a day for puppies, to maintain their energy levels and digestive health. Plan play sessions throughout the day to provide mental stimulation and physical exercise. Ensure puppies and kittens have designated rest periods in a quiet area where they can relax undisturbed. Consistency in routine helps them understand expectations and reduces stress by providing a sense of predictability in their daily lives.

Should you have any questions or need additional help with training, don't hesitate to call us at **[Phone Number]**.

Welcoming a puppy or kitten into your home is a journey filled with love, joy, and sometimes, challenges. By understanding their behavior and proactively addressing common issues, you can create a harmonious environment where your new pet can thrive. Remember, patience, consistency, and a proactive approach are key to building a strong bond and fostering positive behavior.