

Shy dogs

Puppies can be shy for many different reasons, but how YOU respond to their behaviour is critical to their future confidence

Recognise fear

Different dogs show fear in different ways. Some symptoms are obvious: your puppy may have his tail down, his head low, ears back and he may not want to walk or eat. Other symptoms are more difficult to spot. Your puppy may bark or lunge. He may jump up at you and look like he's being 'naughty'. Don't be cross – he's anxious already!

Action! Recognise fear when you see it and don't kid yourself it will go away with age. Ask your trainer for additional help if you are worried.

Ignore anxiety, reward bravery

It's human nature to want to reassure a puppy or dog that's scared. However, dogs just don't understand English – so this means that he will interpret your soothing words as praise for his fearful behaviour. Ignore all of his fearful behaviour. Don't look at him, talk to him or touch him when he's being anxious. Instead, look for brave behaviour and reward him lavishly.

Action! Ignore (really ignore – no touching, talking or looking) all fearful behaviour. Instead, reward bravery with treats, attention and praise.

Feel the fear and do it anyway

Time is critically short! What happens before your puppy is 16-18 weeks old will influence his future behaviour forever. Get him out and about – everywhere, every day! No excuses. The more you expose him to the outside world, the more his confidence will build. Invest in your puppy by giving him the extra time he needs now.

Action! Get your puppy out and about to as many places as you can EVERY day! No excuses!

Have you taken your puppy to?

- ✓ **Shops**
- ✓ **The pub?**
- ✓ **A garden centre?**
- ✓ **To see and hear traffic**
- ✓ **Lots of car journies**
- ✓ **To see other animals, such as other dogs/horses/sheep**
- ✓ **A busy area, eg. town centre/outside a school at home time?**