



HORTON DOGS

SOCIALISATION

Getting your puppy ready for the world



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LET'S MAKE SURE WE DO THIS RIGHT

Socialisation is a vital aspect of raising a well-adjusted and confident dog. It involves actively seeking out new learning experiences for your furry friend, ensuring they have the opportunity to build positive memories in various environments. These experiences contribute to their sense of safety and security and shape their responses to the world as they mature.

WHAT SOCIALISATION ISN'T!

Socialisation is NOT allowing your puppy to run up and play with all of the random dogs they meet in the park. This can cause more trouble in the future with poor recall. In fact, it is best to teach them that most other dogs are none of their business.

However, having a couple of regular dog friends to go on walks with can be a great way for puppies to learn. A calmer older role model is always the best type of friend for your puppy.



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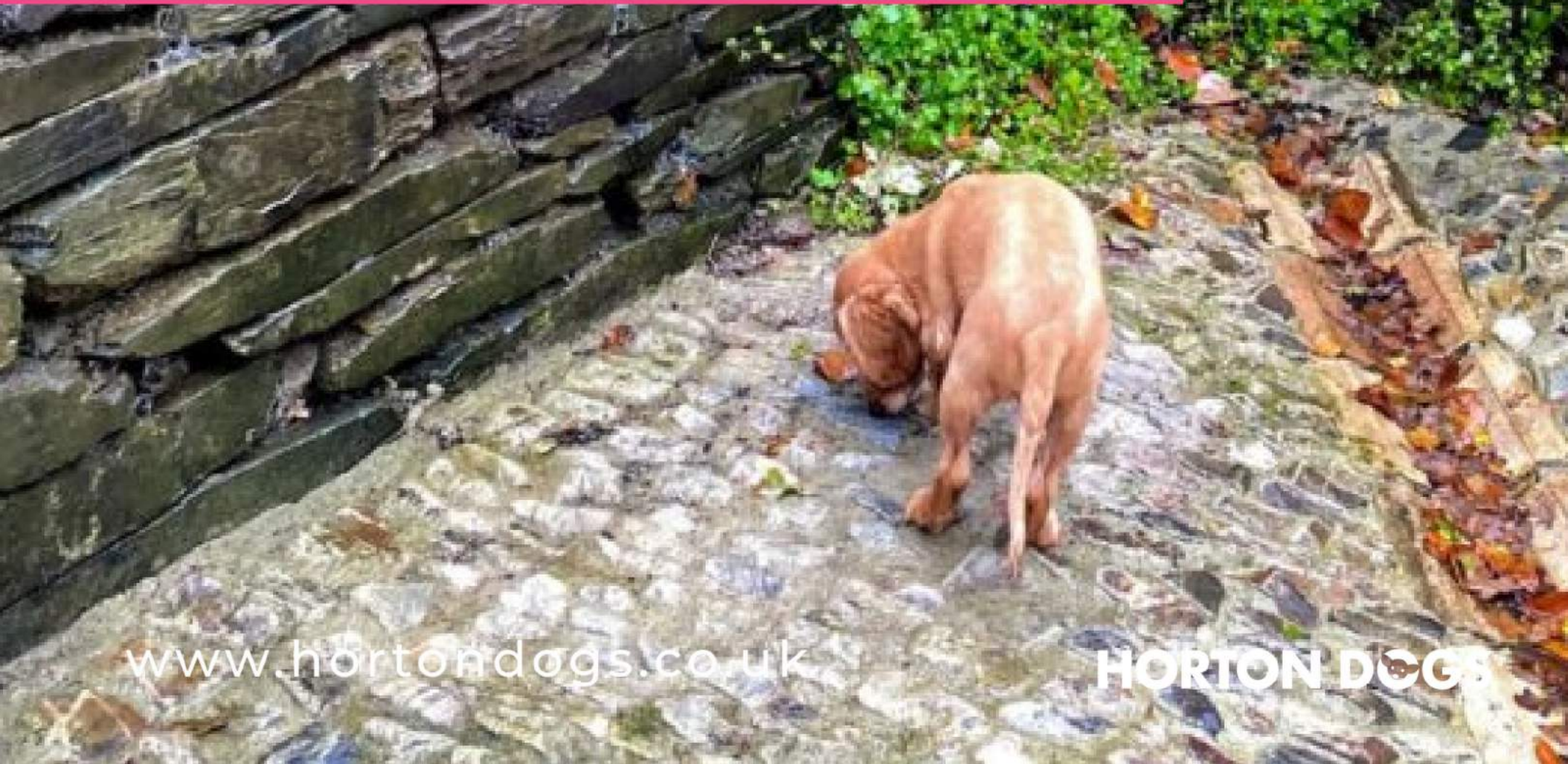
3 TOP MYTHS FOR PUPPY SOCIALISATION!

