

Complete Insider's Guide To The Border Collie



**The Insider's Complete Guide
to the
*Border Collie***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1	
ALL ABOUT THE BORDER COLLIE.....	7
HISTORY AND EARLY BEGINNINGS OF THE BORDER COLLIE.....	7
 THE NAME.....	7
 HISTORY.....	8
 FAMOUS BORDER COLLIES.....	8
BREED STANDARDS FOR THE BORDER COLLIE.....	9
 APPEARANCE.....	10
 COAT.....	10
COLOR.....	10
FOREQUARTERS AND HINDQUARTERS.....	11
GAIT.....	11
HEAD.....	11
NECK, BACK AND BODY	12
SIZE, SUBSTANCE, PROPORTION.....	12
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT A BORDER COLLIE?.....	13
 TRAINING.....	13
 EXERCISE.....	13
 TEMPERAMENT.....	14
 CHILDREN AND OTHER PETS.....	14
 COMPETITIONS.....	14
2	
IS A BORDER COLLIE RIGHT FOR YOU?.....	16
IS A BORDER COLLIE RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?.....	16
 EXERCISE.....	16
 INTELLIGENCE.....	17
 TRAINING.....	17
 SOCIALIZATION.....	18
CHOOSING A MALE OR FEMALE DOG.....	19
 MALES.....	19
 FEMALES.....	20
 SIMILARITIES.....	20
3	
GETTING A BORDER COLLIE.....	22
DECIDING ON A PUPPY OR ADULT BORDER COLLIE.....	22
 THE BENEFITS OF A BORDER COLLIE PUPPY.....	23
 THE DIFFICULTIES WITH A BORDER COLLIE PUPPY.....	23
 THE BENEFITS OF AN ADULT BORDER COLLIE.....	24
 THE PROBLEMS WITH AN ADULT BORDER COLLIE	24
WHERE TO BUY A BORDER COLLIE.....	25
 RESCUE SHELTERS.....	25
 PET STORES.....	26
 BREEDER.....	27
FINDING A GOOD BORDER COLLIE BREEDER.....	28

<u>WHY GET A PUPPY FROM A BORDER COLLIE BREEDER?</u>	28
<u>WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK A BORDER COLLIE BREEDER?</u>	29
<u>WHAT SHOULD A BORDER COLLIE BREEDER ASK YOU?</u>	30
<u>HOW MUCH WILL A BORDER COLLIE COST?</u>	31
<u>PET STORES</u>	31
<u>RESCUES</u>	31
<u>BREEDERS</u>	32
<u>RESCUE CENTERS</u>	32
<u>WHAT DOES THE PRICE INCLUDE?</u>	33
<u>CHOOSING A HEALTHY BORDER COLLIE</u>	34
<u>MATURE DOGS</u>	34
<u>PUPPIES</u>	35
<u>REGISTRIES, REFERRALS AND CONTRACTS</u>	36
<u>CONTRACTS</u>	37
4	
BRINGING YOUR BORDER COLLIE HOME	39
<u>BRINGING HOME A NEW BORDER COLLIE PUPPY</u>	39
<u>BASIC SUPPLIES</u>	40
<u>SAFETY</u>	41
<u>TRANSITION</u>	42
<u>ATTITUDE</u>	42
<u>EXPECTATIONS</u>	42
<u>PREPARING TO BRING HOME A GROWN BORDER COLLIE DOG</u>	46
<u>SUPPLIES</u>	46
<u>PREPARING YOUR HOME</u>	46
<u>WHAT TO EXPECT</u>	47
<u>INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO OTHERS</u>	48
<u>INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO ANOTHER DOG</u>	48
<u>INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO A CAT</u>	49
<u>INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO OTHER SPECIES</u>	49
<u>INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO STRANGERS AND CHILDREN</u>	50
<u>CHILD SAFETY AND DOGS</u>	50
5	
YOUR NEW DOG'S NEEDS	52
<u>EXERCISING YOUR BORDER COLLIE</u>	52
<u>AGE</u>	53
<u>PHYSICAL CONDITION</u>	53
<u>VARIETY</u>	54
<u>DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES</u>	54
<u>DIET AND NUTRITION BASICS</u>	55
<u>OMNIVORES NOT CARNIVORES</u>	55
<u>WHAT ARE THE DIETARY NEEDS OF A BORDER COLLIE DOG?</u>	55
<u>WHAT NOT TO FEED YOUR BORDER COLLIE</u>	56
<u>FEEDING YOUR DOG</u>	57
<u>WET VS. DRY</u>	58
<u>SCHEDULED FEEDING VS. FREE FEEDING</u>	59
<u>HOME COOKING FOR YOUR BORDER COLLIE</u>	59
<u>PREMIUM FOODS</u>	60
6	
TRAINING YOUR DOG	61

<u>TIPS FOR TRAINING YOUR BORDER COLLIE.....</u>	<u>61</u>
<u> MAKE TRAINING FUN.....</u>	<u>62</u>
<u> MAKE TRAINING NATURAL.....</u>	<u>62</u>
<u> KEEP TRAINING CONSISTENT.....</u>	<u>63</u>
<u> PATIENCE IS THE KEY.....</u>	<u>63</u>
<u> NEVER HIT A PUPPY.....</u>	<u>63</u>
<u> GET IN A ROUTINE.....</u>	<u>64</u>
<u>THE BASICS OF DOG TRAINING.....</u>	<u>64</u>
<u> TEACHING YOUR DOG TO COME.....</u>	<u>65</u>
<u> TEACHING YOUR DOG TO SIT.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u> TEACHING YOUR DOG TO LAY DOWN.....</u>	<u>67</u>
<u> TEACHING YOUR DOG TO STAY.....</u>	<u>67</u>
<u> WALKING WITH A LEASH.....</u>	<u>68</u>
<u>HOUSE TRAINING YOUR PUPPY OR DOG.....</u>	<u>69</u>
<u> CRATE TRAINING.....</u>	<u>69</u>
<u> PAPER TRAINING.....</u>	<u>71</u>
<u> LITTER BOX TRAINING.....</u>	<u>72</u>
<u>TIPS FOR HOUSE TRAINING AN OLDER BORDER COLLIE DOG.....</u>	<u>72</u>

