# Training Your New Puppy © Babette de Jongh

**Never-do:**

Never call your puppy’s name as a reprimand. Their name is their NAME, not a command to stop doing something.

Never resort to yelling the puppy’s name over and over again to get their attention.

Never chase your puppy though the house when he’s misbehaving. Puppies (especially bored puppies) love to play chase.

Never give a command multiple times. Give the command once, then make sure they comply. Saying “no, stop, quit it,” over and over again only teaches them to ignore your annoying voice.

Never give a command then decide it’s too difficult to make sure they comply. Don’t ever give a command you’re not willing and able to enforce.

Never hit your dog. Never use force to make your dog comply with a command. Good behavior is based on understanding and mutual respect.

Never grab your dog by the collar and haul him up by the neck as a reprimand or deterrent to bad behavior.

Never put your dog’s nose in his poop or pee. If he peed or pooped in the house, it was your fault, not his. If you need to punish someone that way, just go ahead and do it to yourself.

**Enough with the nevers. Here are the how-tos:**

Teach your puppy to come, to heel, to comply with commands:

Please don’t neglect to do this! This is the most important training tool that most people decide is too much trouble to do. I know it ain’t much fun, but if you’ll do this, you’ll exponentially shorten the amount of time it takes to train your puppy to be the very excellent dog he deserves to become. And, it could literally save your dog’s life.

This training tool is simple, admittedly time-intensive, but worth doing because it supports all the other training you do. Keep a buckle collar—not a slip-chain—on your puppy whenever he isn’t in his crate. ([Check out the potty training download for more info on crate training](https://babettedejongh.com/articles-and-advice-downloads/).) The buckle collar should be a snug-enough fit that he can’t back out of it, but loose enough that you can slip three fingers between the collar and his neck. Check the fit daily, because puppies grow fast.

Make a slip-loop in an 8-foot-long leash by threading the leash through its handle, and attach it to your waist, belt, or belt-loop. Then clip the leash to your puppy’s buckle collar. This means that the puppy will be literally attached to you every waking minute. This means that he won’t be able to jump up on granny, chase the cat, dig through the trash, counter-surf for chocolate doughnuts or fried chicken legs, poop on the welcome mat, pee on the bath mat, chew up the expensive carpet, eat the poisonous house plant, charge through the open door and run into traffic, or otherwise get into trouble/danger/mayhem.

Wherever you go, they go. Whatever they think about doing, you know about before they’ve done it. They learn to watch you for cues on what to do and what not to do. They learn to heel, to come, and to respond immediately when you give a command.

Next-level training is to leave the leash attached to their collar but trailing loose. That way, you and they have more freedom, and they have demonstrated the ability to come when called and follow voice commands. If they think about going off on their own self-described wrong-headed errand, you can step on the leash, pull them up short, and take command of the situation.

The beauty of this method is that they are so used to the leash trailing behind them that they are surprised when you are able to stop them from misbehaving. It’s like the Hand of God descending when they thought they weren’t being watched. Then they’re always waiting for the other shoe to drop, even when they’re all alone and wondering whether the misbehavior they’re considering is worth attempting.

**Teach your puppy to take a treat without snapping:**

Hold the treat with your fingers closed around it. Let the puppy smell the treat and understand that you are holding the treat in your closed fist. Slowly uncurl your fingers, and let the puppy lick the treat from your palm. Make sure they understand that if they snap, they will hurt you. They don’t want to hurt you. If they snap, withdraw your hand, close your fingers over the treat, and try again. Once they understand that they will only get the treat when they use a soft mouth, they will take the treat so gently that you will be able to keep your fingers in their mouth as they take the treat. The command for this behavior is “Take it.”

**Teach your puppy to sit:**

Once you have taught your puppy to take a treat gently, hold the treat above their head and move it back so that they have to look up to see it. Most puppies will naturally sit at that point, in order to keep their balance. When they do, say the command “sit” and give the treat. If they don’t sit on their own, push gently at the base of their spine until they sit, then give the command and the treat.

**Teach your puppy not to jump up:**

Puppies jump up to get your attention. The best way to deal with this is to derail the behavior before it starts, by giving the “sit” command, and then giving the dog your attention—and maybe also a treat! If you are consistent with doing this every time the puppy rushes up to greet you, he will begin to automatically sit to get your attention. Some dogs really want to have their face up close to your face, so squatting down to their level when they sit is a double reward for them.

