

Helping Your New Puppy Adjust To Your Home

1. Set up a schedule and follow it consistently. ALWAYS feed, water, walk, and socialize, etc., your dog at the same time. Like the rest of us, dogs feel much more comfortable if they know what to expect. Follow this schedule for at least 4 to 6 months, as it will take the dog some time to feel "at home".

2. Be consistent. Not just with the schedule, but with everything you do with your dog. Decide on the rules the dog will live by and then stick to those rules. Dogs learn much more quickly and behave much better if you are consistent in your actions and expectations (sometimes hard to implement with several house members doing things "their way"). Consistency must start the minute you get the dog home. Everyone in the household needs to agree on the rules for the dog, how those rules will be taught and how they will be enforced. This means that you will need to be prepared for the dog BEFORE he comes home. Be fair to the dog -- don't get him on the spur of the moment. Be ready for him. Dogs don't just walk in the front door and say to themselves "Oh...there's the potty". They need to be trained where to relieve themselves even if they are already housebroken. A new house means new rules and you MUST TEACH HIM the rules.

3. Don't get angry. Anger doesn't teach, especially with a PON. It tends to make the PON confused and stubborn (ignore you). PON's love to please their owners and you will get the best response by treating your PON with kindness. Deal with disobedience by using quick, matter-of-fact corrections. Don't get your emotions involved. Many problem behaviors are not the result of the dog's attempt "to get even" but rather a result of being bored, lonesome, and frightened or having learned to get attention by some undesirable means.

4. Pack leader. A leader is clear, concise, and consistent. Dogs understand and need to have a pack leader. If you don't assert your right to that position the dog will naturally move into the leadership role. That means that the sofa is his, the garbage is his, the Thanksgiving turkey is his, and the new pair of shoes you just bought are his. In short, he is in control. Leaders don't come when called. Leaders may bark when and how long they want. Leaders may bite, since leader's job is to protect the pack members from intruders, (such as mailman, delivery men, visitors and strange dogs and critters) they will protect with aggression. Think about it...

Often common behavior problems are caused by the dog's assertion of leadership rights over at least some members of the family (usually the kids or the pushover hubby/wife who just loves the dog sooo much s/he give him anything he wants and whenever he wants it).

Practice NILIF or Nothing-In-Life-Is-Free....you are in charge of the food supply, you are in charge of when and where you take the dog for a walk, you are in charge of treats, toys, attention and love the dog receives. Never give it out for free. The dog has to do something to get it. Make him sit, down and stay for his dinner, which he'll receive as a reward, before you walk out the door make sure to have the dog sit and wait patiently and only then reward him with a well deserved walk. Same goes for love and toys. 99% of dogs are born followers, not leaders, they expect you to be the leader. Dog respond to strong leaders much better than weak, baby talking, forever love spewing, and treat dispensing, soft and meek owners, whom the dog feels like he needs to protect, because they have no back bone. Even though he does not want the

leader/protector position, it's making him anxious and nervous and unsettled, he wants the follower position which he feels comfortable in.

Pack Leader's Bill of Rights

- Eat First
- Stand, sit or lie down wherever they want.
- Have access to "prime" spots in the house.
- Control entry to or from any room in the house.
- Proceed through all narrow openings first
- Demand attention from subordinate pack members.
- Ignore or actively discourage unwanted attention.
- Restrict the movements of lesser ranking pack members.
- Win all games.

By studying this Bill of Rights, you can tell who the pack leader in your house is. If you think it is your dog, you can become pack leader by adhering to the following:

Dog Owner's Bill of Rights

- Owner gets to eat first.
- Owner gets to stand, sit or lie down wherever they want and the dog steps aside.
- Owner gets to have any prime spots in the household, such as the bed, chair or couch and may choose to "invite" other pack members to join him.
- Owner controls entry to or from any room in the house.
- Owner proceeds through all narrow openings first or back yard gates or doorways.
- Owner decides when and how often dog gets attention. (NILIF)
- It is never acceptable for a dog to growl or snap at a human for any reason- ever.
- Never should a dog be allowed to lean or push a human or restrict them from walking.
- Owner wins all games. Tug of war ends with the owner winning the toy and putting it away. If the dog is too possessive, don't play tug of war at all.

Remember, nothing in life is free...always ask the dog to sit, stay, down, come, etc. If you follow these simple rules your dog will listen better and follow you as a leader and one day it may save their life.

