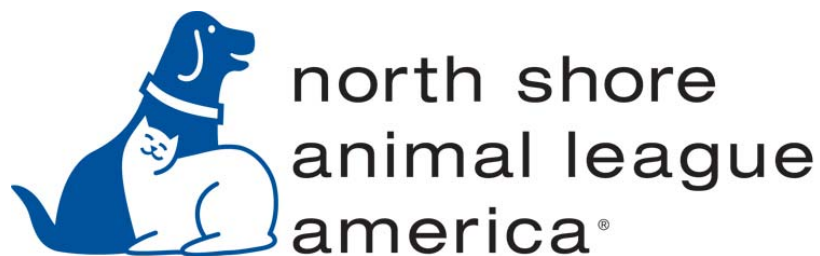


North Shore Animal League America's Puppy Mill Behavior Profile and Rehabilitation Guide



Saving Pets is Our Passion™

www.AnimalLeague.com



Saving Pets is Our Passion™
www.AnimalLeague.org

A Message From North Shore Animal League America

Across the United States and around the world, dogs, cats, puppies and kittens rely on North Shore Animal League America to represent their interests and provide them with healthier, happier lives.

As the largest rescue and adoption center in the world, North Shore Animal League America is often called upon to assist in special rescue operations. While the Animal League's main adoption facility is located on Port Washington, New York, our mobile units allow us to travel the country rescuing animals from various situations from basic over-population shelter rescues to emergency operations such as natural catastrophes and cases of animal cruelty such as puppy mills.

Approximately 3,500 pet stores in the United States sell 500,000 puppies a year. Products of Puppy Mills, the parents of these pet-store puppies are often forced to live their entire lives in cruel conditions including tight, overcrowded and dirty cages with very limited socialization and poor nutrition. Some of these animals never see sunlight and most never get to walk on the ground.

Because they receive little to no veterinary care, they often suffer from various illnesses including: fleas, sarcoptic mange, mites, ear infections, loss of hearing, eye infections, blindness, rotten teeth, infected gums, blistered feet and emotional repercussions such as extreme fear, nervousness, submissiveness and difficulty adjusting to a new environment and gaining trust in people.

This cruelty and inbreeding often results in sick, disabled and even deformed offspring. In addition to being sold at pet stores, these puppies are also sold directly to the unknowing consumer through the internet, newspaper ads and from the mill itself.

Animals that come from puppy mills are not your average adoptions and should not be treated or mistaken as such. It is imperative for an adopter of a puppy mill dog to exercise patience and understanding.

North Shore Animal League America would like to offer the following Puppy Mill Behavior Profile and Pet Rehabilitation Guide to make both the dog's transition and the adopter's adjustment as stress-free as possible.



Saving Pets is Our Passion™
www.AnimalLeague.org

PUPPY MILL BEHAVIOR PROFILE

Puppy mills are commercial facilities that breed dogs specifically for profit. They do not provide appropriate care for the animals they house.

Dogs are clean and social by nature. Being housed in confined spaces without access to the outdoors forces a dog to eliminate where he eats and sleeps. This means the dog's natural instinct to be clean in his "den" has been compromised. Dogs living in such conditions may be difficult to housebreak and unaccustomed to walking on a leash, requiring extra patience on the part of the adopter.

The lack of socialization to people and the outside world can cause a dog to be fearful. Things that are unknown to them become threatening. When faced with this threat, some dogs will choose to run from the situation, while others will defend themselves. In either case, a fearful dog needs time, routine and confidence-building.

Dogs are creatures of habit and change – even change for the better – takes time. Entering a new home is yet another change to the dog. **Fearful dogs often have a strong drive to "flee." Care should be taken to ensure that the dog does not "dart out" opened doors. The dog should never be off-leash or unsupervised in the yard.** In addition, the new owners will have to be patient and not overwhelm the dog with physical displays of affection, which can be very frightening.

Once the dog feels secure in his new home, he could benefit from learning basic obedience and other confidence-building exercises. Please refer to the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Less Is More

Puppy mill dogs have been through a lot. They are traumatized and it is important to give them time to adjust. Do not try to compensate for their trauma by coddling or being physical. They are most probably unaccustomed to attention and may misunderstand your intentions. When you ignore a dog, you are sending the dog "calming signals" telling him that you have no intention of interacting, allowing the dog to warm to you at his own pace.