7

MAINTENANCE OF A HEALTHY DOG..... 74

<u>GROOMING YOUR BORDER COLLIE.....</u>	<u>74</u>
<u> BRUSHING.....</u>	<u>74</u>
<u> CLIPPING.....</u>	<u>75</u>
<u>BATHING YOUR BORDER COLLIE DOG.....</u>	<u>75</u>
<u>EAR CARE FOR DOGS.....</u>	<u>77</u>
<u> GENERAL EAR CARE.....</u>	<u>78</u>
<u> YEARLY CHECK-UPS.....</u>	<u>79</u>
<u>CLAW CLIPPING AND CARE FOR CANINES.....</u>	<u>79</u>
<u> CLIPPING THE NAILS.....</u>	<u>79</u>
<u> DEWCLAWS.....</u>	<u>80</u>
<u>VACCINATION REGIMES.....</u>	<u>80</u>
<u> SIDE EFFECTS.....</u>	<u>82</u>
<u> EXISTING CONDITIONS.....</u>	<u>82</u>

8

MEDICAL CARE OF YOUR DOG..... 83

<u>PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE.....</u>	<u>83</u>
<u> DAILY AND WEEKLY.....</u>	<u>83</u>
<u> WEEKLY TO MONTHLY.....</u>	<u>85</u>
<u>DENTAL CARE.....</u>	<u>85</u>
<u> TEETH.....</u>	<u>85</u>
<u> PROPER CARE OF CANINE TEETH.....</u>	<u>86</u>
<u> BONES.....</u>	<u>87</u>
<u> CONCERNS.....</u>	<u>87</u>
<u>MEDICAL CARE.....</u>	<u>87</u>
<u> HIP DYSPLASIA OR H.D.....</u>	<u>88</u>
<u> COLLIE EYE ANOMALY OR CEA.....</u>	<u>88</u>
<u> NEURONAL CEROID LIPOFUSCINOSIS OR CL.....</u>	<u>88</u>
<u> OSTEOCHONDRITIS DISSECANS OR OCD.....</u>	<u>89</u>
<u> PROGRESSIVE RETINAL ATROPHY OR PRA.....</u>	<u>89</u>
<u> ANAL GLANDS.....</u>	<u>89</u>

<u>ALLERGIES.....</u>	<u>90</u>
<u>SPAYING AND NEUTERING YOUR DOG.....</u>	<u>91</u>
<u>WHEN TO SPAY OR NEUTER.....</u>	<u>92</u>
<u>WHAT ANIMALS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BREED?.....</u>	<u>92</u>
<u>PREGNANCY.....</u>	<u>93</u>
<u>PREGNANCY SIGNS.....</u>	<u>93</u>
<u>BIRTH.....</u>	<u>94</u>
<u>FALSE PREGNANCY.....</u>	<u>95</u>

9

MANAGEMENT OF COMMON DOG BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS .. 96

<u>CONTROLLING UNNECESSARY BARKING.....</u>	<u>96</u>
<u>PUNISHMENT.....</u>	<u>97</u>
<u>TRAINING.....</u>	<u>97</u>
<u>JUMPING.....</u>	<u>98</u>
<u>PUPPIES.....</u>	<u>98</u>
<u>ADOLESCENT DOGS.....</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>BITING AND NIPPING.....</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>REASONS DOGS BITE OR NIP.....</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>TRAINING A PUPPY.....</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>TRAINING OLDER DOGS.....</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>SEPARATION ANXIETY.....</u>	<u>102</u>
<u>SEPARATION ANXIETY BEHAVIORS.....</u>	<u>102</u>
<u>WAYS TO HANDLE SEPARATION ANXIETY.....</u>	<u>103</u>
<u>DIGGING.....</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>REASONS FOR DIGGING.....</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>PREVENTION.....</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>CHEWING AND TEETHING.....</u>	<u>105</u>
<u>PUPPIES AND CHEWING.....</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>CORRECTING A CHEWER.....</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>EATING RELATED PROBLEMS.....</u>	<u>107</u>
<u>FOOD.....</u>	<u>107</u>
<u>DENTAL PROBLEMS.....</u>	<u>108</u>
<u>LACK OF EXERCISE.....</u>	<u>108</u>
<u>PICA.....</u>	<u>108</u>
<u>REFUSING TO EAT VS. FINICKY EATERS.....</u>	<u>109</u>
<u>COPROPHAGIA.....</u>	<u>109</u>
<u>ADULT DOGS.....</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>CORRECTING THE PROBLEM.....</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>CONCERNS.....</u>	<u>110</u>

