**[Your Puppy Will Thank you for Reading (and Following) This](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/890-another-take-on-puppy-biting.html)**

**Do’s**
Be nice to your puppy every time he comes to you (even if coming back from an unexpected romp around the neighborhood or doing something disgusting).
Consistently reward correct behaviors with praise.
Give a command only once. Show him – again – if he doesn’t get it right.
Use your dog’s name to get his attention, and then tell him what you want him to do.
Use a normal tone of voice when you give a command. Your dog’s hearing is quite acute.
Be consistent in your actions and expectations.
Provide a daily outlet for your dog’s energies.
Keep your dog mentally stimulated with training.
Understand that your dog is a social animal. Train him so he can be a part of the family.
Socialize your dog with people and other dogs.
Make learning fun for your dog.
Spend plenty of time with your dog and give him exercise every day.
Be patient and your dog will reward you by getting the message.

**Don’ts**
Don’t do anything your dog perceives as unpleasant when he comes to you.
Don’t nag your dog by repeating commands — nagging teaches him to ignore you.
Don’t use your dog’s name and then expect him to read your mind as to what you want.
Don’t expect your dog to know what the word “no” means.
Don’t yell at your dog. He’s not deaf. Raising your voice doesn’t help.
Don’t lock up your dog or put him out because you haven’t trained him to behave.
Don’t isolate your dog — he’s a social animal.
Don’t expect your dog to obey a command you haven’t taught him.
Don’t get too serious in your training.
Don’t reward undesired behaviors.
Don’t neglect your dog.
Don’t give up when the going gets tough; keep trying.
Don’t blame the dog; you are his teacher.

[**How Can I Stop my Puppy from Biting**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/887-how-can-i-stop-my-puppy-from-biting.html)

It's important for puppies to learn to control their bites.  This is best taught at a young age.

Carefully watch your puppy for signs that he is about to grab your hand. Before he can do that, give him a soft toy or a Kong as an alternative.

If puppy bites you before you can give him a toy, make the squealing sound a littermate would make when it is bitten by another pup – "eek" or "ouch". Then quickly redirect the puppy to an appropriate toy that is "chew safe".

When a puppy can't be supervised he should be safely in his crate or an exercise pen with Kongs or other dog-safe toys that can't be chewed up and swallowed.  DO NOT LEAVE STUFFED TOYS IN A CRATE WITH A PUPPY.  Talk with your breeder and/or vet about safe toys for puppies.

Also, a tired puppy is a good puppy. Be sure your puppy gets plenty of exercise for his body and his brain (but a 1-mile walk or more is WAAAAAAAY too much until the joints knit).  Exercise for 10 minutes every hour or so is better than 2 hours at a time.  Puppies need naps just like babies.

Start training at an early age in a good puppy class in your area.  Puppies of all breeds get your puppy used to other types of dogs.

-- Cheryl May

**For more information**: Use Google to search for 'puppy training' in your area.  Look for local classes that are affiliated with the AKC's S.T.A.R. puppy training.  Also look at our [Regional Club listings](https://www.gsdca.org/join-the-gsdca/regional-clubs) to see if there is a club that offers puppy classes in your area especially for German Shepherd puppies.

[**How can I stop my puppy from pulling me when we go for a walk?**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/886-how-can-i-stop-my-puppy-from-pulling-me-when-we-go-for-a-walk.html)

Consider why puppies pull when they are walking:

* they want to investigate their surroundings
* they want to move forward.

Our job is to alter that natural instinct and teach them to walk nicely on the leash.  It takes time but patience and practice will work perfectly.

The best approach with a young puppy is:

1. Stop walking as soon as puppy starts to pull which results in a puzzled puppy who will look at you
2. As soon as puppy looks at you, take a few steps back and engage puppy to follow you (through kissy sounds, small bouncy steps and relaxed shoulders) not by pulling the leash;
3. As soon as puppy comes towards you, reward with a treat or a kind word and immediately continue walking.

Puppy will soon realize that tension on the leash stops forward movement and as soon as he approaches his handler, the tension is released and he gets to move forward again.

Don’t ask for heeling at this early stage but practice not pulling…it’s lots of fun!

