

## CRATE TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

Crates come in different styles and different sizes. Choose one that will be large enough for an adult Vizsla to lay down, stand up and turn around in without difficulty. (For example: fiberglass airline crate in size #300 is often adequate. A #400 would better suit a larger than average Vizsla). Put the crate in a location close to family activity. Move it from kitchen or family room to bedroom at night so the pup will always feel a part of his new family. Offer him a treat every time he is put in the crate and say “kennel” at the same time. He will cry, whine and even howl in the beginning. Intervene with a sharp “no”. Be consistent and he will eventually settle down. Make sure he has plenty of free time outside of the crate. Take him outside to eliminate whenever you take the puppy out of the crate. Puppies do not soil where they sleep. The crate aids in curbing destructive behavior such as uncontrolled chewing. (Make sure the puppy is provided with safe, chewable toys such as nylon or pressed rawhide bones.) The crate becomes the puppy’s den, a place he will look for when he is sleepy or wants to feel safe. It is an invaluable training aid.

## POINTS TO PONDER

Never underestimate a puppy’s destructive potential. A puppy’s capacity for destruction is directly proportional to the amount of freedom you give him. Curiosity can kill the puppy. Be careful of leaving poisons, rubbish, electric cords, houseplants, etc. where a puppy can get at them. Make up your mind in advance what kind of behavior you want from your Vizsla and give prompt attention to that behavior. If being quiet and calm gets your pup your undivided attention, you will soon have a remark-ably calm and quiet Vizsla.

If you ignore moments that the pup is calm and scold him and yell at him when he’s rowdy, you will both be unhappy and the pup will still be rowdy. For a dog, any attention from you is better than no attention from you. If misbehavior is the only way he can get attention, then he’ll misbehave more often.

Remember that Vizsla pups are exceptionally intelligent and creative. This means that the

adorable, wrinkled baby who learned so fast and was so eager to please can rapidly become a bored adolescent. And if you haven’t spayed or neutered your pup early, a flood of hormones further distracts him. Physical energy can approach Olympic gold medal levels. As the owner of a growing Vizsla, you must be prepared to spend long hours exercising and training your pup. Otherwise the dog of your dreams will become a nightmare.

If you enlist the aid of professional trainers for obedience or field work, first make certain that the trainer understands the Vizsla temperament. Experience with other breeds doesn’t always prepare someone for the paradoxical soft/stubborn temperament of the Vizsla. Look for trainers who emphasize positive reinforcement methods and have immense patience. Ask other Vizsla owners for recommendations. Discouraging dominance is of primary importance in bringing up a Vizsla. In the dog world, females tend to be more dominant within their group of canines, while males tend to dominate their people. While we realize some dogs do not have dominant personalities, those that do must be recognized and trained properly.

## CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY

Consistency and simplicity are the necessary tools for anyone training a dog. Dogs and owners communicate with each other as if they were members of the same species. And—they think they are. Owners often feel as if their canine companions are humans in fur coats and to the dog, he is the same as you. Actually, he thinks you are a big dog. Therefore, if you want a well-behaved dog, you must make sure it is you who is always the top dog.

To become the top dog with a dominant canine, you must understand how a dog sees and understands who is in control. First, when you bring the pup home make sure he sees it is you and the family who eat first. Top dogs always eat first. Therefore, feed your pup after he has watched you eat your meal. The puppy also learns very quickly where you sleep. A dominant dog should never sleep in the bedroom, much less on the bed. (We recognize that not all dogs are dominant and that some dogs who sleep with their owners cause no problems.) If he sleeps on the bed, he is equal with you. The best arrangement is for the dog to have his sleeping quarters either in his crate—or elsewhere, but not in the bedroom. Do not let a dominant dog keep his toys in or on his

sleeping quarters. And—at least once or twice a week, snap a leash on the dog and make him stay off his bed while you sit on it for about ten minutes. During training periods, it is a good idea to keep a leash on the dog inside and whenever he is in your way, remove him out of the way with the leash. Never walk around a dominant dog. He should move for you. You should go out the door first and then allow the dog to follow.

It is kindly, compliant owners who don’t set limits and who identify with their dog more as a person than a dog that encourage dominant behavior. And the next step up from dominant behavior is often aggression. A recent study suggests that people who are driven by their feelings are more likely to foster dominant aggressive behavior in dogs than those who are fact or logic driven. While it is difficult for people to change their personality type, just a few simple changes in your interactions with a dominance-prone dog can often make a world of difference.

## FEEDING YOUR PUPPY

Follow the breeder’s suggestions for feeding your puppy. Most seven to eight week old pups eat three times per day. A good dry dog food without table scraps is best. Do not cater to a finicky eater. No dog has ever voluntarily starved himself to death. Give the puppy a reasonable amount of time to eat his meal and then pick up the dish. Do not offer any food until the next feeding time. Some people “self-feed” their pups. This means leaving dry food down at all times for the puppy. This method is used often for dogs left alone for long periods of time. It is more difficult to housebreak a pup this way—unless he spends his days in a kennel.

## HOUSE BREAKING

This is where a crate is an invaluable aid. Pups rarely soil where they sleep. Make sure he gets plenty of time outside to relieve himself—upon waking up from naps, after eating, after play, etc. Take him to an area in which you wish him to go and praise him when he does.

Smacking a pup with newspaper or rubbing his nose where he has urinated or defecated is not the best way to get results. If you see a pup start to squat in the house, scoop him up and take him outside. Keeping an eye on him in the first few weeks is necessary. Consistency here works well, too.

