

# TIPS AND TRICKS FOR LIVING WITH A STANDARD POODLE!

This is a “keeper” document, one you might refer to for a long time. Please, please read it from start to finish. You won’t absorb it all at first, but I guarantee you will learn something new about dogs in general, and your new poodle puppy!

Thank you so much for bringing a *Simply Standard Poodles* puppy into your family. I hope your puppy will be an integral part of your daily lives -- poodles are people dogs. They need to be with their people! I hope you will consider me a friend and resource for the lifetime of your dog, keep me posted on his or her life, and send me pictures!!! You are now part of my extended poodle family!

Just a few thoughts and tips about raising your puppy - hopefully you will find lots of useful information here.

**Puppy Immunities and Vaccinations** - Your puppy has had one or more of his first puppy shots, and no one knows for sure how much immunity is picked up from these shots, which is why puppies get more than one! For your puppy's good health and safety, please:

- Resist the urge to take your puppy to PetSmart, Petco, etc until after the second puppy shot.
- Likewise, **dog parks are not a great place to take a new puppy until after at least the second puppy shot, or even longer. Dog parks are a good place for your puppy with its immature immune system to pick up giardia, coccidia, fleas, ticks, worms and parasites, and you also have no way of knowing whether or not all the other dogs there have received their vaccinations**
- Be careful that you know that other dogs your puppy will be socialized with have received their vaccinations.
- Ask visitors, especially those who have dogs, to remove their shoes and wash their hands and forearms before handling your new puppy until after the second puppy shot.

Your puppy will have had all of its age appropriate vaccinations at the time he/she goes home to you, including Bordetella (kennel cough) intranasal. Vaccinations are given at 9-10 and 13-15 weeks; rabies should be delayed as long as possible, no earlier than 24 weeks or longer, if allowed by local laws, or if you can procrastinate it with your vet's help. Most vets give the first series of shots, and require “booster” vaccinations at one year after. Those “booster” vaccinations should be good for three years. After that, we strongly recommend tittering for immunities to avoid over-vaccination of your puppy during its lifetime. This is the protocol that has been adopted by all of the accredited veterinary colleges in the U.S., but not all the vets are on board with it – its bread and butter for them, after all they are in the business of earning a profit. There is also a vaccination called Lepto which in my experience although has many benefits for your pups has been known to cause seizures. It is not a required vaccine however depending on where in the states you live it may be a good idea to get these vaccines. I had adopted a poodle with epilepsy and since chosen not the have her receive the lepto shot. She has been fine all the years I have had her. Just remember, your dog can't talk, you are his only voice, and your dog is yours, not the vet's! Stick to your guns. Over-vaccination has been proven to cause many auto immune disorders and adverse reactions in dogs and cats.

**FLEAS, TICKS, HEARTWORMS** - Whether you choose to put your dog on flea and tick preventatives, and which one, is a discussion you should have with your vet. I use a product called Bravecto that has worked very well for me here in the south. It almost seems as though fleas are everywhere all the time. I prefer to take a more natural approach to any types of medications given to my poodles as I believe and have seen that some can see side effects to using certain medications and or even certain vaccinations. While living in Connecticut once the first hard freeze hit fleas and ticks didn't seem to be a problem. I was able to get away with using a good old fashion flea and tick collar without any issues. In the south Bravecto has proven to keep all the fleas and ticks away and you can get it in the month dosages or 3 month dosage supply.

I do suggest strongly that you give your dog a heartworm preventative, such as Heartguard, for example. They do have a newer product out and available that covers more types of worms called Interceptor Plus which is what I use now. It is given orally once a month. It can be given to puppies as early as six weeks of age. I prefer Interceptor plus over heart guard but you will need a prescription from your doctor for this medication. It's truly just a matter of choice, convenience and preference. I have never given either preventative once a month as the manufacturer recommends.