10

THE AGING DOG..... 112

<u>CARE OF THE AGING DOG.....</u>	<u>112</u>
<u>ARTHRITIS, PAIN AND STIFFNESS.....</u>	<u>113</u>
<u>INCREASED WATER CONSUMPTION.....</u>	<u>113</u>
<u>BLINDNESS AND HEARING LOSS.....</u>	<u>113</u>
<u>CHANGES IN WEIGHT OR APPETITE.....</u>	<u>114</u>
<u>MEMORY OR COGNITIVE LOSS.....</u>	<u>114</u>
<u>EXERCISE.....</u>	<u>114</u>
<u>FOOD AND WATER AND BEDDING.....</u>	<u>115</u>
<u>JUMPING UP.....</u>	<u>115</u>
<u>MANAGING INCONTINENCE.....</u>	<u>115</u>

CONCLUSIONS.....	117
<u>BORDER COLLIE FAQ.....</u>	<u>117</u>
SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR BORDER COLLIES.....	121
<u>UNITED STATES.....</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>CANADA.....</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>AUSTRALIA.....</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>UNITED KINGDOM.....</u>	<u>122</u>
<u>GENERAL DOG WEBSITES.....</u>	<u>122</u>

1

ALL ABOUT THE BORDER COLLIE



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HISTORY AND EARLY BEGINNINGS OF THE BORDER COLLIE

Border Collies are sheep-herding dogs that originated in Scotland and England's border countries. They are exceptional herding dogs that are extremely hardworking, and intelligent with uncanny, instinctive abilities when they work.

Many people use Border Collies all over the world to herd sheep, and often they perform their jobs without the herder's direction. These dogs love to work, and excel at problem solving and successfully negotiating new and challenging situations. Border Collies are friendly and protective of family members and people they know, but are often wary of strangers.

THE NAME

There are many theories as to the ancestry of the 'Collie' portion of the Border Collie name. Many historians believe that the word collie comes from the

word 'coalie', which means black. Others believe that collie descends from the Gaelic word meaning 'something useful'. The name of a Scottish breed of sheep is what other historians believe the word collie comes from.

However, everyone agrees that the Border Collie is an outstanding competition dog, a superior sheep herding animal, and a loyal and energetic family pet. Often referred to as sheepdogs in earlier times, the name Border Collie was given to the breed around 1915.

HISTORY

One of the oldest breeds of dogs, the Border Collie has been used for many years in England and Scotland as the primary working dog for shepherds and farmers. A breed of large, tricolor herding dogs that protected the sheep was recorded in history books as far back as 36 B.C. Border Collies and many other dog breeds descended from these dogs.

Numerous books tell of how the Border Collies herded reindeer for their Viking masters. In reality, these were Spitz-type dogs. Crossing the Romans bigger herding dogs and the Vikings Spitz-type dogs produced an intelligent agile herding breed. It became very popular to cross these two breeds. The evolution of the Border Collie as we know it today resulted from this.

Very similar to the Border Collie trials you see today, shepherds held the first sheepdog trials in Bala, Wales in 1873. The International Sheepdog Trials Society, formed in 1906, was the first organization to institute set rules for the dog trial competition. These are the same standard set of rules used today. In 1915 James Reid, the Secretary of the International Sheepdog Society, granted the name of Border Collie to this much loved breed of dogs.

FAMOUS BORDER COLLIES

Two famous Border Collies called Wiston Cap and Old Hemp certainly had a great influence on today's Border Collies. The dog that we see in the featured herding pose on the International Sheep Dog Society badge is a dog named Wiston Cap. He had the distinction of being the most popular used stud dog in the early history of the Border Collie breed.

His line is seen in a large percentage of today's pedigrees. Jock Richardson trained and handled Wiston Cap, who was a good natured, obedient champion animal. This Border Collie not only fathered three Supreme Champions, but in addition Wiston Cap was grand-sire to three more.

Old Hemp was born in 1893 and died in 1901. He was a tri-color dog bred by Adam Telfer. His parents were Meg, a well regarded herding, black coated dog and Roy, a black and tan dog. The sheep responded well to this powerful yet quiet dog, that was less vocal and stealthier in his herding behavior. The modern Border Collie herding mannerisms came from the working style of Old

Hemp. His line, like Wiston Cap's, has established the traits of the breed to this day.

Huge flocks of sheep are found in the United States, Australia and New Zealand living in mountainous, rough terrain - and working dogs are still required to move these sheep. These dogs actually go over the backs of the sheep while herding them if necessary. It would be impossible, on foot or horseback, to herd these sheep.

The Border Collies' most outstanding characteristic is their love and desire to work above everything else. They give the sheep the 'eye', which is an intense stare into the sheep's face while the Border Collies head is lowered. They have an almost uncanny way of knowing where and what the sheep will do next, and are always one-step ahead.

Their ability to problem-solve and work both in conjunction with the shepherd, as well as independently when needed, have made them a mainstay of the livestock industry in many countries. No longer just a farming dog, the Border Collie is also used as a family pet and companion, as well as an agility and obedience trial dog.

BREEDSTANDARDSFORTHEBORDERCOLLIE

The border countries of England and Scotland with their rugged terrain were the origin of the Border Collie breed. Shepherds bred these dogs based not only their ability to work long hours on tough terrain, but also their obedience. This selective breeding resulted in Border Collies' unique way of collecting and bringing in the stock.

Years ago the Border Collies' work was to bring in the sheep from the hills and rugged terrain. These dogs are by nature herders, but are also taught to drive sheep or stock away, as well as keep the stock within a certain area. They understand the handler's commands, even slight variations such as whistles, and respond to each tone appropriately. With their stalking ability, head held low and a gaze or 'eye', they have no difficulty controlling the stock.

Equal to appearance and size in characteristics is the Border Collies' energy, intensity and trainability, developed over hundreds of years. Its uncanny instincts and ability to reason and work without commands have earned it the distinction of being the best herding dog breed bar none.

