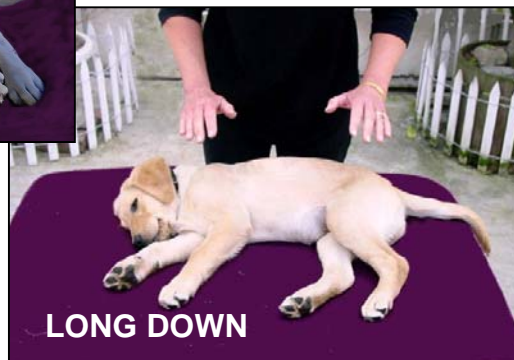
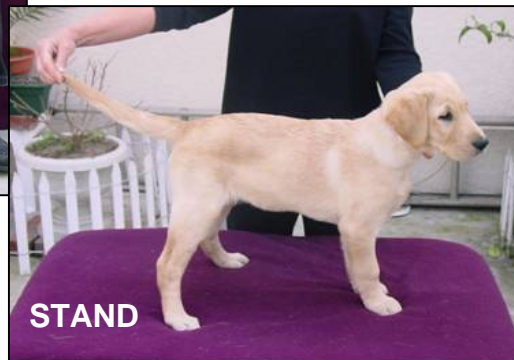
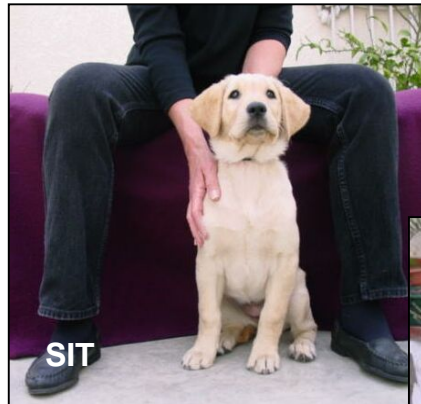


1-2-3-4 Handling



Raising a Guide Dog Puppy
with L.A. Southwest Guide Dog
Raisers

LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST GUIDE DOG RAISERS
Post Office Box 1898
Manhattan Beach, CA 90267
www.guidedogpups.com

Copyright © by L.A. Southwest Guide Dog Raisers
First edition published 1995
Current edition published 2004

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction
for publication in whole or in part in any form without
permission in writing by the author.

Author: Pat Whitehead

Edited and Photographed by:
Gail Hardy
Trish Hittinger

1-2-3-4 Handling
approved by
Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc.
www.guidedogs.com

1-2-3-4 HANDLING

WHAT IS HANDLING?

1-2-3-4 Handling is a process the Raiser uses to teach a puppy to remain calm and compliant while his body is handled. There are four different positions in which the Raiser places the puppy while the Raiser completes certain handling techniques. The four positions are:

1. Sit (also called the Calming Sit)
2. Stand
3. Layover
4. Long Down

A puppy's ability to tolerate being touched and handled by a person is not automatic; it must be taught. Many puppies do not like their legs and body to be handled. It is essential that Guide Dog puppies allow different kinds of physical manipulation.

WHY SHOULD I DO HANDLING?

- Handling helps the puppy learn how to behave when others touch him, such as during grooming, a veterinarian examination, or while removing a foreign object.
- Handling helps teach the puppy self-control and the proper relationship between people and the puppy. Early positive patterning of appropriate behavior during handling makes it easier to work with the puppy when he is older and larger.
- Handling helps build the puppy's trust and strengthens the bond between the puppy and Raiser.
- If anything unusual is noticed during the 1-2-3-4 Handling, report to your Leader.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I DO HANDLING?

Handle your puppy **EVERY DAY** he is with you right up until he returns to San Rafael. For baby puppies, two or three times a day is ideal.

RAISER TIPS TO USE THROUGHOUT 1-2-3-4 HANDLING

- Frequently praise, talk to and stroke the puppy throughout positions 1, 2 and 3. Position 4 is completed using a more authoritative demeanor. Motions are slow and deliberate. The goal of all positions is to end with success.
- During positions 1, 2 and 3, use a calm, low, soothing voice and focus on the puppy. Do not excite the puppy or encourage him to become wiggly.
- Relax and breathe regularly, communicating your calm, relaxed attitude to the puppy.
- Complete all positions slooowwly. Do not rush. The positions you are teaching your puppy are ones he will use for life; thus, a calm happy start is important.
- Use collar corrections or distractions as needed. For example, if the puppy gets mouthy, redirect his focus and/or give a light collar correction. Then, note how the puppy was able to get access to your hand and readjust your position until he settles down.
- Use "Big Hands" (flat palms with fingers slightly spread) to place the puppy back in position if he moves. Big Hands communicate your confidence and leadership.