5. Enroll in Training Classes. Training classes help you communicate with your dog. Learning to obey when there are lots of other dogs and people around helps build confidence in both the dog and owner. Owners who work with their dogs find that the mental exercise is just as important as physical exercise for keeping the dog from becoming bored and neurotic.

It is a proven fact that people who put in the effort to obedience train their dogs and maintain the training have fewer problems with their dogs. An added bonus is the working bond that develops between the dog and the owner when they spend time training together.

6. Praise. Praise is the reward the dog receives for obeying your command. There are some simple rules for giving praise/rewards:

- A) Make the reward immediate. Praise delayed = praise denied- there's only ½ second to reward.
- B) Reward the dog only for obedience. He doesn't get any praise without earning it.
- C) Praise should be short-term. Only a few seconds of patting is enough.
- D) While some trainers discourage the use of food as the primary type of reward, it can be a very useful tool when training most PONs, who are usually very food-motivated.

7. Be positive. Tell the dog what you want him to do instead of what you don't want him to do. It is easier for the dog to understand one positive command (like "down") instead of a series of negative commands (don't chase the cat, don't jump off/on the sofa, don't bark). Being positive enforces the idea that you are the leader because you give and enforce commands.

- A) Giving commands gives definite direction. (Do "this" and I'll be happy= you get reward).
- B) Obedience earns a reward (praise) for the dog. (They live for rewards- treat, praise, ball toss)
- C) It puts you in control. (I tell you what to do, so that you don't do the wrong thing.)

Let him be a dog. Enjoy him, train him, have fun with him. Do not expect him to make decisions. That's your job -- you're the leader. Expect him to act like a dog, don't humanize him, he's not a baby. Dogs are intelligent, energetic and very adaptable. Given the right training and being respected for the qualities that have made them "man's best friend" for thousands of years, dogs can become very good companions and valued members of the household. Without training, proper care, or an understanding of how dogs think, feel and react, these four-footed creatures can become problems to both the owners and neighborhood, and not give the pleasure that good training can create.

8. Crate Training. Dogs in the wild are naturally den animals. They like their own spot to feel secure and protected. A crate, if used properly, makes a great substitution. If you make crate training an enjoyable experience, your dog will adapt to it and even learn to love it! I do not crate my adult dogs, only puppies or young dogs I don't trust yet, but if I bring a crate out for whatever reason, they all decide to go and sleep in it, including my adult dogs that have not seen a crate in ages, crates mean security for them. The key is not to abuse its use. I very, very, rarely leave my dogs in their crates for more than 4-5 hours- they can easily nap for 4-5 hours in their den. Because of this, I've never had any difficulty getting my dogs into their crates. They have learned (on their own!) to head for their crates whenever they sense/see I'm getting ready to leave- the last thing I do is close their crate door and give them a little reward before departing. They also go in all by themselves periodically throughout the day for naps or to get away from noisy children or each other. I'm including a little blanket with scent of his mom and siblings to make him feel at home. Place it in the crate and try to preserve it for at least a week or two without washing it.....if it gets soiled it's better to cut the stained spot out and leave the remainder in the crate.....once the puppy is adjusted to his new home you can just toss it.

Crate training is indispensable for these reasons:

- *It keeps the puppy out of trouble when you aren't there with him to keep him safe.* Few people have the time or energy to follow a puppy around the house during its every waking moment. But that's exactly what you would have to do to prevent him from chewing carpet, gnawing on furniture, getting entangled in drapery cords, chewing on electrical cords and the like. Keep him and your house safe by putting him in a crate.
- *It speeds up the housebreaking process.* Dogs do not like to soil their "home". You can use this basic instinct to your advantage by using a crate to housebreak your dog.
- *Traveling.* If you ever take your dog on an airplane he must be in a crate (unless, of course, he's a puppy who can travel with you up in the cabin but even there he has to be in a soft carrier). When you take him in the car, unless you buckle him in a harness, he should be in a crate. He cannot balance himself when you make abrupt stops and could end up flying into a window and seriously injuring himself. If you ever have to stay overnight in a hotel with your dog, it is usually required to crate him when you are out of the room, so he will not destroy it or run away if the maid opens the door to clean.
- *It's much easier to crate your dog when you have a houseful of guests or children.* Then you don't have to make sure the dog isn't jumping or licking a guest who doesn't appreciate it or constantly supervising, so a child doesn't pull his fur or ears. PONs may also find great delight in herding a group of children around the house which definitely isn't their idea of having a good time.