APPEARANCE

A Border Collie's appearance should be athletic, well balanced and of medium size showing equal amounts of agility, style, strength and soundness.

The dog's muscular hard body should give the idea of endless stamina and effortless movement.

A very crucial characteristic of this extremely intelligent breed is its alert, keen expression.

Judges will severely fault a Border Collie for any aspect of temperament or structure that would hinder the collies ability to work as a herding dog.

The Border Collie is an unspoiled, natural and true working dog. It should remain that way.

COAT

Border Collies have two varieties of coat allowed and one is not preferred over the other. These are:

1. **Smooth**

Entire body is smooth; texture is coarser; slight feathering allowed on haunches, forelegs, ruff and chest

2. **Rough**

Length is medium but not excessive; feathering on haunches, chest, forelegs and underside; smooth, short coat on fronts of legs, ears, face and feet

Both of this variety can have dense, close-fitting double coats that are weather resistant.

The top coat is wavy or straight with a soft, dense, short undercoat.

They do not penalize the dog for seasonal shedding.

COLOR

Border Collies can be in any color or combination of markings and/or colors with all colors and markings judged equally.

White patches should not be predominant on the head or body but may be present.

Physical evaluation and gait comes before color or markings

FOREQUARTERSANDHINDQUARTERS

When viewed from the side, pasterns are slightly sloped and the forelegs are parallel when viewed from the front.

From elbow to ground is slightly longer than from wither or shoulder to elbow.

Border Collies' legs should be proportionate to their body and the shoulder blades are equal in length and well muscled .

The hindquarters, sloping to a low set tail, are muscular and broad with their thighs muscular, deep, long and broad.

GAIT

Two of the Border Collies working gaits are the moving/stealth crouch and the gallop.

They should move at moderate speed and never race.

The dog will automatically adjust his or her pace to match that of the stock that is being worked.

HEAD

A Border Collie should look intelligent, full of interest, alert and eager.

Their eyes are blue, any range of brown or part/one of each is blue or brown with fully pigmented eye rims are acceptable.

Ears should be sensitive, highly moving and set well apart. One or both ears can stand erect or semi erect.

The muzzle, narrowing slightly at the nose and skull are about the same length with the skull comparatively flat and average in width.

The under jaw on a Border Collie should be well developed and strong.

Nose color is the same as the main body color with well-developed nostrils.

Strong jaws and teeth that meet with a scissors bite are required.

NECK, BACK AND BODY

Their strong, muscular neck is in proportion to the length of the collie's body and arched slightly.

From the muscular loins to behind the withers, the back is level.

The body of the Border Collie should be athletic with a moderately broad chest. If the dog's tail is obviously curled, it is a fault.

SIZE, SUBSTANCE, PROPORTION

The requirements are:

- From point of buttocks to prosternum slightly longer than height at withers; height to length ratio approximately 10:9
- Height at withers from 18" to 21" for females
- Height at withers from 19" to 22" for males
- Excess body weight is not substance or muscle
- Medium bone is correct, lighter preferred over heavy, strong bones
- Overall balance is extremely important between length, height, bone and weight

The handler must show the Border Collie in difficult working conditions.

It is considered a fault if even one feature of the dog appears out of proportion.

Broken teeth and scars received while working are acceptable.

The Border Collie is an alert, intelligent, responsive and energetic dog that loves working and excels at it. They stand their ground, but when it comes to family and friends are extremely affectionate. There is nothing quite as breathtaking as watching a Border Collie gathering and fetching the stock with complete control. They make it seem effortless, and anticipate the direction that the stock will move.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT A BORDER COLLIE?

A Border Collie is a very energetic, enthusiastic and intelligent dog that loves to work and be around people and animals. They are one of the few breeds of dogs that can easily be trained at all ages with the correct training techniques.

They respond best to praise and intermittent rewards, but also seem to take intrinsic pleasure from doing a job well. Historically bred to herd livestock they continue to use this natural intelligence and problem-solving ability no matter where they are or what they are doing.

TRAINING

Border Collies tend to do best when they are working and feel that they are involved in the family. This means that they are easily trained to do both positive and negative behaviors, so care must be taken to avoid inadvertently training the wrong sort of tricks. This breed responds very well to positive praise as a reward, but responds equally well to being ignored as a punishment. A Border Collie should never be harshly punished, as they can easily become timid or shy if overcorrected.

Many breeders of Border Collies report that this breed requires early socialization with humans and other animals to prevent shyness as they age. Once a Border Collie becomes socialized, they love to go everywhere with the family or owner, and quickly learn to heel, sit and even stay almost naturally.

,Because of the work they historically completed with shepherds, they respond to hand signs and signals or whistle training, and a working Border Collie is truly a wonder to watch.

EXERCISE

For those that enjoy a dog that is ready to go for a walk, run or a trip out of the house at any time a Border Collie is a great breed. They have a boundless sense of energy but are not hyperactive or problematic, provided that they have adequate opportunity to exercise at least twice a day.

They can be good housedogs provided as long as a long walk or two, or time to run in a good-sized fenced yard is provided frequently. Ideally the Border Collie does best with a large area or even acreage to be able to run and explore.

TEMPERAMENT

Overall the Border Collie loves to please the family. They do best with a lot of human contact and training, and need to be given attention with a firm and loving set of expectations. Occasionally young Border Collies can go through a period of challenging the owner for dominance, but with firm and consistent training the owner can help the young dog work through this phase.

