

Holzinger Kennels

PUPPY TIPS

- When picking out a quality pup, get help from a reputable breeder and/or a professional trainer.
- Fax information on pedigrees, titles, etc. to a professional for their opinion and advice. Good bloodlines generally tend to produce dogs with well established natural instincts that are easier to work with.
- When choosing a puppy from the litter, try to pick a pup that is well balanced. Do not pick the shy puppy or the pup that is overly aggressive.
- Spend as much time as possible socializing with your puppy, especially in the first 3 months.
- Take the puppy to lots of different places, both on foot and in your vehicle.
- Get the puppy used to climbing over obstacles, like your legs, logs, stairs, creekbeds, etc.
- Spend time walking with and playing with your puppy in shallow water before attempting to encourage swimming.
- Make sure your puppy is swimming confidently before letting him on the dock or boat, then gradually get him used to riding in the boat.
- Start teaching your puppy to use his eyes and nose by throwing pieces of dog food on the floor a short distance for a few throws. Repeat the throw when the pup is not looking. When the pup looks, point the direction of the throw as if you just threw the food. This works well for starting some simple casting. Let them chase the food off the sidewalk into the grass. This will encourage them to use their nose to hunt for it.
- Start some VERY LIGHT obedience training, consisting of sit, heel, kennel, and recall with using the "here" command. You can use a little dog food as treats to encourage a good attitude. Keep these early sessions short so that your puppy associates training as a fun activity.
- DO NOT teach your puppy to lay down until most of the training is finished. This will help prevent your pup from laying down and quitting when learning new commands.
- Limit your pup's exposure to other dogs until at least 5 months of age. This will help prevent him from bonding with another dogs instead of people. That could cause him to look for a way out when basic obedience training starts, and make him want to play with other dogs instead of focusing on pleasing you.
- After 5 months of age and basic obedience training has been started, let the puppy play with other dogs occasionally so that he learns to socialize with other dogs as well.
- Only throw 2 or 3 retrieves, then put the object away. Start with tennis balls, and eventually change to canvas dummies, then rubber dummies. As the puppy gets older, mix in some larger dummies.
- As your puppy gets good at retrieving, start to challenge him by throwing objects into light cover and/or out in the dark. This will encourage him to learn to use his nose.
- Put a collar on, and attach a short 18" length rope to it. Let them step on the rope for a few days. Then, put a leash on and condition the puppy to walking on a leash.
- It is HIGHLY recommended that your puppy be a house dog. House dogs are better socialized and bond to people much better, and also tend to be more easily trainable. Note: 3/4 of all National Field Champion retrievers grew up as house dogs.
- We recommend starting puppies on dead pigeons first, then clipped wing pigeons around 4 months of age. Limit the access to the bird, or your puppy may not want anything but birds to retrieve.
- We highly recommend the purchase of the following video: Jackie Mertens Sound Beginnings Retriever Training DVD, available at
www.gundogsonline.com www.gundogsupply.com

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