Start your crate training as soon as you bring your puppy home. They can be purchased at pet stores, Chewy or Amazon delivers right to your door and usually cost about \$50 and up depending on the type you buy. Keep in mind that if you're using the crate on an airplane it must be airline approved. Never use a metal crate in the car. More than one dog has been impaled or horribly entangled in one, should you be involved in a severe car accident. Plastic crates are cleaned easily but are not collapsible like metal wire ones, so this may be a consideration.

Buy a crate that's big enough for the dog to move around and lie down in when he is full grown. The top should be 2"- 4" above his shoulders and 2" from the dog's rump when full grown. For traveling, car or airplane, I use airline approved [Petmate Vari kennel](#). For home I have a wire crate [36"Lx24"Wx25"H Midwest brand](#). My female Pons are about 40lb and it's a perfect fit. Bigger boys may need a bigger size when fully grown, but most will fit in a 36" crates so that should be sufficient for now. I use the foldable wire crate...it's easy to store away when not in use and it's airy for the puppy to feel included rather than behind a solid plastic wall. Put the crate in the room the family uses most so he will not feel left out when he's in it. When you move to a different room, bring it with you, particularly at bedtime- I have a separate crate in the bedroom so I don't have to move it up and down the stairs. If puppy can see you nearby he will settle down to sleep much faster. I use [a bath mat with rubber bottom 36x24](#) size instead of bed in the crate- they get hot and uncomfortable and dig at the bedding, mat is sufficient, it's easily washed in case of accidents and they won't get too hot and it does not slide. I also have a [water dish](#) 4 cup size that attaches to the side of the crate, as water at all times is necessary.

Begin to accustom your puppy to its crate by putting some treats under a towel or blanket while puppy is watching. Allow puppy to go in and get the treat. While he's in there, praise him, "Good puppy". You can also throw a toy in there to retrieve and then praise again, "Good puppy". After you do these awhile, close the crate door when he goes in for a few minutes. If the puppy is quiet while he's in there tell him, "Good puppy" let him out, and give him a treat. If he starts complaining, ignore him until he is quiet and then praise, "Good puppy" and give him a treat, then let him out. Never let him out while he's complaining or you'll be reinforcing this unwanted behavior of whining till he gets what he wants-he's training you to open the crate on command-by whining. When it's time to feed puppy, put his dish in the crate so he'll also associate his crate with the pleasure of feeding time. Praise him for eating inside. After he's grown accustomed to eating inside, you can close the door while he's in there. Then let him out and praise him when he's done. Next time leave him in there a bit longer after he's finished, let him out, and praise him. If you make this fun for puppy he will learn he has nothing to fear from being inside. Gradually increase the amount of time puppy stays locked in his crate. Start with 5 minutes. When he's quiet, let him out, praise him and give him a treat. (Don't forget to put an especially good treat inside to get him to go in too!) Then go to 10 minutes or so. Try leaving the room for a minute, return to him for a bit, and then if he's still quiet let him out, praise him, and give him a treat. Keep increasing the time he stays in the crate and the amount of time you're out of the room while he's in the crate. Remember, lots of praise when you let him out and give him a treat. When he stays quietly in his crate for 30 minutes or so while you're out of sight, he's ready for you to take short trips and eventually longer trips away from home to run an errand. Congratulations you're puppy's now crate trained!

Side note: Your puppy will be crate trained when he leaves Ponavie home, you can comfortably leave him in the crate for a few hours or at night from the start...just don't rush the puppy, give him a chance to get used to his NEW crate and NEW surroundings. We'll provide you with a scented blanket from our home for him to have some of the 'old' scent close by to start with.

9. Potty Training. The Pups will need to learn where to go potty in your house/yard. There will be accidents no matter what, they learn from accidents, so please roll up your rugs and such for the time being- it's easier to mop up the hardwood or tile floors than wash the rug and you can live without the rug for 6 months. If the pup is sleeping in his crate. He need to be picked up and carried outside where they can potty- once they are in process of peeing you say the words "go potty" over and over and over (to mark the behavior with a word "command"-this way you can teach them to go potty on command) and praise them and give them a treat once finished. You can't let him walk out the crate to follow you outside to pee yet- he will not make it all the way and will pee on the way out anywhere in the house, so carry him out. When pup is loose in the house you are 100% supervising and playing- and I mean eye on the dog 100% of the time. If you feel enough time passed and he may need to go potty again- carry him out again and ask him to go potty- hopefully he will and praise and treat. If he does not he goes in crate (they will not pee in their crate) and you wait 30 min and try again to potty. If he pees he can be loose in the house with supervision, if he does not pee, back to crate until he's ready. They poop after eating usually, they'll have to go out after eating also. The time he's allowed to be loose in the house will increase over time. You must prevent him from learning to pee in the house- if he gets used to peeing on pads or rug or kitchen floor, where you block him to "park" him while you have no time to watch him 100%, but you're feeling too guilty to put him in crate again- he will learn it's

