

Stahlrosenhof Kennels

Puppy Information: Your Puppy

General Information

Your new puppy will have all kinds of things to get used to, so if it is possible to stick close to his current schedule for a few days while he adjusts this will help. He will quickly adjust to a new routine, but keeping to a set routine while he is fairly young will keep him less stressed, and will help with house breaking. For example, if you feed him at 7:30 in the morning, then always try to feed him at this time. If you travel a lot or need to leave him with someone, this will give some stability to his routine regardless of where he is. He will soon learn that he depends on you to provide security and needs, not his environment or a familiar place.

Your puppy will get into everything he can reach and try to drag off anything that is not nailed down. Table cloths are a big no-no and a good invitation for puppy to pull on them. To him it looks like a toy waiting to be tugged on. Hanging kitchen towels are also certain to get carried off. He may bring with him some toys, but he will no doubt create his own. Let him play with as many different things as he is allowed to under supervision. He can have a couple safe toys in his crate, blankets are optional and may cause more headache than it is worth. Some dogs will lay on them fine, others will shred them in minutes. If he starts to shred anything you put in there, then just let him be in the crate with a bone or two. He will be fine. You may not want to leave his soft toys in the crate with him, he may tear apart those too, which is fine, but you don't want him eating fluffy pieces of stuff. "Fluff" will typically come out the other end fine, however strings and towel strips sometimes do not.



Your biggest immediate challenge will be house breaking. This is also where the importance of a set routine comes in early on. If you can't watch him every second, put him in his crate. He will be fine and it will give you both a break. He may squeak a bit, but he will settle down. Being in his crate is better than having an accident on the floor when you aren't looking. Anytime he comes out of his crate, even if he has only been put up for a little bit, take him straight outside. If you can, before you put him in his crate, always take him outside first. He already understands that when he goes outside he goes potty, but he is still at the stage where, when he has to go, he goes. If at all possible, at least for the first few weeks try not to leave him in his crate for more than three or four hours at a time. (He should make it through the night fine though) You don't want him piddling in his crate.



You will not have to worry about exercising him, he will exercise you. Early on he will follow you around like a puppy. At about 12 - 14 weeks he will begin feeling his independence, and you will think someone has traded puppies with you. When he is outside keep a collar on him. Unless you are in a fairly rural area, or have a fenced yard, you will need to keep a leash on him. Mals are incredibly fast, and when their prey drive kicks in and they take off after the squirrel, bunny, neighbors cat, or whatever, it is tough to get them back. We suggest if you are in an open area to keep your puppy on a long line. This will give him some independence and makes motivational training much easier.



If you are consistent in what you ask of your puppy, and consistent in rewarding him, he will quickly respond in love and loyalty. They are very smart, and will test their boundaries at every chance they get. If you don't want him to do something and tell him "No", the minute you turn your back he will be back at it again. Not really because he didn't understand the first "no", he's just seeing if you really meant it. You will learn the art of 'redirection' and if he is chewing on something he shouldn't, trade him with something he can. Keep toys handy and give him a toy or bone in exchange for whatever it is he isn't supposed to have. Always be honest with your puppy, if you ask him to do something, make sure you know it is something he is capable of doing and he is rewarded for his efforts.

Aggression in Malinois

Malinois are typically very dominant in character, very protective of their home and territory, and very protective of their owners. They range from the Mal who loves everyone who walks through the door (this is considered a breed fault by the way - although due to today's society is being bred for more often) to the ones you can't touch with a 20' pole (nor would you want to) As a side note, you can read the "Malinois Top 20" This is extremely politically incorrect, but funny, especially if you have had one like this. Remember though, the guy who originally posted this on one of the discussion boards was a police officer helping out new handlers, and the dogs they were getting in were young adult dogs, from overseas and had already had some pretty hard core training. However, many of the comments do apply to most Mals.

The best way to keep your puppy stable with other people is to socialize, socialize, socialize. Expose him to as many different situations as possible. Let people give him treats if he is uncertain about someone. The best

way to control a problem is to catch it early and let him know what you will and will not tolerate. Barking at the door is good, attacking the neighbor as he is running by isn't. He will be, and look, intimidating enough. This will probably be your biggest problem because he will quickly pick up on people who hesitate or react fearfully. These dogs have very strong prey drives. That



means if it moves, they will chase it, and I'm not talking the happy retriever play ball chase type; we are talking the chase, tackle and bring down. This in itself is not a sign of aggression. That's just the way they play. They will also run, jump, and body slam sideways. You will probably notice this as your puppy gets a little bigger. They will snap, snap, snap, hence the term 'malingator', this is also just the way they play. As he gets older, he may or may not 'chatter'. It's not because they are cold or anything, usually they are really excited or protesting something. There is a big "however" to this socializing thing. Mal puppies can and do go through stages. If your puppy 'suddenly' becomes anti social, don't push him. You want to make all of his social contact a happy experience. If you have good friends or neighbors that are willing to help you, have them take your puppy for the afternoon just to play.