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Myth 1

You must socialise your puppy by meeting 100s of different dogs of all breed types and have lots of puppy play sessions.

We actually need to teach our puppies that random dogs we see are none of their business to prevent them from thinking every dog is their new best friend. Instead a calmer older role model is a lovely dog for your puppy to learn from.



MYTH 2

You must wait until your puppy has had all vaccinations before taking them out and about.

Lots can be done with fairly low risk. Explore new environments just be mindful of avoiding dirty areas or places where there are lots of dogs. If unsure, you can carry your puppy to new environments and in the safety of your arms they can watch the world around them.



MYTH 3

You need to let your puppy “face their fears” and “learn it's not so bad”

We do want to build up resilience and not be afraid to push them a little outside their comfort zone, however we are looking for good bounce back and recovery. A puppy that is a little unsure is very different to a puppy that is terrified. Learn to understand your puppy's body language and communication so you have a better idea of how they are handling a situation.

SOCIALISATION IDEAS!

Build resilience, confidence and
optimism through these simple
ideas

Socialisation Ideas

This doesn't have to be a checklist but a guide to give you some ideas.

It's crucial to focus on creating positive experiences. Approach new situations calmly, allowing your pup to explore and adjust at their own pace. Rushing them can lead to stress and hinder their progress. Patience, treats, and encouragement are key tools in helping your puppy feel brave and confident.

NOVELTY PARTY

There are plenty of things in the home, garden and out and about that are novel to your pup, so get creative and dig out that umbrella, raid your cupboards and sheds for buckets, crinkly ikea bags and anything safe you can find. Allow them to explore and even hide a couple of treats in there.

As your pup explores and goes in, under and around the objects things will move and make noises around them. Your dog has the choice to carry on exploring as they overcome barriers and novelty.

If your dog seems too worried by these things, take the difficulty level down a notch and start with some simple items such as a single cardboard box and work from there.

Noises

There are a lot of noises you can pair with some of their daily food such as knocking, doorbells, letterbox, garbage truck. This will help build a positive association with those things.

Play various sounds in the background while they enjoy a tasty chew. Things like the hairdryer, Hoover, dishwasher. Recorded sounds such as babies, children playing, car horns, thunderstorms and fireworks.



Positive Pairings

Here are a few things that we can notice out and about, for the more timid pups I tend to give a treat whenever these distractions appear:

- Traffic, Cyclists, Car horns
- Joggers, People, Children
- Pushchairs, kids scooters, skateboards
- Other dogs
- Other animals or wildlife
- The wind rustling
- Dustbin truck
- Umbrellas
- Kids laughing and screaming

If they seem to be worried then try observing from a greater distance. You can also engage in your own fun activity while these things are nearby. We want them to learn this is all just part of daily life.

New Surroundings

Think about the various environment you can visit with your puppy, being mindful that some will be much more challenging than others.