ok to pee inside and it'll take 2-3 times as long to potty train him. If you catch him peeing inside- and I mean in the process of urine coming out of him- you give him a negative marker- shout Egrrrh- No- Hey - clap hands loudly to indicate you're not happy, scoop him up quickly and take him where you want him to go and praise once he pees outside. After a few of these he'll learn that you're "happy" when he pees outside and "unhappy" when he pees inside. He wants to please you. HOWEVER the secret is in catching him in the act of peeing, hence the 100% eyes on the dog supervision. If he pees and walks away, no amount of correcting will make him understand you're getting upset over something he did 22.08 seconds ago – his mind is onto other things- a fly that buzzed by, a shadow that moved over there, a toy he stepped on, a noise he heard outside, and there's no connection to him peeing on the floor and your sour mood. Let it go and do better next time!!!! The more he pees inside "uncorrected" the more he learns it is ok to do that and the more he pees inside "corrected" the faster he learns where to go. Eventually he'll figure out a way to let you know, by going to the door where he goes out to potty that he needs to go out, just pay attention and praise him for giving you the signal. Once that happens you've won the war, the light bulb came on- your dog is almost (95%) potty trained. This usually happens at around 6-7-8 month mark- sometimes sooner. I never use pee pads ever- I never let dogs pee indoors on pee pads as they learn inside and outside peeing are both allowed- and it takes longer. 100% supervision while loose from crate or being crated are the only 2 tools you need. I don't use puppy ex-pens inside to block them in an area, as they'll pee in there. I have my doors to yard open in warm weather and they will chose to go potty outside, if the door is closed then I take them out more often. If I feel like it's been about the amount of time they can usually hold it and they refuse to potty in the appropriate area on command- in the crate they go and I let them sit in there with a bone or toy to chew, until they're ready to potty, rather than risking peeing on the floor the moment I get distracted for a second because the milk boiled over or phone rang. They need to learn bladder control- and if you are taking them out every 30 minutes, it is making them getting used to peeing very often and any minimal pressure on bladder requires a trip outside. You want to make them sit in crate for a few hours and "hold it" to teach their bladder that they need to hold it. At 8 weeks they are perfectly capable of sleeping through the night without a potty break, so if they can hold it for 7-8 hours overnight, they should easily be able to hold it for 4 hours during the day.

10. Biting/Mouthing. First of all, one must realize that normal puppy behavior includes biting and mouthing. Puppies don't have hands, so they use their mouths to explore their world. It is through play with their mother and littermates that a puppy learns to control the force of their biting. Bite inhibition. Here is a typical scenario: A puppy runs up to its littermate to play and bites her too hard. The littermate then squeals her distress. This catches the puppy by surprise and the puppy usually stops for a second. The puppy decides to bite littermate again and this time she really lets out a cry. She then turns and runs away, completely ignoring the offending pup, if it should approach her for further play. The puppy eventually learns the message; if you can't play nice with me I don't want to play with you at all! If the puppy won't take no for an answer and continues to bug the littermate she will bite him back. And he'll get the taste of his own medicine. If he's pestering his mom for play and won't take no for an answer, mom gives an especially nasty growl and using her teeth she grabs the puppy by the scruff of the neck or pins it down or shoves it out the way with her muzzle (sometimes it looks like she's about to rip it to shreds, it's scary looking, but the mom knows how to "teach" her pups to behave, and pups know to back off and learn manners, this is normal mother-offspring behavior). She will continue to

growl at him, keep him pinned until the puppy gives up and relaxes his body while keeping perfectly still or the puppy steps back and relaxes the excitable behavior. In this way the puppy is telling mom that he agrees that she is the boss in dog language. Thus mom is establishing dominance over her pup. Sometimes if a pup is really out of control its mom may knock the puppy over with her paw and pin it to the ground. She may even growl at the puppy or pinch it with her teeth until it squeals but does not hurt him, this is a normal dog behavior. Just like the first instance, she only lets go of the puppy when he completely relaxes and lies still. Then the puppy is free to run off.