POSITION 1: SIT

1.1 Kneel on the floor or sit on a couch. Be sure the surface in front of you is not slippery. Use a carpet or mat under the puppy, if needed. A non-slippery surface helps the puppy relax and be less fidgety.



1.2 Sit your puppy in front of you, facing away from you and as close to your body/couch as possible. Puppies often back out of what they think may be a stressful or new situation. With the puppy facing outward and against something, he cannot back away. *Praise.*



1.3 Loop your thumb under the puppy's collar to enable you to control the puppy or give a correction if he mouths or pulls away.



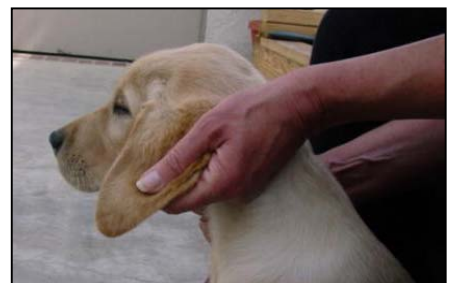
1.4 With your free hand, gently and very slowly stroke the puppy's chest upward and/or downward using Big Hands. *Praise.*

TIP: This position, along with the slow, gentle stroking, is called the **CALMING SIT** and can be used anytime the puppy is too energized, especially in public.

POSITION 1: SIT

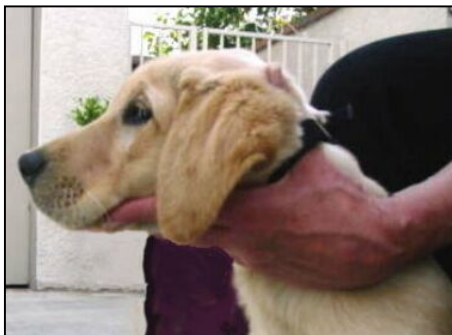
1.5 Examine each ear.

- Place your hand with the thumb under the collar so that your fingers support the puppy's muzzle.
- For body sensitive puppies only, apply light pressure at the base of the ear opening. Once the pup accepts this touch, continue with deeper ear examination. *Praise.*
- Insert your finger in the opening of the puppy's ear canal. If a large amount of dark brown, smelly wax comes out, consult your Leader. Never use a Q-tip or similar object.
- Smell the ear for signs of an infection. If there is a sour odor or if the ear is red, dry, and/or leathery, consult your Leader.
- Massage the ear from the base toward the tip, using gentle strokes.



POSITION 1: SIT

1.6 Examine the nose and each eye for signs of redness or discharge.



- Place your hand with the thumb under the collar so that your fingers support the puppy's muzzle. Examine each eye, using the thumb and middle or index finger of the other hand to spread the skin above and below the eye. *Praise.*



- With the fingers of your free hand, gently massage the area around the puppy's eyes by moving the balls of your three central fingers in a slow, circular, clockwise motion. Stay about one inch from the puppy's eyes. After one rotation, lift fingers, move location, and repeat. *Praise.*
- If a discharge from the eyes or nose is present, consult your Leader.

1.7 Massage the gums; examine the gums/teeth.



- Some puppies may not be ready for a full mouth exam. For those puppies, gently massage the outer surface of the flew with a slow circular motion using the balls of your fingers. Gradually, over a period of days, work in until the puppy comfortably allows access. *Praise.*

POSITION 1: SIT

- Lift the flew and gently massage the puppy's gums with one or two fingers, using small clockwise motions. This will prepare the puppy for brushing the teeth. *Praise.*



- Lift the flew and look at the teeth and gums. It may take a few days for comfortable access. *Praise.*
- Check the gums for bleeding, swelling, redness or looking excessively white.
- Check the teeth for black/discolored teeth, missing or broken teeth, an adult tooth overlapping a baby tooth, or bleeding or swollen gums.