Since the breed is very independent, they will often try to find ways to help you out if they are not given specific work to do. Sometimes this is not in ways that the owner approves of, such as digging or chewing. By providing exercise and a game of fetch a few times a day, the dog will quickly learn how to please its master and the problem will be avoided.

CHILDREN AND OTHER PETS

Border Collies when properly socialized get along very well with both children and other pets. They are more suited to older children than younger children simply because they are sensitive to loud noises and may startle easier than some of the other breeds. They also have a tendency to herd things, children included, and this can result in nipping or growling at young children, that can be worrisome for both children and adults, although from the dog's point of view it is well-intended.

Kids that learn to work with Border Collies have a great relationship and they both seem to have unlimited energy to romp and play together. Border Collies can also be very protective of children and will bark to let people know if strangers or others enter the yard or approach the children.

Border Collies are good with other animals with proper socialization. They may interact better with larger breeds of dogs than smaller, and this is largely due to their dominant tendencies. Two Border Collies make a great set of companions for each other especially if they are of opposite gender, both neutered and at least one year apart in age. Two males or two females that are not spayed or neutered will have more difficulty establishing a hierarchy but will eventually learn to get along.

It is always a good idea to supervise any breed of dog with other pets until you are sure it is safe. Cats and Border Collies can learn to live together with socialization and supervision until the relationship is established. Often a Border Collie will try to herd the cat which results in rather negative interactions.

COMPETITIONS

If you wish to have a dog to enter in various herding, fly-dog, athletic, obedience and other competitions a Border Collie is an excellent breed choice. Since they love to work and please their owners they excel at most

events. The combination of athletic demands and intelligence required for some of the trial competitions make this breed a natural. They can be easily intimidated by crowds, though, so they need to be socialized at an early age if you wish to compete.

Herding is a natural activity for a Border Collie and training them to work with livestock is rewarding. If you are considering this try finding a good trainer in your area that has worked with Border Collies.

Overall the Border Collie makes a great outdoor and indoor dog for both an individual and a family. They have a love of life, exercise and work that is not seen in all breeds, and really makes them an active part of the family. They are highly intelligent and will amaze their owners at the rate that they learn new commands and tricks all through their lives.

2 IS A BORDER COLLIE RIGHT FOR YOU?



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IS A BORDER COLLIE RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?

All breeds of dogs are more or less suited to a variety of environmental and living conditions. The Border Collie is absolutely no different and has the same characteristics as many of the working breeds. The biggest factors with Border Collies are the amount of energy, intelligence and working ability that these dogs naturally possess.

EXERCISE

A Border Collie is not generally a good breed for apartment dwellers or those individuals or families that want a quiet, "lay about the house" kind of dog. A Border Collie, while not hyperactive, does have a much higher energy level than many of the breeds.

If they do not have an outlet for their energy it can result in negative tendencies such as jumping, chewing, nipping and biting as well as digging. Border Collies that have a large yard or acreage to run on with self-exercise, but they do love to work for people and please their owners. They require a

game of fetch or a run through an exercise or behavior routine to keep them feeling that they are working.

If you and your family do not spend a lot of time outdoors or want a dog that can be left alone without human contact for long periods of time a Border Collie is not for you.

INTELLIGENCE

Many Border Collies are used in police work, as well as to assist hearing and visually impaired individuals because they are such eager workers and are so easy to train. Their intelligence is well known in Border Collie owners groups, and the natural curiosity of the breed is also famous. Because of these tendencies, it is important to constantly keep challenging the Border Collie with new situations and activities. They love learn, and will excel at almost any task that requires problem solving.

Many Border Collie owners have their own trail area set up in the backyard, or take their dogs to parks that have obstacle courses and other activities for dogs already developed. An owner that is not able to work with their Border Collie will quickly learn that the dog will find activities to do to keep occupied, and the human members of the family will not appreciate many of these activities.

Often these problematic behaviors include herding family members, other pets or even escaping from yards and kennels. Border Collies simply cannot tolerate boredom. They would rather be interacting with people on a continuing basis rather than shut up in a kennel or in a pen or yard. They can be penned and kenneled provided appropriate exercise, lots of human contact and intellectual stimulation is provided on a regular basis.

Bored Border Collies tend to be prone to separation anxiety problems that can lead to long-term negative behaviors. This can include barking, digging, chewing and snapping at people that are both known and strangers. If you cannot provide a lot of attention on a daily basis and are not prepared to really have your dog as a part of your life then a Border Collie is not a breed that you and your family should consider.

TRAINING

Since the Border Collie is so quick to learn new behaviors, it is important to follow a good, solid training program even for very young dogs. The Border Collie will naturally herd, and this may involve both nipping as well as staring behaviors. Those owners that have not worked with Border Collies may find these behaviors unsettling as well as problematic to control.

The Border Collie can easily be taught to use these instincts properly, but it does take a consistent training program. Many people find that it is very cute

when a puppy herds the children or the other pets, but it becomes less endearing as the dog matures and still continues the behavior.

Once a Border Collie has developed some of these negative habits it is difficult to have the dog “un-learn” them. The best practice is therefore to work consistently with the puppy and only allow them to use the correct behaviors.

Training that involves punishment and raised voices do not work well with Border Collies. The breed is naturally very sensitive to sounds and voice commands and quickly responds to different tones and volumes in the owner’s voice. Yelling and harsh tones will only confuse the dog and make it less responsive to all commands. Positive praise and consistent practice is the key to a well-behaved Border Collie.