Now let's apply this same principle to teach our puppy not to bite humans. The first time your puppy bites you let out a good loud OUCH! Make it clear to your puppy you are very distressed. Completely ignore your puppy for a few minutes. Turn away from your puppy and don't play with him, talk to him or give him any attention at all. If he insists that you play with him and won't leave you alone, grab him by the scruff of the neck and give him a good shove. At the same time make a low growling noise in a deep voice or simply give it a negative marker- No, Stop, Egh in a negative sounding tone. Don't be afraid to sound very menacing. If the puppy just won't give up, and/or his behavior starts to escalate every time you attempt to use this correction, hold him down by a scruff in one position until he stops all his wiggling and lies totally still, ignore all his cries until he relaxes. He's learning. Then let him up to go his merry way. Please do not overuse this last technique. It should only be necessary if you have a particularly strong-willed pup. Another technique used by many people is to spray back of your hands with [Bitter Apple No chew Spray](#). Then when the puppy grabs your hands instead of the toy you're holding he learns that hands taste nasty and it will discourage him. Whatever technique you use, be consistent with this training! Even though puppies love to play rough, it is never a good idea to wrestle with a puppy using hands. This confuses the puppy as to when he is allowed to use his teeth in play and when he is not. Use toys to redirect.

11. Socialization. This is an EXTREMELY important part in the development of a PON. This point cannot be stressed enough! From the time your PON comes home, you should be making sure your puppy is exposed to lots of different people and places. I encourage you to take them out in the safe neighborhood and coffee shops and town square where he can meet a lot of people. IT IS IMPERATIVE the puppy is socialized more than any other dog breed. Avoid places where many dogs congregate of course- no dog parks or hikes where people take many dogs daily- but it would be a huge mistake locking the puppy up until the last of the 16 week shots are administered and miss out on the first crucial months of socializing. Yes, there technically is a little threat of parvo they could contract, but if you're smart about it, and avoid dog gathering areas, the actual risk is miniscule, since in our society most dogs are vaccinated and very healthy. After your puppy has had most its shots you can take your puppy to new places. Parks, the entrance to grocery stores, Home Depot, pet stores, dog parks and schools are all good places where your puppy can meet lots of different people and dogs in a short amount of time. Walking on a school route and let the puppy be loved on and touched by kids is a good idea. Or if you have kids, taking it to drop of kids at school is a perfect way to socialize the pup. Take it to Home Depot and let everyone feed it treats and pick it up. Continue this at least until your dog is 15-18 months old. The longer you continue this practice the better! Ask people to feed your puppy a treat that you provide (don't let them feed their own treats that you don't know the origin of). This helps your puppy associate good things with meeting strangers. The

more experiences your puppy has with different people and at different places the quicker he will warm up to strangers he meets and the more adaptable he will become to new situations. If your city or town has a place that teaches puppy socialization classes, this is a marvelous way to get your puppy off to a good start. The puppy needs to meet at least 100 different dogs and people in the first 6 months of his life, preferably many picking him up and rubbing his belly. My best behaved and well socialized puppy lives with owners that like music festivals and they took him to his first festival only 3 days after he arrived to their home- he attended many many many different venues with thousands of people petting him and loving on him before his 1st birthday- he's the most well balanced dog on the planet. They also travel with him and camp with him- he's been exposed to everything and socialized well. If you were to take just a single advice from me- please take socializing seriously!!! I also suggest to have people over at your house- have a BBQ or invite friends for a glass of wine- sit in yard, sip on wine and play with the dog. He needs to learn visitors are ok and no need to bark like a maniac at anyone that approaches the house. If you have kids organize play dates at your house, ask the neighbor over for a visit- have your gardener play with the dog, let the contractor that's fixing your roof feed him treats and scratch his belly- use everyone you can to socialize your puppy.

Remember, your puppy came into your life, not the other way around. He needs to learn all the loud noises that occur in your household. TV, radio, piano, vacuum cleaner, food processor, lawn mower and such. Always introduce your puppy to these "scary" noises by desensitizing your puppy to these new "monsters". Turn the machine on while the puppy is still far away, offer him treats and work your way closer and closer to the noisy object while giving the puppy a lots of treats over a few days, make sure not to baby talk and sooth the dog or it may think there's really a reason for concern since you're acting "weird". Take baby steps, do not push your puppy too fast, get a feel for its pace and slowly, slowly introduce the loud objects, sometimes may take weeks but going too fast may cause him to regress.