Unfortunately, a lot of puppies don’t get taught this behavior soon enough, and then jumping up becomes a bad habit. If this happens and substituting the “sit” behavior isn’t working, you will have to dismantle the bad behavior before you can teach the desired response. There are two ways to do this, and which one you use depends on the situation.

Situation One: You are present when the puppy wants to jump up on someone. With the puppy on a leash, allow him to approach the person. When he begins to lunge forward, say a firm “NO,” and give a sharp jerk back on the leash. Then let the leash go slack, give the “sit” command, and follow through with praise and reward. Repeat this process until the dog always sits to get attention or to greet a newcomer.

Situation Two: You are by yourself with the dog, and for some reason, he isn’t wearing a leash. He is too excited to sit on command, and insists on jumping up on you, which is a potentially dangerous situation. (Though the current situation may not be dangerous for you, this sort of behavior could easily hurt someone who isn’t as fit or prepared as you are, so jumping up in an aggressive manner is a potential danger.)

It’s best to use a leash and work with another person, but in this case, you’re on your own, so you’ll have to resort to negative reinforcement by bringing your knee up sharply between yourself and the dog while saying a firm “NO.” Do this while turning toward the dog, not away from them. (If you turn your back and lift your arms up, you’re basically turning yourself into a ladder for them to climb and reinforcing their bad behavior. In dog body language, it’s the same thing as rolling over in submission.)

For a big/tall puppy, lifting your knee as they leap up will knock them back, because they are already off their feet and this sudden movement disrupts their upward trajectory. Please note: You are NOT kicking the dog or assaulting him with your knee. You are blocking their own force and momentum, which directs it back toward them.

For a smaller dog, lifting your knee will be less effective in directing their energy back toward them, but it will at least insert a barrier between them and their effort to climb up your legs. In either case, however, bringing your knee up sharply as they jump up will deny them the ability to climb all over you.

The knee-up “NO” response to jumping-up is meant to derail bad behavior when there is no other option, but the goal is to have the dog learn a more appropriate behavior: to sit for attention. So, immediately after you’ve discouraged them from jumping, give the “sit” command and reward them for complying. Then put the leash back on them so you’ll have more control next time.

**Teach your puppy not to rush through a doorway ahead of you:**

First of all, he’s on a leash, yeah? So, whenever you’re going in or out the door, give the “sit” command, then walk through the door, then give the “come” command to invite the dog to follow you through the doorway.

Teach your puppy to let go of something he has in his mouth, or something he’s messing with that he needs to leave alone:

First of all, he’s on a leash, yeah? All you have to do is tug back on the leash, give the “sit” command, then say “leave it,” and take the item from his mouth. Get him to release the object by wrapping your fingers around his muzzle from above, and pinch your fingers into his gums. His lips will be trapped between your fingers and his teeth, and to keep from biting himself, he will open his mouth, so you can gently remove the object. You might also follow up by telling him “Not your toy…” then giving him an approved chew toy and saying, “This is your toy.”

**Teach your puppy not to chew on your hands:**

Puppies like to chew. Like babies, they are dealing with emerging teeth and sore gums. Chewing makes them feel better. When a puppy chews on you or on something you don’t want them to chew on, use the command “Leave it.” Take the item from their mouth by putting your hand over their muzzle and applying gentle pressure between their upper and lower jaw until they open their mouth and release whatever they’re chewing on. Say, “Not your toy.” Then give them an approved chew toy, and say, “This is your toy.”

Good chew toys for teething puppies include frozen bagels, frozen chew toys made especially for that purpose, Kong toys, or other chew toys. Don’t let them have rawhide (which can expand in their intestines and cause a life-threatening blockage). Don’t let them have rugs, socks, shoes, blankets, kids’ toys or any item meant for human use. A good rule: if it’s not made to be a puppy’s chew toy, don’t let them have it.

I hope this helps you to make sure your new puppy will be a joy to all and a nuisance to none. Labor-intensive, maybe, but a labor of love that will make sure your dog will be welcomed anywhere you are. This isn’t meant to be a substitute for traditional dog training, but I hope it’ll help you to do right by your dog and give them a step-up when they do attend puppy class.

I’d love to hear of your puppy-training experiences, successes, and challenges. If you have any questions or if you think there’s anything about puppy training that I haven’t addressed, let me know and I’ll hop right on it. Please visit the forum on my website: <https://www.BabettedeJongh.com/community.>