**I DO NOT RECOMMEND ANY TOPICAL FLEA MEDICATION. Some may disagree with me but it too has proven to cause seizures in your pet. On the flip side some may say oral medications are basically poisons but I have seen little to no effect of using this type of medication. You are less likely for your pet to lick it off the back of its neck and again with topical medications as you do your own research it slowly gets absorbed into the skin and is not to be eaten by your pet but so often is licked or scratched and takes a good amount of time to dry on the back of your pets neck. Again, you are the voice for your pet. Use your judgement but in my experience the oral medication has worked best with the least adverse reactions.**

**NAILS** - Your puppy has been accustomed to having its nails trimmed frequently – keep it up, and you will never have a dog that's difficult to work on, or a dog that's all but crippled from its nails being too long. Clipping nails is not hard to do. You may "quick" a nail now and then, but it hurts you far more than it hurts your dog! Keep some Kwik Stop on hand for those occasions when you do quickly a nail. Consider the purchase of a small dremel grinder, it's faster and easier and less likely to "quick" a nail. I used one to do your puppy's nails before delivery to you!

**TEETH** – If you've ever had a dog before, you know that dentals performed by a veterinarian are expensive, and can be risky, as the dog must go under anesthesia to have them cleaned or scraped. If you want to save yourself this expense and save your puppy the risk, I have two recommendations:

1. Brush your dog's teeth daily! Any dental product you need can be purchased at Petco or Petsmart. I actually use an inexpensive battery operated toothbrush and baking soda! Once they get used to it, piece of cake!
2. Go to the flea market, or to a dog show, and pick up a set of dental tools for scaling your dog's teeth when the tartar buildup becomes visible. You should be able to get a flat scaler and a pick in a set for less than \$10. It's not hard to do, and you could begin getting your puppy accustomed to having its teeth scraped as early as six months (beyond those wiggly baby days!). Scaling is good for the big back teeth, which is where most of the tartar builds up.

**BATHING** - If you want a beautiful, thick, fast growing manageable coat, bathe and thoroughly dry and brush your dog weekly, or at the least every 10-15 days. **Be careful not to get shampoo or conditioner in your puppy's eyes – it will ulcerate them and fast! Very painful!** I suggest putting a drop of mineral oil in each eye before bathing, or a sterile ophthalmic ointment. If you do get soap or conditioner in your dog's eye, flush it thoroughly with fresh water, followed as quickly as you can with a sterile saline solution, and watch it closely for signs of irritation. If your dog begins to squint or keeps the eye closed, you need to see your vet for pain relief and eye medication. Eye injuries like this are very, very painful for your poodle! You will also find that using a conditioner will make the coat dry faster and make it easier to brush out, with less damage to the coat. You might want to use a tearless shampoo on the head, and regular shampoo for the rest of the body – I have seen the damage getting shampoo in the eyes can do, and I err on the side of over-cautious! My favorite line of bathing and grooming products are Groomers Edge Emerald Black Pet shampoo very often used by groomers. I buy a gallon and it will last me a lonnnnnng time – it's concentrated! This one is specifically for dark colored poodles but you can get a lightening shampoo for your whites and apricots. K9 Pro Tear Free Dog Shampoo is great for all dogs and puppies. This one is a hypoallergenic, tearless anti itch vet formula for dogs with dry or sensitive skin. It is great and gentle for your puppy's eyes and comes in a sugar cookie scent.

**BRUSHING** - Poodle coats will mat, just like any other dog's coat will. A clean, well-brushed coat will be healthier, grow faster, and will be easier to maintain. Asking a professional groomer to demat a coat will cost you extra grooming dollars, and is torture to the dog. A dog that is allowed to mat to the skin is a dog in a great deal of pain – every loving pet is pulling on its skin! Most groomers will have no recourse but to shave down a badly matted coat, and that makes for a less than pretty or handsome standard poodle! Get yourself a good soft slicker brush (Miller Forge Doggyman, Chris Christiansen, to name two, are good slicker brushes), and a decent "greyhound" comb, and you'll be set. I recommend a really good brushing at least once a week, and just run your hands through the coat in between and spot check for mats. The most common places for mats are armpits, around the neck where the collar goes (when your dog is at home and inside, take the collar off, and always remove for being crated!), the chest, and inside the back legs. Don't be afraid of the slicker brush, and remember, if you are not getting down to the skin, you are not brushing properly and you WILL have mats. Brush against the growth of the hair (up the legs, not down; from tail to neck, not the other way around, tip of tail to base, etc.). Run the comb through the coat after brushing, and your comb will find any mats you missed!

Your standard poodle will go through a juvenile coat change anywhere from 9-14 months, and may mat if you just look at him wrong! A coat change can last as long as just a few weeks to a couple of months, and you may wonder why you ever got this poodle! BUT be patient, brush more frequently, keep the dog clean and well dried, and you will get through it! **NEVER bathe a dog with mats;** bathing just sets the mats in tighter!!!!