Walking: I usually use this [Balance harness](#) (or similar) in Small size for PON pups up to 4 months, for walking on leash and then switch to regular collar. It has to be a harness that has the ring to clip the leash on their chest, NOT THE BACK between the shoulders. Harnesses were made exclusively for sledding dogs (or pulling on leash like crazy) with clips on back to allow the dog put their entire chest and body into pulling the sled or their owner – this a harness that has a ring to clip in front, on the chest, it prevents them from pulling too much, and it has a ring on the back too- it's meant for seatbelts in conjunction with [a seat belt clip](#) to keep them safe while riding in the car. You need to get a collar and leash for the pup, the [XS 3/8" thick collar with leash](#) like this is perfect to start with, make sure to have it on very tight so they don't wiggle out of it.

12. Grooming. This breed requires coat maintenance!!! Most of the pet-store grooming supplies are not good enough to handle PON hair. Here's a list of what I use. Even if you cut your dog into a short puppy cut, you'll still need to bush them regularly and must get at least one brush and one comb minimum.

I use:

-[#1 All Systems ultimate Poodle Comb](#) which is 100% needed to get through the thick coat to comb his hair all the way down to skin, you need to make sure to catch all the matts before they get worse.

-[Chris Christensen Combo fine/coarse Comb](#) to get rid of the fine matts.
-[Chris Christensen Ice Slip 20mm brush](#) which is the best brush for dematting.
-[Chris Christensen 20mm Oblong Pin Brush](#) (without the little bobbles on ends of pins)- it's a softer brush in the same series I like to use too.
-[Chris Christensen Slicker brush](#) to take apart tight matts.
-[#1 All Systems Super Cleaning and Conditioning Shampoo](#) is highly concentrated shampoo and conditioner I love using and works great on their coat.....I have many many many hair products in my collection....trust me on this....the 2 combs (poodle and fine or a combo of the two) and one pin brush Ice Slip (20mm) and a slicker brush is all you need to groom this shaggy dog, don't waste your money on anything else..... Choose any brand of detangelers that you like, a brand I like is [Cowboy Magic](#) to take apart little tight matts to work it into the matt, [Crown Royale Magic Touch #2](#) is also good spray to keep the coat less matty but I rarely use either, unless I'm keeping them in show coat, if you're clipping them short don't bother with these. I use nail grinder rather than nail clippers, standard cordless Dremel 7700 or [Dremel 7350](#) tool with [Diamond Tip Nail Attachment](#) is great. You can use [Nail Clippers](#)- it is a personal preference, just make sure they're sharp and not the guillotine style. It is imperative you teach your dog that touching their feet and nails is a normal part of life, nails need to be cut, so they don't panic when you cut their nails. There's nothing more difficult than cutting dog nails on a dog that is panicked and is refusing to let you touch his feet- try to cut their nails once a week, just a sliver- it's mostly for practice on puppies, I cut my dogs nails every two weeks when they get baths, it is easy because they don't mind, but I've groomed dogs I had to practically sit on to hold them down to cut their nails while they squealed on top of their lungs, because they did not like their feet touched and it took an hour to get through 4 feet on ONE dog. So please, touch their feet and nails daily.

Because the PON is a long-haired breed with a dense undercoat, with hair that continually grows and does not shed, rather matts, it is important to establish a grooming routine from the time your puppy is brought home from the breeder. Again, there's nothing worse than having to brush a dog that is biting the brush and refusing to be groomed, whines and barks and is stressed during grooming. This is part of their life and always will be, make it easy on them and yourself. Using a table, whether it be a [professional groomer's table](#) (which is foldable and I could not live without it) or a waist high table with a non-skid bath mat so the dog does not slip, it is good for three reasons. It will save you from getting a severe backache (it is a back breaking job to groom a fully grown PON in full coat if it's matted and could take hours of brushing), and your dog will learn that being placed on the table means it's time to be groomed, not to play and he'll learn to cooperate and stay still or nap while you brush. This will also make it much easier for the dog and the professional groomer should you decide to hire someone to do the job. Best is to lay the dog on his side while you proceed with brushing one side and then flip him over and brush the other. A non-skid mat is important because if the table surface is slick, the dog will slide which can cause him to panic. It's important to introduce your puppy to regular grooming from a very young age, hair matting is minimal during the first 5-6 months and people often don't have the need to brush puppies but gentle brushing every day will get your puppy accustomed to being brushed and groomed and relax during brushing sessions. Once that 6th month comes, the undercoat starts coming through and matts will start appearing with a vengeance, and having a calm and trained puppy to let you detangle the matts is a lifesaver. Fighting with them while trying to pull out matts is no fun whatsoever and only teaches them that grooming hurts.