SOCIALIZATION

Border Collies require a solid foundation of socialization from the earliest possible age. Even at eight to twelve weeks of age the puppies should be handled gently and exposed to other animals and children in positive, controlled interactions. If a Border Collie is not properly socialized they tend to be very shy or timid, and may be very hard to manage when away from their home territory. They also will develop an exaggerated startle reflex and may run away and be difficult to catch in new environments.

A properly socialized Border Collie is an excellent pet for children and adults alike. With proper education of both the child and the dog or puppy a lasting, loving relationship will quickly be established. Children that are very young should always be supervised around a Border Collie as with most other breeds of dogs.

Some Border Collies can be prone to snapping, but this is not a breed trait, rather it is a sign of inappropriate handling, training or socialization. Most dogs can learn to refrain from snapping or nipping but this will take time and consistent expectations and training.

With proper loving care a Border Collie is a great pet for families. If you and your household are not able to provide a lot of attention, interaction, consistent training and exercise a Border Collie is not the right breed for you. If you are able to provide these things, and want a dog that is outgoing and intelligent then a Border Collie may be just right.

CHOOSING A MALE OR FEMALE DOG

One of the first decisions that a prospective dog owner (regardless of breed) has is determining if a male or female dog is the best match. There are certain characteristics that most male and female dogs will have, and knowing these characteristics will help you make the best choice.

Even if you plan to spay or neuter your Border Collie, it is still important to consider the characteristics of male and female dogs, as they will still be present even after the procedure, although the characteristics will not be as pronounced. Avoid the temptation to just pick the “cutest” puppy or older dog, and try to determine which gender will be the best possible match for you and your family.

MALES

One of the most obvious physical characteristics of the male dog is that it is generally larger than females of the same breed, and eats more. Males are heavier, taller and stronger than female dogs, although this may be particularly of concern more in the larger breed dogs. Usually the size difference will only be a few inches in height, but it may be more substantial in weight. Male dogs tend to eat significantly more food than non-pregnant females.

Male Border Collies may be more aggressive and independent than female dogs. Again, this is a more important consideration in larger breeds than smaller breeds. Some male dogs tend to be more difficult to manage in small, confined areas and often do not socialize well with other males. This will be particularly true if there are female dogs in the area that are in heat.

A male dog often will form a closer bond with one person, whereas a female dog tends to bond equally with many people.

Male dogs tend to develop quicker sexually than female dogs, and will display sexual tendencies at a younger age. This is a concern if there are other dogs in the house or in the neighborhood that may come into heat. The male dogs will tend to roam, as they can smell female dogs in heat for many miles and if allowed, may even be gone for several days in a row in pursuit of females. Neutering your male Border Collie will eliminate this problem.

If you choose a Border Collie male dog and plan to use him for breeding purposes it will be important to construct a solid fence to contain him, even though he may be small! If you purchase a pair of dogs for breeding purposes, it will be important to monitor how aggressive the male becomes when the female is in heat.

You may find that the male becomes very possessive of the female - even

towards humans. This may be a concern if you have small children in house, or do not have the dogs kenneled. In addition, the male may become aggressive towards the female if she is not receptive to his advances. Any breeding pair of dogs needs to be carefully monitored.

Male dogs tend to be more difficult to train than female dogs, and are more independent in nature. They also tend to be friskier and require more exercise. Males may be more difficult to socialize with other animals and other dogs, and need to begin socialization training at a young age.

FEMALES

Female dogs tend to be smaller than male dogs of the same breed and are often less aggressive. However, a female dog protecting a litter of puppies can be just as aggressive as a male. A female Border Collie with her first litter should be carefully monitored for the first few weeks, to see how protective she becomes of the puppies.

Females will come into heat at least twice a year for approximately three weeks. During this time there will be a noticeable discharge of fluid from the female, that is designed to attract the male dog. Spaying the female dog will prevent this from occurring. If the female is to be used for breeding purposes, there are products on the market designed to address this problem.

Female Border Collies tend to be less excitable and easier to train. They can, however, become easily cowed or shy if treated harshly, or scolded in a rough or angry tone of voice. Female dogs tend to bond with many people. They may be less protective in general than male dogs, however are also easier to socialize with other animals.

Female dogs will fight with other females, but tend to get along generally well with male dogs. Usually a group of female dogs will establish a hierarchy, and will bond with each other after the initial pecking order is established.

SIMILARITIES

With both male and female dogs, it is important to consider the amount of time, attention and effort that will be spent in training the dogs and socializing with them afterwards. Both male and females require the same amount of exercise, training, feeding, general care, and love. In addition, regular veterinary checkups and yearly vaccinations will be required for both genders.

Deciding on a male or female Border Collie is largely a personal decision. Unless the dog is being used for breeding purposes, consideration should be given to spaying or neutering the animal as soon as recommended by your veterinarian, to prevent unwanted pregnancies and puppies. If the dog is to be used for breeding purposes, it is the responsibility of the owner to keep the dog away from other dogs to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

3

GETTING A BORDER COLLIE



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DECIDING ON A PUPPY OR ADULT BORDER COLLIE

There are so many decisions to make prior to getting a new dog. First you must decide the breed, the place you will purchase the dog from, if you should choose a male or female, as well as decide if a puppy or an adult dog is right for you. Taking the time to make these decisions is important for both you and your pet.

In making a decision between an adult Border Collie and a puppy, there are several questions you should ask yourself:

How comfortable are you in training a puppy?

How much time do you have to set aside for training?

Can you spend time with the puppy for the majority of the day and night?

Do you have patience to work with young animals?

The following sections will discuss the positive aspects and the difficulties of purchasing a puppy or an adult dog. Thinking your options through will help you determine the best choice given your situation and environment.