- Parks
- Woods
- Cafe
- Pub gardens
- Garden Centres
- Supermarket carpark
- Beaches
- Bridges
- Town centre
- Farm
- Train station
- Bus stop
- School run

Always be mindful of other people, animals and livestock. Never allow your dog to worry livestock. Keep them on lead if you need to.



PLAY DRESS UP

Another fun and easy game is to play dress up in front of your puppy (you not the pup!). Raid the dressing up box for those big wizard hats, jingly Xmas jumpers, crazy wigs.

Be mindful not to scare your puppy, if they back away, bark or show any change in behaviour, take it down a notch.

SOCIALISATION OUT & ABOUT

Here are a few tips for when you
are out and about

DOG WALKING ETIQUETTE

It is important to be aware that not all dogs like other puppies or dogs running up to them, so if you see a dog on lead please put your puppy or dog on lead.

Some dogs are on lead for a reason, they may be recovering from an injury, have poor recall, or worried by other dogs. The last thing that owner and dog needs is your very friendly puppy bouncing up to them.

That owner may not say it but they will be very thankful you put your puppy on lead.

If you want your puppy to greet another dog, always ask the owner first.



1 in 5 rule

To avoid ending up with a dog that runs off to greet every single dog or person in the distance we use the 'meet 1 in 5 rule'.

This means that most of the time we don't say hello to the dog or person walking past but instead we just keep walking.

If there is someone you would like to meet and it is appropriate to do so then add a release cue "Ok Go" that indicates to your puppy it is ok to say hello. Make sure you ask the other owner first.

DISENGAGEMENT

Quite often puppies will struggle to disengage from other puppies, dogs, or people. Along with the 1 in 5 rule mentioned previously these tips will really help avoid struggles with recall.

3 SECOND RULE: Greeting other people and dogs should be short and sweet, 3 seconds max, then encourage them back to you and feed a few treats so it becomes a great deal coming back.

WALK AND TALK: Keep your puppy moving to avoid any conflict between puppies and dogs, even if this adds 5 mins onto your walk.



ROLE MODELS

Dogs like to copy, so a good natured older dog can be a fantastic role model for your puppy, a dog that doesn't find life worrying, who takes things in their stride and knows that most things aren't their business.

Remember not to let your puppy keep pestering the older dog, we do not want to put that dog or puppy in a situation where the dog tells the puppy off.

A few strategies would be to walk together while on lead, or if visiting, have a filled kong and a puppy lead to give the older dog some peace and quiet.



PUPPY PLAY

Puppy play is not essential, instead you want to spend more time with a calmer older dog, however if you do have a friend with another puppy then these are the things to consider. Play should be well matched. There are confident pups and there are timid pups so be mindful of this, look out for signs that one pup may be too much for the other, we want them to both enjoy it. Play should be short and fun and always finish with a tasty treat back with the owner.

They are never too young to start learning to come back to you after play. After they have had a little break and a chance to calm down, you can let them have a little play again.



BE THEIR GUARDIAN

While dogs are playing, if they look worried or the play is too much for them, don't be afraid to intervene. Separate the pups by calmly holding onto their harness, pop them back on lead and give them a treat as you both walk away.

You are also teaching your pups that good things happen when they come away from play and back to you, this is such a valuable life skill.

GUARD THEIR CONFIDENCE and your training

Don't be afraid to say no to other people. Some people or children may want to cuddle your puppy, this may not be the best thing for them right now. Either your puppy may be way too excitable or may find it worrying. Have ready a phrase you can say to people so you can really guard your puppy's confidence, guard their progress and their training. The same goes for other people and their dogs.

Practice saying "He wouldn't enjoy that right now, maybe later when he is more confident, but thank you for asking"

OR " He is very jumpy right now, maybe another time, but thank you for asking"





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WHAT NEXT

More free Tips and Advise on our website:

www.hortondogs.co.uk

Contact Cathy to discuss what you would like to work on and grow that bond between you and your puppy.

Call 07776 235809

Email cathy@hortondogs.co.uk