Before you begin to groom your dog, gather all the tools you need for the job: a good quality metal comb (I recommend a metal wide tooth poodle comb- [link above](#)), a pin brush and your detangler and /or spray conditioner ([links above](#)- or mix conditioner with water in a spray bottle). On puppies, a small brush can be used over most areas. Be careful to use gentle easy strokes and keep your groom time to a minimum at first. You need for him to like to be brushed and it's supposed to be relaxing and pleasant time. Use the comb to do the puppies face and legs. PONs of any age hate to have their legs and feet handled, so it's a good idea to be especially gentle on those areas. Handle your puppy's feet regularly, so they get used to the touch. This will make it less distressing to the puppy when the hair starts to grow longer and you must spend more time grooming the feet. As the puppy gets older the comb and pin brush will be used predominantly, the slicker brush tends to remove the fine undercoat which is not desirable and I only use it to remove mats if I find any. Begin by spraying your puppy with a fine mist of either water or a conditioning product ([link above](#)). First go over the coat with the pin brush to remove any loose hair. Brush the coat in the opposite direction of how it grows. Then take your comb and gather small sections, gently combing each section starting from the tips and working toward the base of the hair shaft to remove any mats. If you encounter any tiny fuzzies too small to remove with the comb, you can remove these gently with your fine comb. Work across the dog in rows, so as not to miss any spots paying special attention to the arm pits, chest and stomach areas. One of my dogs matts around the eyes more than anywhere else, another has mostly beard matted- they each have their "difficult" area.

It's IMPORTANT to teach your puppy to stay still and get him used to being groomed. The mats don't start appearing till they're about 6 months old and the grooming becomes more time consuming as well as unpleasant. It is hard to brush the mats out without pulling on hair, detangling is not pleasant either.....now that it is no longer fun and relaxing to be brushed, it's too late to attempt to teach the puppy to "like" being groomed and cooperate. Trust me....you want to teach your puppy to sit still while being groomed. They spend half their life on grooming tables!!!

If you come across any tough to remove matt, you can try spraying the matt with one of the many matt detanglers on the market to help in its removal ([link above](#)). Some people use a coupon-cutter or seam ripper to make several slits in the matt starting near the skin to break it up. This helps to remove the matt more easily but can also remove more of the coat so may not be an appropriate method for the groomer of show dogs. I regularly cut/clip hair out of their armpits as they matt terribly around there and it's not visible even on a show dog.

Of course, clipping your PON down in a "puppy cut" keeps groom time down to a minimum. The condition of the coat also makes a difference in the amount of groom time. I add some "raw salmon oil" into my dogs' diet, it contains omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids and it can make a major difference in the coat and skin condition of your dog. There are other coat enhancing diet supplements available, discuss the use with your veterinarian. Remember to use these products as directed - more is not better and can do more harm than good.

13. Treats. The vast majority of dog treats and toys sold by the largest pet retailers are made in China. The amount of China-made pet treats imported to North America has skyrocketed in the last decade from zero to 115 million pounds in 2021. Over the past few years, Chinese-made

jerky treats (particularly of the chicken and duck variety) have been linked to over 5000 illnesses and caused the deaths of thousands of dogs in the United States and one of them was mine. I will never feed my dogs anything that has not been made in my kitchen or made in the USA-and it has to be labeled as MADE in USA, not “packaged by” or “imported by” a company in the USA! If it’s made in the USA they will BRAG about it on the packaging, if it’s not there...move on! Please make sure NONE of the treats you feed your dog are MADE IN CHINA. I lost a dog to Chinese treats in 2011- they lost a customer forever.