[**Do's & Don'ts for a Healthy Dog**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/748-dos-a-donts-for-a-healthy-dog.html)

It is unhealthy for a dog to be overweight.  Overfeeding is NOT a sign of love.

Your German Shepherd is the right weight when you can tell there are ribs (without them being obvious) and there is a slight 'waistline' behind the ribs, before the rear legs.

* Stages:
- Puppies eat more and are highly active
- Adult dogs have normal routines and food intake
- Older dogs might require special diets & limited exercise
* **Feed a really good quality dog food.**  Quality foods have good protein sources and few fillers. Quality foods cost more but you will feed less because your dog will get more nutrition for the food. Good food will decrease your daily pickup chores.
* **Set Regular Mealtimes.**  An irregular eating schedule can affect your dog’s digestive system and ultimately cause chronic digestive disorders.
* Keep the water and food bowls in the same place every day.  If you have more than one dog, make sure each dog has its own food and water bowl.  Wash them often.  Stainless steel is a good choice.
* Don’t worry about your dog getting hunger pangs between meals.  Unless instructed by your veterinarian, your dog should only need two meals daily.
* Set a 15 minute rule.  If your dog has walked away from its bowl, it has probably had enough to eat.  Take the bowl up, dispose of the uneaten food & wash the bowl.
* Resist giving your dog people food.  A begging pooch can be hard to resist, but your dog doesn’t know how dangerous the mal you’re eating can be.  Grapes, raisins, chocolate, onions are among some of the foods that can be toxic to your dog in large enough quantities.  Sometimes excessive fat in meats or dairy products can cause digestive distress.
* Don’t over-treat or over-supplement your dog.  Too many treats will lead to unhealthy excess pounds.  Too many vitamins can also have unintended consequences.  Ask your vet about whether your dog needs any extras before starting it on a regimen of supplements.

*Based on information supplied by The American Kennel Club, Inc.*

[**My puppy barks at people who come to my house.**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/885-my-puppy-barks.html)

**I really don’t want him to do that.  How do I stop him from barking at strangers?**

Barking is natural for dogs.  They are doing their job by alerting their family that someone is coming.  It’s unreasonable to expect that a puppy will never bark.   The key is that he should learn to stop barking once you have identified the issue and taken charge.

Acknowledge that they’ve done something wonderful and then take a leadership role so the puppy can relax. Here are some specific steps you should take:

* As soon as puppy starts to bark, approach him to investigate what he sees.
* Tell him he’s a good boy and ask him to sit.
* Praise him for the sit and answer the door.
* If puppy continues to bark, say “all done” and give him work to do (such as sit, come, down) and reward him for the work.
* In the future, the “all done” will come in handy to stop barking in many situations.

By practicing this, puppy is learning that his bark will get you to investigate then you will take over the situation so he can relax.

[**Successful Dog Owners**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/751-successful-dog-owners.html)

No matter where you live, owning a dog is a long-term emotional and financial commitment and it's important to take your neighbors into consideration.

The AKC offers owners the following tips:

* **Train Your Dog** - Puppies need to be properly socialized and trained.
* **Pick Up After Your Puppy** - ALWAYS carry a plastic "baggy" to pick up any waste, then dispose of it properly.
* **Exercise** - Puppies (and dogs) need regular exercise or they may become destructive. Take your puppy for walks (not over a half-mile to start please & gradually work up as they mature) or throw a ball in the back yard for a few minutes.
* **Prevent Nuisance Barking** - Don't let your puppy annoy your neighbors. Training and exercise can reduce barking.
* **Microchip Your Dog** - In addition to wearing an ID tag, your puppy should have a microchip. when he's old enough (ask your vet).
* **Use a Leash** - Keep your puppy on a leash no longer than six-feet whenever you are out in public. It will keep your dog safe. Even the best-trained dog can become so distracted it will run after somethiing and get injured (or worse).