**PROFESSIONAL GROOMING** – Unless you plan to do your own grooming (It's not hard to learn how!), you will need to have your poodle professionally groomed every 4-6 weeks at a minimum. Nails should be done much more often than that, and ears should be cleaned much more often than that as well. If you keep your dog bathed and brushed, you will not have to pay your groomer extra for dematting charges, or have your gorgeous poodle suffer the indignity of being shaved down because it was matted!

*For those of you who have a desire to learn to do your own grooming I will include some resources to help you with that.*

I've heard some terrible stories about people who have lost their previous dog to seizures after being left under a heated cage dryer for too long! Very sad situation, and completely avoidable. But it prompted me to do two things - find a good site for the novice groomer to learn from, and also to advise all of you to question your groomer about their drying procedures. If your groomer uses cage dryers (and most of them do), you should absolutely make sure they use "air only" dryers. Here, there has been so much publicity about the dangers of heated dryers, that virtually no one uses them anymore. The shop where I help out sometimes hasn't used heated cage dryers for years. Let me explain that "air only" dryers do not blow completely cold air, so your baby won't freeze in the winter! Ha! The air from the dryers becomes very slightly warmed from the heat of the blower motor only as the air circulates. I have three high volume force dryers, two stand dryers, and a double hose box cage dryer (remember, I show my poos and have multiple dogs). Only one of my stand dryers has a heated air setting, which is necessary for brushing out a standard in full continental show coat pattern. Otherwise, I use the air only settings of all of my dryers, even though I'm at home and the dogs are always in my sight. Heated dryers can be lethally dangerous in the hands of a sloppy, non-caring, non-professional groomer. Really good groomers with clean, friendly shops will have no problems showing you their operations, and abiding by a request that your dog be dried without heated air. If your groomer won't do that at your request, find another groomer who will!!!

As the breeder of your puppy, I always want, of course, for my puppies to be a well-groomed, sound representative of the breed. And, I want to be proud that someone stopped you on the street and asked you where you got your poodle! There's no greater compliment. Grooming a poodle isn't hard, just takes practice and patience and the desire to want to learn to do it right. Clipping a poodle that has not at least been dried with a force dryer will give you a very choppy, ragged looking coat. Scissoring is a little difficult to get nailed down, but it's just hair, and it will grow back! If you'd prefer to use a professional groomer for the body and head (recommended), delivering a standard poodle to a groomer brushed out, with no mats, and with its face, feet, tail, tummy and nails already done will save you a LOT of money, and your groomer will love you!!!! Just bathing and drying, and doing the body is a piece of cake! I will say that a human handheld hair dryer will NOT do the job, and it gets too hot. Spend a little bit of money and get a force dryer (For a good beginner dryer, I recommend a Metro Air Force Commander 4HP, 2 speed, about \$140, often less on eBay.) – You won't be sorry! If you really get into it, consider a better, stronger force dryer like a K9 down the road.

**EARS** - Clean your puppy's ears once a week, and pluck hair once a month. One product I recommend is the Blue Power Ear Treatment, which you can make yourself very inexpensively. I promise if you use it faithfully, ear infections will be a VERY rare event! Get the pup comfortable with this early on any you won't have extra trips to the vet. Some breeders recommend Gold Bond medicated powder instead of expensive ear powders for plucking – it's great! Use the one in the green bottle, it has menthol in it and is very soothing. If you find yourself fighting ear infections, try a diet change to a lower protein diet – protein promotes the production of yeast (aka ear infections!). And, you might want to put cotton balls in your dog's ears prior to bathing, so that the ears don't get wet or soapy inside. Dry is good! If you don't care to make your own ear cleaner, I recommend Chris Christensen's Mystic Ear cleaner – great stuff! Another good product is Wonder Ear. If you do get one of those nasty yeasty ear infections, one of the best things you can use to treat it (or any wound, insect bite, scratch, etc.) is Colloidal Silver, which can be purchased at almost any pharmacy, or ordered easily online. I actually put a drop per ear in my own dogs after I pluck ear hair and bathe them, as a preventive. Works great!