Introducing a Leash

The easiest way to get a dog accustomed to having a leash on is by introducing it in gradual steps:

- Start by attaching a lightweight line (a tether) to the dog's collar for him to drag around the house **when you are home**



Saving Pets is Our Passion™
www.AnimalLeague.org

- Once the dog is accustomed to the line attached to his collar, start to pick it up for a second and give the dog a treat
- Next, do the same as above but gradually apply tension
- Use food to lure the dog without making eye contact or you could try picking up the tether and following the dog's path being careful not to cause tension on the line
- Gradually work up toward using the tether in the house to direct the dog when you need to have him do something
- Once the dog becomes accustomed to the tether, replace it with a leash
- If the dog takes exception to any of the steps, go back to the preceding step

Having a tether on the dog can also provide control to prevent the dog from darting out the door – giving you something to grab or step on if he does get out. *Please refer to the following literature regarding “running out the door.”

Socialization

Everyday sights and sounds often frighten dogs that have had little exposure to the outside world. Let the dog become accustomed by sitting outside with him. You should be relaxed, perhaps reading the paper and the dog should have a long lasting special bone. Start at the quietest place on your property and gradually work up to the most exposed area. Reward the dog for appropriate behavior by bringing him in the house NOT going on to a more frightening area on the same day.

Housebreaking

Any dog new to a household should have a centrally located crate or other safe, small, gated, confinement area where he can eat and sleep. If the dog does not keep this area clean it may be necessary to paper-train the dog temporarily to reinforce his instinct to be clean. This area should be utilized at times when you are home as well as away so that the dog does not associate his safe area as being left alone.

Running Out the Door

****Your dog should always be on a leash when not in a confined area****

Teach the dog to “wait “at the door. Wait is different than stay. Stay means to stay in one spot in one position. Wait simply means “don't follow.”

Wait: In order for a dog to understand what a word means, you need to connect the word to the dog's action.



north shore
animal league
america®
Saving Pets is Our Passion™
www.AnimalLeague.org

When you go to open a door, the dog is typically there **waiting** for you to open it. Have a soft or small treat available. You should be closer to the door than the dog is. For extra safety, stand on the tether that should be attached to the dogs collar without applying pressure. Be sure to use the movement of the door as a training tool not the tether. Say "wait" and give the dog a treat as you **slowly** start to open the door. If the dog goes to run out the door, make a sharp noise like "eh" and sharply close the door (not on him). Wait a second and the dog will be waiting again. Repeat the above. You want to be able to open the door wide enough for the dog to get through while he continues to wait for the command to "go through." As the pack leader, you should always go through the door first and then tell the dog to "go through."

This exercise requires no obedience training, just persistence. You are using the door as a training tool. This exercise teaches the dog to wait at doors and to only go out when given the command to "go through."

Special Recommendations for Fearful Dogs

- Fearful dogs often have a strong drive to "flee". The dog should never be off-leash or unsupervised in the yard until he/she has become comfortable with you.
- The dog should be fed and walked by the person he fears most. This will build trust and aide in the bonding process. Fearful dogs are typically more fearful of men due to their intimidating size.
- In extreme cases everyone other than the caregiver should ignore the dog. Being a social animal he will eventually turn to his caregiver for companionship.
- The dog should be taken for walks regularly to help diversify his environment. Care should be taken to ensure that the dog couldn't slip out of the collar or harness being used.
- A short leash or long, light line should be kept on the dog when supervised. This will give the owners more control over him, and it will be an aid in showing him the rules of the house.
- When meeting people for the first time, it is important not to allow anyone to push himself or herself on the dog. People should be asked to sit or stand quietly and allow the dog to approach if he is comfortable. When he/she approaches, the dog can be offered praise in the form of treats or verbal praise.
- When faced with situations your dog is uncomfortable with, **you** should always act calm and normal. This way the dog can read your body language and feel that perhaps the situation is not a threat after all.
- Fearful dogs often benefit from routine and confidence building exercises such as retrieving and basic obedience.
- Please refer to the following literature regarding fearful dogs and" retrieving" exercises for confidence building.



Remember - It is extremely vital for the adopter NOT to set their expectations too high or expect too much too soon from the dog. Every member of the adoptive family must be dedicated and help with the dog's rehabilitation.

Adopting a new pet can be one of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences in one's life. With time, patience, diligence and a good understanding of the situation at hand, any adoption can be the perfect adoption. Perfection does not happen overnight, nor does a love that lasts a lifetime. Be patient and reap the rewards forever.

To receive more pet health and training tips from North Shore Animal League America, and to download our FREE 31-page dog training manual, sign up as a member of the Animal League: www.AnimalLeague.org/Membership



Saving Pets is Our Passion™
www.AnimalLeague.org