



Double Trouble Raising Two Puppies At Once!

by Nancy Vollmer

You couldn't resist. They were totally adorable six-week-old balls of fluff romping and scuffling on the breeder's carpeting. So you agreed to take Molly and Jasper home at eight weeks, and now they're romping, scuffling, eliminating, chewing, and digging on *your* carpeting!

You had the best of intentions. Not only would they keep each other company during your long hours at work, but you and your spouse would each have your own dog. And it didn't seem like two little puppies would be much more trouble to take care of than one.

Unfortunately, the operative word is "trouble." You soon discover that two pups seem to make not twice, but eight times the mess as one! It's as if they "feed" off each other's energy.

Bonding

But the real problem is not the constant chaos involved with trying to keep up with two perpetual motion machines, but the realization that since the dogs have each other, they really don't need you! They're much more interested in roughhousing and running together than the ball games and long walks that you planned on enjoying with them.

Training is a nightmare. When you and your spouse try to separate the twosome for their daily lessons, they cry and bark and carry on trying to get back together. Even standing on your head, you can't get their attention for a moment. What can you do to get things back on track and have these pups grow into the wonderful companions you wanted?

The underlying problem is bonding. Since the pups were left alone together while you were away and never separated when you were around, their primary bond is with each other and not with you and the other family members! Never having been separated, they haven't had the opportunity to develop a closer bond with humans.

Here are some tips for managing two pups that will maximize their chances at becoming great companions.

First, the pups should sleep separately. Approximately two weeks after they come home with you, they should be trained to sleep in separate crates. You can use the den-training procedure in* *SuperPuppy*.

Separation

But don't combine the stress of a new home with the stress of being separated right off. Start out by placing their crates side-by-side. *Gradually* move the crates apart so that eventually they are comfortable sleeping in different rooms. (This also prevents the development of separation anxiety problems in the future should they suddenly have to be separated due to an accident or illness.)

Once they are able to sleep in separate rooms, start separating them for short periods during the day. Start while you're at home, perhaps with naps in their crates. Build up the time so that they're calm and comfortable when apart for several hours. (Ideally, they should be confined in separate areas in exercise pens during your long absences. Although this may not be possible, it's a good way to prevent the dogs from becoming overly dependent on each other's presence.) They can share water bowls but try feeding them separately.

From the very start take them outside separately as well as together for short excursions around the neighborhood, car rides, and socialization visits.

Training Tips

Enroll them in puppy class, but keep them apart as much as possible during the class. At first do the puppy class homework while separated. Then, once they know the lessons, bring them together and practice. Teach them to pay attention to you, even though they're around each other. As a reward for working with you willingly, allow them to romp briefly together between lessons.

The pups will learn their names faster if you use their names *each* time you interact with them. In the beginning, names should *always* be said in a happy tone of voice in a rewarding context such as when praising, giving meals or teaching a command that will be rewarded with praise, petting, and a treat. Once they're a bit older, and respond to their names, you can use a name before reprimanding of one of the pups without involving the other.

Be the Leader

Exercise good leadership. Don't let one pup become excessively dominant. Allow them to establish their relationship, but intervene if one puppy becomes overly domineering. (See *SuperPuppy* pg. 18) Give each puppy equal time and attention, and try not to favor one over the other.

To make sure each puppy responds equally to all family members, everyone who's able should participate in the training and care taking of both pups.

As you can see, raising two puppies together to their maximum potential is considerably more work than just bringing up one. But it can be done, it's just more work for you to be done correctly.

SuperPuppy^(R) Press : PO Box 463030 : Escondido, CA : 92046-3030 : 1-760-489-1818

E-Mail: superpuppy@superpuppy.com : Home Page: <http://www.superpuppy.com>