14. Food: I feed raw meat and bones. Puppies are weaned on raw food and that is all I feed. I use premade ground [Small Batch](#) brand for dinner 8oz, and whole raw chicken necks, duck necks or chicken backs for breakfast, 8oz also. That’s it- a pound a day, all raw. I use this brand because I have a friend supplier, it’s not special, and there are many brands on the market. I used to feed [Oma’s Pride](#) and they have 4 weekly subscription delivery for free right to your door. It’s also a very good quality food. I buy chicken necks and back at a local butcher that orders me whole cases at wholesale price. I have lots of dogs, so I buy in bulk. I don’t force anyone to feed raw if they prefer not to- but I try to give my pups the best start in life and this is what I believe is best for them. If you’re on the fence about raw feeding please watch [Pet Fooled](#) documentary about the pet food industry- it’s sickening. I lost a dog to Chinese treats poisoning, I watched a client’s dog convulse on recalled kibble. I’m not sure what’s in the kibble to give it a 20 years shelf life- and I don’t want to know, I’ll never feed kibble. It’s difficult to know what’s best for your dog- I’ll leave the decision to you, do your research. A step down from raw but a huge leap from kibble are fresh made cooked foods, one that is advertised a lot is [Farmers Dog](#), that maybe a second option, there are many brands and home delivery services. It’s your dog, do your research. Vets (unless holistic) are not necessarily the best at diet recommendation- they think kibble is grand and truly kibble is pushed at vet schools too- I’m not surprised, they hold a huge market share in pet food world, why would they want to give it up?

I also use various NATURAL supplements....[Missing Link](#) is good and they get it with dinner daily, Fish Oil gels, sometimes Coconut oil or Vitamin E gels (I buy mine at Costco or other big box stores), This way you keep him healthy, cut down on vet bills and extend his lifespan.

15 Vaccinations: I vaccinate all my pups, all the recommended puppy shots called DHPP: canine distemper, infectious hepatitis, parainfluenza, and parvovirus combination shot (except for Lepto- a personal choice) this is done at 8, 12 and 16 weeks as recommended by my vet. I give them the 8 week vaccines before they leave and you’re responsible for 12 and 16 weeks set and at 16 weeks they get rabies shot too. I repeat a year later and then never again- I instead do titer tests (take a blood sample and run titer to establish immunity in the body) preventing over vaccination. To this day I never had any vaccine immunity low enough having to revaccinate. Rabies is the only “required” by law and I vaccinate every 3 years. The rest are a choice. You can do influenza and Bordetella annually as these are a good idea, similar to flu shot for humans and it’s required if you take the dog to puppy day care and such, where larger number of dogs congregate.

16 Insurance: I have health insurance on all my dogs. I use Trupanion. The monthly premium is \$65 on 90% no ceiling coverage and \$1000 deductible (I feel ok paying \$1000 for a surgery and such, but any more than that with as many dogs as I have would be a strain) you can chose higher premium and lower deductible. I recommend you get the insurance right away as once there's an illness of any kind and the dog is treated (for even a mild case of vomiting) it's considered pre-existing condition and they won't cover it or will argue about it being linked to previous stomach issues and who wants to fight with the insurance company- so insuring a puppy with NO pre-existing conditions is a must.

17 Spay/Neuter: I recommend waiting until about 11-12 month. Their skeletal growth is not complete till about then, if the procedure is done too early, it may take much longer for their growth plates to close and they tend to grow very tall and lanky and thin boned. For boys I would definitely wait till about 12 months. For girls you need to wait at minimum till the first heat cycle is complete (at 6-7 months) and then about 3 months after, otherwise their progesterone levels which climbed high during heat will drop fast once the uterus and ovaries are removed, mimicking pregnancy/birth like feeling (progesterone drops fast just before birth) and they act as if they're ready to deliver- Stressing during the post spay recovery. So at around 11-12 months is best timing.

18 Heartowrom and Flea meds: Please put them on a monthly heartworm preventative- it's important, as heartworm is very nasty to treat. I use Sentinel for heartworm preventative (it is an Rx prescription) and topical ([Advantix](#)- buy online) for flea/tick control. Many heartworm and flea meds can cause seizures in dogs, be careful what you use, do your research. I have seen some people that use Trifexis with PONs (also Rx)- which is a heartworm and flea control pill to avoid topical meds.

Recommended Books:

[Think Dog by John Fisher](#)

[Training The Perfect Puppy by Prisco](#)

[How to Raise A Puppy You Can Live With by Neil](#)

[The Monks of New Skete-The Art of Raising A Puppy](#)