

Westlane Labradors Puppy Guidelines & Rules of the Road

When your puppy has had it's final set of vaccinations at around 4-6 months of age, you should enroll him or her in a Puppy Kindergarten Class. I can give you a list of Instructors in your area. Remember, whatever effort you put into raising a well behaved puppy, the more enjoyable it will be to live with. It is your responsibility to make sure that your new puppy learns acceptable house manners which come in handy when you have company over for visits !!

POTTY TRAINING & CHEWING: If your puppy misbehaves, such as chewing on something other than his or her toys, **SPANKING** or any type of **HARSH** punishment is **NOT** productive, nor do I agree with this type of discipline. If the puppy or young dog is chewing on a shoe or furniture for example, you can gently grab the dog's muzzle and firmly say, "No Chew" then place an appropriate toy in your pup's mouth. Dog's have short term memories when it comes to "Doing the Crime and Consequences" so to punish a puppy or dog for something he did half an hour ago or even minutes ago is going to confuse him or her. The time to firmly scold your pup is **AT THE MOMENT HE OR SHE IS DOING THE CRIME**. It is your **RESPONSIBILITY** to keep an **EYE** on your puppy at **ALL TIMES**. If you go to the bathroom, take your dog with you or put it in it's crate. Puppies need to go outside to relieve themselves every hour on the hour until their bladder develops. By putting a doggy door off the side or back of your house is a great help in potty training. If you don't want to put in a doggy door then it is up to every family member or person to make sure your young dog has a chance to go outside, every hour. If you need to run errands or do work around the house, take your puppy outside to go potty then place him or her in it's crate.

SPAYING/NEUTERING: Male and female puppies may only be spayed/neutered **AFTER 18 months of age** If you spay or neuter your puppy before my recommendations, this will void the replacement portion of our contract. You must be very careful to confine your unaltered puppy in the house, yard or kennel, prior to spay/neutering her/him to ensure an accidental breeding **DOES NOT** take place. **DO NOT** let your puppy run around an **OFF LEASH PARK** while she/he is still **INTACT** (un-altered).

FENCING & KENNELING: You must have a minimum of 6 foot high fencing in your backyard or a 6 feet high by 6 feet wide by 12 feet long kennel with a top over it to protect your dog from rain, sun and an insulated dog house or Igloo. Labrador Retrievers will **DIG** their way out of any kennel or yard if bored. It doesn't take long for them to accomplish their great escape so it is up to you to puppy and dog proof the **PERIMETER** of your yard or kennel. I suggest using large cement pavers for the inside of your kennel run and along the perimeter of your yard. Railroad ties have also been used with success.

FEEDING YOUR NEW PUPPY: Please be aware that as a new puppy owner you share in the responsibility to help prevent hip and elbow dysplasia, as it has been proven to be part hereditary and part environmental. Puppies should never be allowed to free feed. Puppies should be fed twice daily rather than once to help prevent stomach and intestinal problems. **ALWAYS FEED** your puppy **TOP QUALITY FOOD** from a Pet Store. Anything you can find in most grocery stores is loaded with fillers and can affect your Labradors skin and hair among other health related issues. If you need help choosing a food brand let me know!! Large breed dogs should **NOT** be overfed and if you choose not to feed your young puppy "Large Breed" Dog Food then you should feed him or her normal adult dog food, not a "Puppy Formula". You need to control how fast your puppy grows so you don't run into joint problems unnecessarily. I recommend up to 2- 2 1/2 measured cups per feeding by the time they are 16 weeks of age and only feed once in morning and once in the evening (ideally 12 hours apart). Labradors can get a condition called **BLOAT**. To prevent this from happening to your dog, feed your dog 2 times a day, rather than one meal a day. Do **NOT** exercise your dog before or after he or she eats a meal. Bloat can kill a dog within 20 minutes of onset.

EXERCISING: Jogging and forcing your young dog to exercise under 18 months of age is not wise as it can negatively affect the bone growth and elbows of your dog. This will also void the replacement portion of our contract. Only **NATURAL, NORMAL PLAY** with your puppy is acceptable until he or she reaches a full 18 months old. If you must jog with your wonderful Labrador after he or she is 18 months old try to avoid jogging on cement. Jumping off of heights of over 3 feet can also cause joint problems so any action requiring a dog to get out of a vehicle or off of a structure more than 3 feet off the ground should be aided by a ramp or physically lifting dog to prevent joint damage.