

## **SOCIALIZING THE BRITTANY PUP**

(from *THE BRITTANY: Amateurs Training with the Professionals*)

**By**

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Behavior studies for dogs have shown that the first twelve weeks are extremely important because the pup's experiences during that time will affect his emotional responses as an older adult dog. The need for human attention is very important and starts soon after the pup is born. Research has shown that a three to seven week old pup can be strongly affected by a lack of human contact. The pup could develop into a shy and easily excitable dog. It is very important that the breeder spend "a lot of time" with the pups during this early formative stage of pup's life.

When you take the pup home and become his master, the responsibility now becomes yours. Make him your buddy! Take pup with you everywhere you go. Put on a collar and lead for walks. Put him in a kennel crate for rides in the car. Let him be around other people and especially kids. Let him sort out the multitude of smells, sounds and sights and determine their importance. But be cautious concerning loud noises.

Socialization cannot be overemphasized. It begins with the breeder and must continue with you as pup's new master. Take pup to all sorts of new and different places. Take trips to the post office, the bank, and walks in the park on a lead. Puppies attract people, so take advantage of every opportunity to stop and let people pet and play with your pup. This develops self-confidence and pup comes to like and trust people.

You need to establish yourself as the dominant leader for pup. With mild restraint hold pup while other people are petting him. Help the pup to be calm. You are starting to develop a well manner dog. It is a lot easier to restrain and convince a 12-pound pup to be "well mannered" rather than a 40-pound mature Brittany.

When you bring your seven or eight-week-old pup home handle him. Firmly cradle pup in your arms. Hold the pup quietly until he submits to your authority. Repeat once or twice a day, each session lasting two to three minutes. You want pup to eventually stand quietly and allow you to touch and handle him. You want pup to allow you to open his mouth (the veterinarian will need to look at his teeth), touch near his eyes and ears (medication will often be given in these areas) and touch his feet and toes (nails to be grinded or clipped). Never hold pup down or forcibly make him submit. Back off and do not allow pup to fear your actions. Build pups confidence and

go back to doing something that is comfortable to him.

This quiet time/restraint training for pup can be on a training table, your “back yard” picnic table or the tailgate of your truck. If the surface is slick, put down a piece of carpet to give pup firm footing. The more time you spend with your pup the bond between the two of you will continue to grow.

Training is a progression. In order to progress, pup has to accomplish certain steps before moving on to the next one. Don't skip steps or move him along faster than he's able to go. Spend time with pup and expose him to as many different situations as possible. Build his confidence, have fun with him and the result will be a well-mannered and socialized Brittany.

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