

# TRAINING A COCKER SPANIEL

**COCKER SPANIELS ARE INTELLIGENT DOGS AND CAN BE TRAINED WITH PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE. THEY RESPOND BEST TO REWARD BASED TRAINING.**

**HOUSE TRAINING.** All puppies will leave the nest to relieve themselves as soon as they are able. When they go to their new homes they need to go outside on waking, after meals and frequently when they are awake. There is no point scolding a puppy after the event – be more vigilant next time and praise when they do their toilet outside. Many puppies are used to newspaper so will use this if they can't get outside. Puppy pens and crates are useful but pups still need to go outside regularly.

**RESPONDING TO THEIR NAME.** Choose a one or two syllable name for a puppy and stick to it. Use the name to get the dog's attention then use a command word like 'come', 'sit' etc. A 'watch' command is useful.



**FEEDING TIME.** Make sure the dog has somewhere quiet to eat. Don't snatch the food bowl away but go to bowl and add extra bits to encourage the dog not to mind if anyone goes near his food. Titbits can be given as a reward, but make sure the dog takes them gently.

**WALKING ON A LEAD.** Once the pup is vaccinated he can start to go out for little walks – just a few yards to start with building up gradually. Over exercise is bad for dogs, it affects their skeletal development.

Use a collar and lead, not a harness. The collar should fit around the neck snugly so the dog can't back out of it. An identity tag is required by law even if the dog is microchipped. It **MUST** have owner's name and address and you will want a contact number as well. Take a poo bag with you.



**TRAINING CLASSES.** It is important to take your dog to some classes to socialise him and help you to teach him some basic obedience. Classes aimed at the Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Awards are ideal for cockers. They can work through the various levels and win rosettes and certificates. Basic obedience is the cornerstone of any dog activity and helps to strengthen the bond between dog and owner.

**COMING WHEN CALLED.** Start with saying the dog's name and 'come'. Make it fun and reward the dog with fuss or a treat. Outdoors, start on lead and don't let the dog off until you are confident he will come back. If the dog does disappear never punish him when he returns – no matter how stressed you are.

**KENNEL CLUB GOOD CITIZEN DOG SCHEME** is run by training clubs throughout the country. Find your local club by visiting the Kennel Club website.

**PLAYING WITH A TOY.** Cockers are gundogs and have soft mouths. Never play tug of war. Play with a toy and tell him to 'fetch' and 'give'. Always praise when he gives you the article- even if it is your best shoe.



**SIT.** Say the dog's name and 'sit'. You can hold the titbit above his nose and gently push bottom down. Reward while he is sitting.



**STAND.** Say dogs name and 'stand'. A titbit or tickling inside thigh will help. This is necessary for show dogs.



**DOWN.** Start with the dog in a 'sit', hold a titbit under his nose and take it down to the ground. Give the titbit when the dog is down.



**AGILITY.** Once your dog has some basic obedience he might enjoy agility. Find out about classes by visiting [www.agility.net](http://www.agility.net).



**HEARING DOGS FOR DEAF PEOPLE.** Cockers with some working ability can be trained as Hearing Dogs. Their size and keenness makes them ideal in a home situation.



**SNIFFER DOGS.** Cockers and springers with working ability can use their gundog instincts by becoming sniffer dogs for explosives, drugs, cash and even cancer. Trainers reward their dogs by giving them a game with their favourite toy.