## RECOMMENDED READING

- “A Pet Owner’s Guide To The Dog Crate”, by Nicki Meyer. (pamphlet). Nici Meyer Education Effort, Inc. 31 Davis Hill Road, Weston CT 06883 (203)226-9877.
- AKC Responsible Dog Ownership/AKC Dog Buyers’ Education (pamphlets available from AKC) American Kennel Club, 5580 Centerview Drive, Raleigh NC 27606 (919) 233-9767.
- “How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With”, by C. Rutherford & D. Neil. Alpine Publications, P. O. Box 7027, Loveland CO 80537 (800) 777-7257.
- “The Versatile Vizsla”, by Marion Coffman, “Your Vizsla” Strauz & Cunningham, Alpine Publishing.
- “The Vizsla”, by B. C. Boggs. Glenbrier Publishing, P.O. Box 1844, Chillicothe, OH 45601 (614) 772-2000.
- “The Complete Vizsla”, Gay Gottlieb Macmillan Publishing, 201 W. 103 St, Indianapolis IN 46290. Attr:Howell Sales.
- “Vizslas” by E. Hart. T.F.H. Publications, 1 TFH Plaza, 3rd & Union, Neptune City, NJ 07753.
- “How to Be Your Dog’s Best Friend,” “The Art of Raising a Puppy”, by The Monks of New Skete Little, Brown Publishing.
- “The Vizsla”, video available from the AKC.

## Available from the VCA

- “Presenting the Vizsla”, (flyer)
- “So you want to be a Vizsla breeder? or Does your Stud dog have what it takes?”, (flyer)
- “Is the Vizsla the right breed for you?”, (flyer)
- “Breeders Directory”, (booklet updated bi-annually)
- List of regional Vizsla clubs.
- Breeders material, puppy packets, stud dog contracts.

***For the entire package, contact the VCA Corresponding Secretary:***

**Visit the VCA Home Page on the internet:  
[www.akc.org/clubs/vizsla/](http://www.akc.org/clubs/vizsla/)**

The books listed are only a small fraction of those available. Browse the bookstore, and read DogWorld, DogFancy, and AKC Gazette—magazines available on the newstand.

## PERIODS OF PUPPY DEVELOPMENT

### NEONATAL PERIOD (BIRTH-2 WEEKS)

Puppies are blind and deaf, unable to regulate body temperature or control elimination. Removal of dewclaws and tail docking is done during the first few days of life.

### TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (WEEK 3)

Eyes open around day 13, ears toward the end of third week. Pups start walking and interacting. Milk teeth start to emerge.

### LITTER SOCIALIZATION (WEEKS 4-6)

Pups become more aware of their environment and each other. The brain develops rapidly as senses and muscles mature. Pleasant interaction with people is essential. Weaning should be started.

### HUMAN SOCIALIZATION (WEEKS 7-12)

The nervous system is complete at 49 days and experience becomes important in shaping the puppy's personality. Weaning should be completed. At 7 weeks the puppy can readily form new attachments, but this decreases with age. Puppies should be given individual attention separate from littermates on a daily basis. Gentle play training can be started.

### FEAR IMPRINT PERIOD (WEEKS 8-12)

A few days around week 8 is when painful or frightening experiences are likely to have a lasting effect on the puppy. Continue exposure to a variety of positive experiences.

### JUVENILE PERIOD (WEEK 12-PUBERTY)

All senses fully developed. Puppies begin testing to determine pack leadership.

Any biting behavior should be discouraged. Littermates should be separated, but not totally isolated. Adult teeth appear around 16 weeks. Another fear period occurs between 4 and 7 months. Molars erupt around 7 months.

### PUBERTY (6 MONTHS - 1 YEAR)

Males start leg-lifting and are interested in bitches in season; females come into season. (Note: Vizsla bitches often come into season later than 1 year).

Although adolescent dogs are capable of mating, their bodies are still immature and can be damaged by the vigor of mating and resulting pups. All dogs not intended as breeding stock should be neutered.



## ADVANTAGES OF NEUTERING OR SPAYING YOUR DOG

Absolute lifetime birth control and relief from following hormone-driven urges (most effective when done prior to puberty): Aggression toward other dogs; territorialism—over-protection of home ground; wanderlust; dominance; marking with urine or feces; overt sexual behavior; frustration. Protection (either partially or completely) from such hormone-induced conditions as: Males—testicular cancer, benign prostatic hyperplasia, acute and chronic prostatitis & prostatic abscess, perianal gland adenomas (multiple tumors around anal opening), orchitis (infection of testicles), perineal hernia (abdominal organs bulging from rectum), veneral tumors, inguinal hernia with potential organ strangulation. Females—breast cancer, cystic endometrial hyperplasia & pyometra, false pregnancies, mastitis (can occur during false pregnancy), transmissible veneral sarcoma, ovarian & uterine tumors, cystic ovaries & hyperestrogenism, chronic endometritis, vaginal hyperplasia & prolapse, uterine torsion or uterine prolapse. (Most dogs are neutered between 6 and 24 mos. of age based on your dog's personality and consultations with your breeder & veterinarian.)

We touch on only the high points of raising a puppy. In fact, we barely scratch the surface. We can only suggest that you read as much as you can about raising puppies and about training dogs.

We urge you to be in contact with your breeder, with other Vizsla owners and to attend obedience and socialization classes in your area. Often a local kennel club or your veterinarian are good reference sources.

Being firm and consistent doesn't mean not enjoying your puppy.

The main object is to take as much pleasure as possible from a rare and ancient connection—that of dog and man.

# RAISING A VIZSLA PUPPY