THE BENEFITS OF A BORDER COLLIE PUPPY

Anyone who has ever seen, held or played with a puppy can quickly tell you the biggest benefit of getting a puppy. Their cute, loveable and energetic personalities are wonderful, and they bring a smile to everyone's face.

Puppies are great for families and individuals that want to spend time with the young dog, to bring it up and train it specifically as the family wants and needs. Raising a puppy allows the owners to provide the training and socialization to make the puppy into a happy, healthy and well-behaved dog.

Purchasing a Border Collie puppy from a reputable breeder or shelter ensures that the dog will be with the family for the longest possible time, as the owners can provide proper care, nutrition, and veterinary treatment for the life of the dog.

Watching the puppy playing with its littermates may also give an indication as to its temperament as an adult dog. Puppies in the litter that tend to be more aggressive and assertive are more likely to be independent, and potentially more difficult to train as they grow. The puppies that stay more isolated are usually more quiet and shy as adult dogs, and may have difficulty socializing and interacting with strangers and in strange situations.

THE DIFFICULTIES WITH A BORDER COLLIE PUPPY

While the opportunity to train a puppy is a benefit, it can also be a difficulty for some people. The time and effort needed to successfully train a puppy is more than many individuals can manage, especially if they already have a family to raise and a job to go to every day. Raising a puppy is a lot like having a baby in the house, especially for the first few months. It is a twenty-four hour, seven day a week responsibility.

Besides training in the house it is important to socialize the puppy to new people, new environments and other animals. Puppies, just like children, go through difficult stages, and may damage or even destroy household items. It is important to be able to puppy-proof your home as much as possible, particularly during the chewing stage.

Housebreaking is another difficulty on the horizon with a puppy. Housebreaking can be easy or difficult, depending on the type of training,

breed of dog, and time that the owner has to spend with the puppy. Many trainers now recommend crate training for housebreaking puppies, but this still requires consistency and time to complete.

When you are getting a Border Collie puppy from a shelter or other pet adoption service, you may not be one hundred percent sure of the breed or history of the puppy. There is always a chance that the puppy described as a Border Collie may not be pure bred, and may grow to be a larger breed than you are able to keep. This is an unfortunate situation that is difficult for the dog as well as the family.

THE BENEFITS OF AN ADULT BORDER COLLIE

Choosing an adult Border Collie allows you to know the size, appearance, temperament and behavior of the dog. Adult dogs will already be trained and housebroken, so this will save both your household items and your patience.

Adult dogs will know how to behave in the house, car and on the leash - so will be less time-consuming from the training aspect. They will still require your love and attention, but less emphasis will need to be placed on training new concepts.

Adult Border Collies tend to be calmer and less stressed by new environments. This is just a generalization, and watching how the adult dog responds to you and your family will give you clues as to how socialized and well behaved the adult dog is.

Adult dogs can bond to new families and individuals with good care and lots of attention. It may take a few days for the dog to settle into the new home, but within a week or so there should be a comfort level and trust. In a month the dog will be right at home with its new family.

THE PROBLEMS WITH AN ADULT BORDER COLLIE

Perhaps the biggest problem with any adult dog is the bad habits that the dog may have learned from the previous owner. While not impossible to correct, it will take some time to re-train the dog to behave in a way that is acceptable in your house. Often it will be a bit confusing for the dog, and it requires special attention and positive rewards to encourage the dog to use the new behaviors.

Adult Border Collies may be uncertain in a new environment, and may have a period of adjustment where they do not listen well to new owners, or where they regress in their behavior. Positive attention and time will allow the bond to develop between the dog and the new family.

Adult dogs may have more difficulty in socializing with other animals already in the household and attention should be given to introducing the dog to other pets.

Whether you decide that a puppy or an adult dog is the best choice for you, it is important to consider how much time you have to provide training and socialization. Generally the smaller the amount of time you can provide to train the dog the older the dog should be. If you have lots of free time a puppy is an excellent choice. If you have limited time to train an animal consider an adult dog.

Either a puppy or an adult dog will still require your love and attention and will quickly become a member of the family.

WHERE TO BUY A BORDER COLLIE

If you have made the decision that a Border Collie dog or a puppy is the best choice of a pet for you and your family, your next decision is where to buy the animal. There are a wide range of options to consider when determining where to get your dog or puppy. Depending on the type of Border Collie that you would like (if you want to use the dog for breeding or showing or not), and how long you are willing to wait for a dog or puppy will probably influence which option is best for you.

RESCUE SHELTERS

A rescue shelter is a good option to get an adult Border Collie that is going to be a companion animal for you and your family. Usually the shelter will allow you to spend some time with the dogs that they have for adoption and purchase, and this will give you time to check on their temperament and behavior.

Often shelters will agree to take the animal back if it does not adjust to your home or family. Many of the adult dogs from the shelter are already trained, and this can be an asset when you do not want to go through the training process.

When getting a Border Collie from a shelter be sure to check the following:

Ask for any information available about the dog.

Make sure the animal has had a complete check-up and that the vaccinations are up to date.

Ask if the dog has any behavioral issues or other concerns such as eating or barking.

Does the dog appear healthy and energetic?

Will the rescue shelter allow you to spend time with the dog prior to taking it home?

What is the policy on spaying or neutering the animal?

Can you return the dog if, for some reason, the adoption does not work out as planned?

Drawback to rescue shelter dogs

There are some drawbacks to getting a Border Collie from a shelter:

The dog may have learned bad or negative behaviors and will have to be re-trained.

You have limited choice over the breeding, size and gender of the dogs available.