- Bring your hand up under the muzzle. Using your thumb and middle finger, gently press in the sides of the back of the mouth to cause the mouth to open. Examine the inside of the mouth. *Praise.*



- Report problems or concerns to your Leader.

POSITION 1: SIT

1.8 Check both front paws.

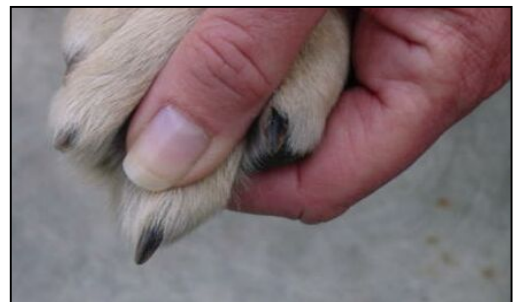
- Keep your thumb under the puppy's collar to correct if puppy mouths.
- Move your other hand down a front leg to the paw.



- Check between the toes for bumps, bruises, cuts, foxtails, etc. *Praise.*



- Gently press each nail as if you are going to "present" the nail for clipping. *Praise.*



POSITION 2: STAND

The puppy begins in the Sit position.

2.1 Stand the puppy using one or more of the Stand Techniques described on pages 14-16 of these guidelines.

2.2 Starting at the neck, stroke the puppy, moving along the shoulders and back to the end of the tail. Your hand is "cupped" over - not pressing on - the spine as you go to the end of the tail. Give the tail two very gentle tugs as you move to the end. *Praise.*



POSITION 3: LAYOVER

Layover is the act of placing the puppy down on its side with its legs facing outward in preparation for further examination. The picture shows a puppy in a completed layover. As you do the layover, you may stand, kneel, stoop, or sit next to the side of the puppy, depending on your preference and agility.



3.1 Place the puppy in the layover position using the method suggested by your Leader.

Layover Method A is used for young puppies that do not yet know the Down command.



- Place the puppy into a Sit facing left or right. Shift puppy onto inside hip. Place one open hand on the outside shoulder near the elbow. The other open hand is on the inside shoulder in the same position.



- Slide the open hand that is on the inside shoulder down the leg, folding the leg inward. While doing this, exert enough pressure on the puppy with both hands to lift him slightly and guide the puppy into a down-on-side position. *Praise.*

Layover Method B is used for puppies that know the Down command.

- Give the Down command. Once the puppy is down, gently position the puppy on his side with his legs extending outward away from you. *Praise.*

POSITION 3: LAYOVER

- 3.2 After the puppy is on his side, place your thumb under his collar. Stroke and *praise* him. Correct any attempts to get up with a collar check or by repeating the Layover Method you used.



- 3.3 Gently lift the puppy's back leg and check his tummy. Stroke his tummy slowly while giving *praise* in a calm voice. Take your time. TIP: Some people use a special word when looking at the tummy which the puppy later associates with the action in a positive way.



- 3.4 Check both back paws thoroughly as you did the front paws (1.8). BEFORE allowing the puppy to get up, proceed immediately to the Long Down (Position 4).



POSITION 4: LONG DOWN

The Raiser's demeanor during the Long Down is *very important* because the Long Down emphasizes the Raiser's confidence and leadership. Here are a few pointers:

- NO stroking or talking. You are establishing a relationship of mutual trust and respect, yet on your terms. You are not mad at the puppy, just establishing leadership. Remain calm.
- Do NOT stare at the puppy. Limit eye contact. Looking slightly to the side works better.
- Breathe regularly.

NOTE: The Long Down is *never* an appropriate technique to use in public. Instead, use the Calming Sit (see 1.4), distractions, or other focus activities for a puppy that is acting out.

The puppy begins in the Layover Position. The Raiser is standing, kneeling, stooping, or sitting next to the side of the puppy.

4.1 Using Big Hands (flat palms with fingers slightly spread), move your hands to the puppy's shoulder and thigh areas while exerting a very light pressure with your open palms and fingers. Use just enough pressure for the puppy to accept the position, settles down and, finally, sighs or relaxes. Do not apply too much pressure. Do not push.