**DIET** - Some people want to do raw feeding, others don't. I personally do not feed raw. And, I know some people are passionate about it. My personal opinion is that it has been generations and generations since domesticated breeds were allowed to roam free, feeding what they caught, raw. I believe their systems have adapted to being domesticated and that a raw diet is fine, but not the only diet they should be fed. Instead, feed a mid to high grade commercial kibble, not the highest protein level available (protein encourages the production of yeast – ear infections!), but not the lowest, and one where any kind of meat fat is not listed in the first 5 ingredients, and one that does not include soy, wheat, or corn. My favorite preferred brand of dog food is Purina Puppy Chow or TLC Whole Life. The TLC Whole Life offers a version for adults and puppies. It is holistic and biologically beneficial lifelong nutrition to help your dog thrive. It is one of the higher end dog foods however its formula delivers the ultimate balance of meat, animal fats, vitamins and minerals to mirror a dog's natural diet. It is easily digestible, with a great content of amino acids and folic acid. A quality dog food leads to a healthier and balanced dog. You should always be able to easily feel the ribs on your dog, with just a light layering of fat over them. Last, if you feed your dog from the table, you will teach him to beg – resist! If you must give him a people food treat, give it to him in his regular food dish or in his crate. Never give your dog raisins, grapes, or chocolate – all can be lethal! As a guide, my dogs are fed twice a day - my adult girls get a total daily of around 2-2 1/2 cups of dry food, and the larger boys 4 cups, that's it! You won't find a fat poodle here! And, generally speaking, dogs need a little less food in the summer months than in winter. I personally free feed – they are able to graze and eat when they are hungry and it has allowed them to feel comfortable knowing there is food available at all times when they are hungry, no fights over food etc.

**Tip – protein source is important. Here's the recommended choices in order of preference – lamb, fish, turkey, chicken, then beef/red meat. Chicken and turkey tend to give my poodles a little more gas and although lamb is a red meat the protein quality is a very balanced choice when feeding your pet.**

**Also, if you do plan to free feed, wait until your pup is housebroken.** You'll never figure out the pup's potty schedule if you free feed from the start! And, remember for a while your pup is likely to wolf down its food, as it has been competing for food with its littermates. That will stop over time, when he/she realizes no one else is going after his/her food! Your poodles are extremely smart. They will get the hang of all of this very quickly.

**Your puppy has been fed a diet of Purina Puppy Chow.** I start all my puppies out on this kibble as for whatever reason, they like it and tolerate it very well – no diarrhea! When you elect to change kibbles, please do it gradually to avoid uncomfortable upset tummies! Whenever I have changed foods in the past, I have done it over a 7-10 day period, usually without problems. If you do get upset tummies – add some plain yogurt and a bit of plain pumpkin to their food and that may help settle their tummies. When my dogs have upset tummies, I feed them their kibble mixed with plain white rice (I keep several bags of ready rice on hand.) I also keep a bag of slippery elm powder, which is a natural digestive aid. I give it to all of my dogs when/if I switch foods, or if they have an upset tummy now and then. All of the puppies have been given it in their formula and food mix.

**BLOAT** - Standard poodles are just one of the many deep-chested breeds where bloat and torsion can be found, and unfortunately it can be fatal if not treated in time. Know the symptoms, know what you can do to buy yourself some extra time, and get to the vet or emergency clinic ASAP!

There are things you can and should do to minimize the risks of bloat to your dog:

- Never feed your dog less than one hour before and after heavy exercise
- Do not allow your dog to “tank up” on water before or after heavy exercise or meals. Allow water access, but controlled.
- Do not feed/water from elevated bowls
- Feed your dog two smaller meals daily, instead of just one.
- Choose a kibble where “fat” is not listed in the first 5 ingredients
- Learn how to “burp” your dog (ask me how!)
- Keep several bottles of infant gas drops (with simethicone) on hand (I buy mine at Walmart, their store brand, and I always keep 3 bottles on hand). If your dog exhibits bloat symptoms, give a whole bottle to them immediately. It will buy you time; it will NOT stop bloat. You must get the dog to a veterinarian immediately! TIP: If that whole bottle (it's small!) goes down easily, you are probably just in the bloat stage. If the dog immediately throws it back up, you may have already a dog that has torsion and you are now in a critical emergency situation!!!! Get to the vet immediately!
- At the time of spay/neuter, consider a prophylactic gastropexy - - I strongly recommend it! - - that's where the vet will “tack” or “pin” the stomach so that it cannot twist (torsion) on itself. This will not prevent bloat, but will reduce the risk of torsion to less than 10% in the event of bloat.