Your puppy will soon be over the phase and back to normal. Socializing without confidence building is counter productive and can cause problems in your puppy's perception of other people. Note that none of this applies to the adolescent stage. We just wish everyone good luck through that phase.



Tug of war games do not increase aggressive tendencies. It is fun, and it is a good way for you to remind him who is in control. As a puppy you should usually let him 'win' to build his confidence, but when the game is over, tell him "out" and take the toy. This will remind him that although he can 'win', you are still in control and he has to listen to you. This pretty much applies to any game you play. We do not "out" our young pups.

We do trade with them something they can have when the game is over to build their confidence. You as an owner need to decide what balance you want between confidence and early obedience. Just make sure whatever you ask is fair, and consistent.



Your puppy may at some point between 5 and 9 months attempt to climb the ranks in the household. If or when he does, take him out and do some intensive obedience to remind him he has to listen. Hand feed him for a couple or several feedings. He will understand he depends on you, and you are 'top dog'. If you still have problems I will send you a copy of the "Malinois Top 20".



Training bitework does not make your puppy aggressive. It simply channels his natural tendency to want to bite and play. Teaching him what and when to bite is a good thing. However if you start training in any type of bitework, it is your responsibility to ensure that you finish to the point that your puppy is stable and controllable in that type of situation. A dog that is simply taught to bite without the control and discipline associated with it can be a very dangerous dog, and is the result of an irresponsible owner, not a bad dog.

General Care

Taking care of your new puppy is pretty basic. Food, water, shelter, play and lots of love. A brushing once a week or so, bath when needed and annual vet visits. He should act happy and not get too plump, especially as he is growing. You will need to keep an eye on him for heat stress. There have been cases of Mals heat stressing at temperatures as low as 75 degrees. That doesn't mean that they are heat intolerant, they adjust quite well to different situations. It's just that they go, go, go and don't know when to stop, especially a high energy puppy. We have safely worked our dogs in SAR in 95 degree heat through the rubble piles, they were however soaked down and worked very short periods at a time. Signs of heat stress: bright red ears, loss of concentration, tacky gums and general distress. If he should get over heated, hose him down, under the belly first and over the head. Keep an eye on him, small amounts of water at a time. During really hot periods, just keep play times short. If you are hiking with him in the summer or something, you may want to put him on a 50% electrolyte solution like half water and half Pedialyte or something similar to keep him hydrated.

As dogs go, Mals are typically pretty easy to care for and don't require extensive grooming. They are double coated though, and males get a lot more 'fluff' around the neck. You may want to consider stripping out the undercoat areas in the summer. They get baths when they stink too bad to bring in the house. Of course due to the nature of a puppy, this could be fairly often!

Mals, being as agile as they are, seem to always be getting cuts, scrapes, and general boo boos just because they will plow through anything without thinking. Peroxide, betadine solution, a good cleaning, hydrotherapy and maybe some triple antibiotic ointment will be about all you will need. If the spot is somewhere he can reach, forget the ointment, he will just lick it off. Just keep it clean, it will heal fine.

Your Responsibilities

Your responsibilities include taking care of puppy, providing adequate training so he is fairly well mannered, contacting the breeder (me) if you have a problem, and notifying me of certifications and such (hips, etc.) That pretty much covers it.



Breeder Responsibilities

The contract is designed to protect you as a buyer as well as me as a breeder. I have the responsibility of making sure I send out into the world healthy, happy, stable puppies that are a credit to the breed. I can't do this however without your feedback and help. It not only helps me understand what breedings produced what kinds of puppies as far as temperaments, but also allows me to keep track of general health and genetic tendencies in the lines. I don't like being too strict on what I want owners to do and/ or not do with their puppies. First of all, it is usually unrealistic and hard to enforce, second of all, I don't think it is fair, because situations change and people's expectations change. I am however real intent on getting the hips certified, regardless if the dog is neutered at qualifying age or not, as I obviously cannot guarantee a puppy that has not been x-rayed in the appropriate time frame. This is because this is a working breed and if they are structurally unsound, they are useless as a working dog. Not to mention it is heartbreaking for owners. We are trying to improve and maintain the structural and working integrity of the breed, not send out into the world what ever we can produce. I will keep you updated on any certifications and/ or problems in my dogs if they arise.