*Based on information supplied by The American Kennel Club, Inc.*

[**Out for a Walk: Teaching Your Puppy Not to Pull on the Leash**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/743-dog-walking-leash.html)

There are many things that tempt your dog when you’re out for a walk, like new smells and other animals. Your dog will try to get where he wants to go, even if that means pulling you along with him! If he pulls on the leash and you allow him to, you’ve reinforced him for pulling, and your pup got what he wanted. Once you’ve allowed him to do this, he’ll do it again. AKC's, Mary Burch, Ph.D., offers the following 2 techniques:

**Technique #1**

* When Fido starts to pull on the leash, stop in your tracks. Stand still and don’t move forward with the dog.
* Wait right there where you are. Your pup will pull, but he’ll eventually stop.
* When he does stop pulling, praise him and move forward again.
* Anytime he starts to pull, repeat the procedure and stop where you are. It won’t take him too long to figure out that you’re not going anywhere as long as he pulls on the leash.

**Technique #2**

* When your pup begins to pull off in his own direction, briskly turn around and begin walking in the opposite direction. Fido will have to come along, and most likely he’ll hurry up to keep up with you.
* When Fido begins to follow in the direction you are walking, praise him. If you’re at the beginning stages of training your pup, give him a treat. This will train your dog to watch you when you’re out for a walk and not pull on the leash.

*Based on information supplied by The American Kennel Club, Inc.& Mary Burch Ph.D. and Certified Animal Behaviorist*

[**Introducing a New Dog to Your Household**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/750-introducing-a-new-dog-to-your-household.html)

Whether you choose to get a puppy from a responsible breeder or adopt a German Shepherd dog from a rescue group, the first two weeks for you and your new dog are a critical period of adjustment.

If your dog had a previous owner, this time could be particularly stressful for him or her. Here are some tips for a smoother transition for new dog owners.

[Read more: Introducing a New Dog to Your Household](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/750-introducing-a-new-dog-to-your-household.html)

[**Why Won't My Dog Come When I Call Him?**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/745-why-wont-my-dog-come-when-i-call-him.html)

Have you ever trained your dog to come when called, and then when you call him, he completely ignores you?  You are not alone!  There are many reasons why your pup is not responding to your command.

* **More training is needed**.  Your dog might not be ready to be off the leash in wide, open spaces and needs more systematic training.  Go back to the basics and try again.
* **Competing reinforcers.** Your dog might be perfectly well-trained to come to you when you call him, but other creatures & people can win in the competition for your dog’s attention.  It is important for you to know your dog, and that includes knowing when you need to leave the leash on.
* **No reinforcement.** When you call your dog and he comes to you, it is important to reward him.  No reinforcement leads your dog to not wanting to come to you.  You can use a food treat or plenty of praise.
* **Not understanding the dog’s needs.** Sometimes your dog will not come when called because you are rushing him.  He may need to run, sniff around a bit, or search longer for a good bathroom break spot.

Puppies expect to be "paid" for good behavior.  Praise in a happy voice and small treats are the best form of reward for good behavior.

Start by teaching your puppy his/her name.  By 4 months, they should know sit, down, come, go out, and wait/stay.  Be consistent & patient and reward good behavior.  Training for a few minutes (5-15) several times a day is better than a longer training session.

*Based on information supplied by The American Kennel Club, Inc. by Mary Burch, Ph.D. & Certified Animal Behaviorist*

[**Preventing Food Issues**](https://www.gsdca.org/german-shepherd-dogs/training-puppy-tips/749-preventing-food-guarding.html)

Even though we feed our dogs plenty of food and treats each day, by nature, many of them will defend or guard their food. Here are some tips prevent food guarding from developing in your pup.

* **Don’t leave your dog’s food out all day.**  Feed your pup the amount of food recommended by your breeder or veterinarian and take the food bowl up after he's had enough time to eat his food (usually about 15-20 minutes).  Do not overfeed your puppy.  You should be able to see the shadow of the ribs but not the ribs themselves.
* **Let your dog eat in peace.** Dogs shouldn’t be bothered while they are eating.  Feed your dog in an area where kids & other pets won't bother them. Teach your children that the dog should be left alone when they’re eating or chewing on a bone.  If you have a busy household or have multiple dogs, feeding your puppy in his crate may be your best solution.
* **Your puppy will be healthier** if you feed him/her at approximately the same time each morning and evening and DO NOT feed him/her table scraps.

NOTE:  Feed your puppy a GOOD FOOD.  You will generally want to feed the diet your breeder recommends and increase the portions as needed for a healthy body shape.  You want to be able to see that the ribs are there but not extremely noticable.