**Spaying or neutering your Puppy** - The longer you can wait to spay/neuter your puppy, the better, preferably 12-18 Months or later. Studies show that spaying or neutering is best done when the puppy's growth plates are mostly closed, generally by 12-18 months – boys slightly later than girls. But do get it done as soon as practical for a companion puppy. If a dog is not going to be bred, it is a more home-friendly, healthier puppy spayed or neutered. Spaying/neutering earlier than 12 months, without discussing it with me first, will void my health guarantee.

**Obedience Training** – Do it! Most classes require that your puppy have had all of its shots except rabies prior to beginning training. Check with them. If you can start earlier, great, but wait for at least the second set of puppy shots. If you get a trainer who does not use positive reinforcement techniques, run in the other direction. Negative techniques using harsh corrections simply will not work with a Standard Poodle – please trust me on that! Clicker training is a marvelous technique, give it a try! Consider a private, at home trainer to begin your puppy's training a little earlier than a public, retail environment would allow. Patience, consistency and repetition are the keys to a well-trained dog.

**A Tired Dog Is A Happy Dog!** - Your Standard Poodle has a medium to high energy level, and will be happier and healthier if it receives a minimum total of 45 minutes of exercise daily. It is much less apt to “get into trouble” in the house if it receives enough exercise. A walk/hike is always good – time not distance is the key. Find a job your dog can do – make it fun! Putting its toys away. Learning to bring you specific toys – hide them. Bringing in the paper. Getting your slippers. Tricks. You have added an extremely intelligent clown to your family – keep him busy and you will both be happy! Consider, after vaccinations, daycare where your dog can socialize with other dogs, even just one day a week. But be sure the daycare facility you choose ONLY has supervised play, and that dogs are not left together without human

supervision. And, choose only a daycare facility that requires evidence of vaccinations, including Bordetella (kennel cough), or titer records.

If you're reasonably fit yourself, a great exercise you and your dog can do together is bicycling – not as a young puppy, but short, leisurely runs with you biking are excellent. Any overly strenuous exercise (jogging, fast biking, and long distances) can be harmful for your puppy until his growth plates are closed.

**Potty Training/Crate Training** – I enthusiastically recommend crate training -- but do NOT use a wire crate! I have seen too many snapped bones, especially with puppies, who get their legs caught between the wires of a wire crate. Your puppy will be safer and more secure in a hard plastic crate. Your puppy is used to being confined in a relatively small space for short to long periods, and may be relatively used to a crate by the time you bring him/her home, depending on the size of their litter (can't have that many crates! Ha!). A crate is not a cage – it is a secure "nest" for your puppy. Most puppies, as they mature, will do everything they can not to soil in their crates assuming the time they are left there is reasonable, not excessive. Have realistic expectations – they are puppies, and they have little bladders. Be patient and be consistent. Learn your dog's eating and elimination habits. Never use the dog's crate as a punishment. If your puppy knows his crate is "home" you may often find that he/she will go to it naturally for naps and quiet time if the door is left open. Try feeding your dog in its crate. Always give the puppy a treat AFTER going in its crate as a reward. Don't trick him/her into the crate with a treat – poodles know the difference!

Your puppy's first night or two in your home is most likely going to be a "rough" night – he may be a little frightened with all the newness. Resist the urge to put him in bed with you. If you can, put his crate in your room by the bed where he can see/smell you, hear you breathe. Let him cry! Do not take him out of the crate unless he quiets, not while he's crying. Be strong, you can do it! Those first few rough nights will be over soon.

You should start out with a crate that is not too large for your puppy – the more room he/she has in that crate, the more likely he/she is to soil it. You can upgrade the crate to a larger one later – donate the old one to your local rescue club, SPCA or humane society. They will appreciate it! Or, save it for your next poodle puppy!!!

The last tip I have is ENJOY! Just enjoy your dog and lavish him with good attention and care, great food, consistent training with patience and reward, and lots of love, and you will be rewarded with unlimited unconditional love and loyalty from this newest member of your family! Make this your mantra for your puppy – PATIENCE, REPETITION, AND CONSISTENCY!!!!

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