4.2 The puppy's head is to remain on the ground. If the puppy struggles or lifts his head, keep one open hand on the thigh and move the other hand to the pressure point below the ear at the curve of the jaw. With gentle pressure on this spot, move the head back down on the ground. You may also take hold of the flat collar to provide extra support when repositioning the head.



POSITION 4: LONG DOWN

- 4.3 When the puppy has accepted the Long Down and has relaxed, lift your hand a few inches above the thigh but remain ready to place it back if the puppy moves about. Your other hand remains lightly on the puppy's shoulder.



- 4.4 Slowly lift your hand a few inches from the shoulder but remain ready to place it back if the puppy moves about. The desired outcome is for the puppy to lie quietly on his side.



- 4.5 After an appropriate amount of time (3 to 10 seconds for little puppies or up to a minute or two for older puppies), stand up and walk away. If using a table, lift the puppy to the ground and walk away. Say nothing. Let the puppy get up when he is ready. If the puppy comes to you for approval, you may pattern/cue/say "Sit" before giving praise.

USE OF THE LONG DOWN

The Long Down may very occasionally be used for a puppy that is acting out and is not responding to corrective techniques. Use of the Long Down is *never* appropriate in public. Instead, use the Calming Sit (see 1.4), distractions, or other focus activities.

Use of the Long Down *never* involves force or anger. If the Long Down is overused, used inappropriately, or executed incorrectly, the puppy could become submissive with negative behaviors or may become aggressive toward the handler. Always consult your Leader.

STAND TECHNIQUES

In patterning the Stand behavior, Raisers are initially patterning the puppy to stand in response to touch and a slight forward pull (gentle arcing motion) on the collar. The verbal Stand command is not given for the babies, just the touch cue. The Stand command is used in later weeks, according to your Leader's direction. Eventually, the puppy will learn to stand in response to only the verbal command or touch.

Begin by using the "Tummy Circle" technique and progress to the "Touch the Spot" or "On Command Only" technique. You may not need to use all the techniques listed here in order to teach your puppy to "Stand" on command. Use those techniques to which your puppy responds best and which work best for you.

All techniques below begin with the puppy in a Sit position and the Raiser standing next to the side of the puppy. The Stand position is **not** to be achieved by picking up the puppy and placing him in a standing position unless the puppy is being placed on a vet table.

TUMMY CIRCLE

1. Move your hand over the top of the puppy's back and place it underneath on his tummy at, or a little bit below, his navel.
2. Apply a slight, circular, upward pressure under the puppy's tummy as if mixing a thick pancake batter by hand. This causes/patterns the puppy to stand.
3. If the puppy starts to Sit, repeat the slight circular pressure. **Do not lift or pull the puppy up into a Stand.**
4. *Praise.*



STAND TECHNIQUES

ARM UNDER THE PUPPY

1. Keeping your palm down (parallel to the ground), move your arm under the puppy just in front of his back legs in the tuck area. Your hand will end up on the outer side of the puppy.
2. Lift your arm a bit. When the puppy feels your arm under his body, he will automatically rise.
3. Lower your arm a bit. If the puppy struggles, raise your arm again until he is still.
4. *Praise.*



THIGH SLIDE

1. Palm facing you, slide your hand down the inside of the puppy's thigh that is closest to you. Continue across the thigh towards the rear, causing the reflex action of standing.
2. *Praise.*



STAND TECHNIQUES

TOUCH THE SPOT

1. This technique is used after successful responses to those techniques on pages 14-15.
2. From either side of the puppy, lightly touch the puppy's "tuck" (the spot on the torso slightly in front of the thigh).
3. *Praise.*



ON COMMAND ONLY

1. Say "Stand" without touching any part of the puppy. You may cue the puppy to move with either a step forward or a slight forward pull on the collar.
2. *Praise.*

TIP: With these techniques, you may also simultaneously use the puppy's collar to assist in standing. Take hold of the puppy's collar and pull forward with a gentle arcing motion. Using the collar only as a cue works best with older puppies with more experience.

**If you have any questions or concerns
as you use these Handling techniques,
always contact your Leader.**

Handlers/Photographers
Leader/Raiser Pat, Raiser Gail, Raiser Trish



Guide Dog Pups Loden, Glee, and Satchmo