You have little information on their lineage or medical history.

Shelters are more likely to have adult Border Collies than puppies.

Most animals will have to be neutered before leaving the shelter, or you will have to agree to neuter or spay the animal.

PET STORES

Pet stores usually offer both purebred and non-purebred puppies. Usually a pet store does not sell full grown dogs as they have limited space. It is possible to order a specific breed of puppy through a pet store, and you can usually indicate the color and gender that you would prefer.

There are, however, a couple of major concerns when buying a Border Collie puppy at a pet store. The first concern is that most reputable breeders will not sell to pet stores, so often the purebred puppies offered are from "puppy mills".

These puppy mills are kennels that simply breed dogs to produce large quantities of saleable puppies, rather than trying to selectively breed to

specifications and positive attributes of the breed. Often these purebred puppies will not be show quality, and the buyer will not learn of this until they attempt to register or show the dog. Unless you are familiar with the top lines of the breed, it is difficult to know a good quality purebred from a poor quality or line.

The second concern is that there may only be one puppy of a breed to choose from. This limits your ability to compare the puppy with littermates or other puppies of the same breed. Puppies in pet stores are also stressed, as they are away from their home environment. They may be exposed to different pet diseases, and will need a thorough vet examination as soon as possible after purchase.

BREEDER

While probably the most expensive choice, buying from a Border Collie breeder is generally the best option if you want a purebred puppy from a reputable line. Most breeders offer a guarantee of health, as well as detailed information on the breed. A breeder will often interview you as a potential owner, and may even want to come and visit your home before agreeing to sell a puppy.

Most breeders encourage you to come and see the litter several times before choosing the puppy that is right for you. They will often provide recommendations on food, veterinarians in the area, trainers, problematic issues with the breed, as well as other points of interest. Most breeders will also discuss issues with spaying or neutering the pets, unless it is agreed upon that the puppy will be a show dog or future breeding stock.

Before visiting a Border Collie breeder, it is important to ask for information on the line of dogs that they are breeding, as well as any relevant health information on the parents. Do some research both on the breed and on the line the puppies are bred from. Calling other kennels that are breeding the same type of dogs or contacting the breed association may be helpful.

Getting this information prior to visiting the breeder is essential as it is all too easy to get caught up in the excitement of getting a new puppy.

Make sure that the Kennel Club in your country or location recognizes the breeder. Ask for information on shows or events that the breeder has participated in and where his/her dogs have been entered. If the breeder is unable or unwilling to provide this information, it may be wise to consider trying another breeder.

Be aware that puppies from championship lines may be difficult to purchase and you may have to wait for a puppy. Good breeders will not produce litter after litter; rather they will breed their dogs based on the health and well being of the female.

Purchasing a puppy from a Border Collie breeder is the option that allows you to know the temperament and lineage of the parent dogs, as well as the medical background of the puppy. It also insures that you will get a quality animal that can be shown or bred if desired.

FINDINGAGOODBORDERCOLLIEBREEDER

Being a dog breeder is not like being a doctor, lawyer or teacher; there are no set training or educational requirements to the job. Rather the health, temperament and adherence to breed standards or their animals are the measure by which a breeder is judged.

Most Border Collie breeders have a genuine love for their animals, and breed them responsibly and in the best interests of the individual animals – as well as the breed as a whole. After all, breeders' reputations are based on the ability of the puppies they sell to develop into champions of the Border Collie breed. Unfortunately, as with most things, there are those who consider themselves breeders who are more interested in making money than raising dogs.

In order to get the puppy that you want and to be satisfied with the dog both now and in the future it is important to do some research on the breeder that you are considering.

WHY GET A PUPPY FROM A BORDER COLLIE BREEDER?

Purchasing your puppy from a Border Collie breeder provides you with:

Peace of mind as to the medical background of the puppy's parents in current and past generations.

Quality assurance that the puppy that you purchase will meet breed standards and specifications.

Support in understanding and working with the breed of your choice – the Border Collie.

Advice as to vaccination regimes, medical concerns associated with the breed, local trainers and handlers, and other questions you may have.

The breeder's role is to continue to choose dogs to breed that will enhance the most desirable characteristics of the breed, and minimize any undesirable characteristics. A Border Collie breeder will usually be active in showing

animals, and will be very aware of the current trends in the breed, so they will be actively pursuing the breed standards.

In addition to being aware of current and future trends, a good breeder will also be aware of the history and lineage of each individual dog that they have, and will be aware of any potential problems in breeding into another line.

WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK A BORDER COLLIE BREEDER?

Breeders that are concerned about advancing the breed, and who care for each of the puppies they have will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. They will, in fact, probably want to ask you several of their own before deciding if you are right for their puppy.

As the buyer you should consider getting the following information from the Border Collie breeder:

Does the breeder have a contract to purchase that clearly outlines the guarantee of health and a return or refund policy?

Does the breeder know or has he/she worked with both the parents of the puppy?

Can the breeder provide a lineage chart for the puppy tracing back several generations?

Will the breeder let you see the other animals in the kennel and is the kennel clean, well maintained and animal friendly?

Are you allowed to see other adult dogs and puppies that the breeder owns socialize together?

Does the breeder limit the amount that you handle the pups?

Does the local, state or national breed organization or club recognize the breeder?

How often does the breeder allow the female and male to breed and reproduce?

A good Border Collie breeder will be concerned with the safety and health of the puppies, and will only allow serious buyers to handle the puppies. If you are just enquiring about the breed you may be able to see them from a distance and may be able to interact with the adult dogs. A breeder may also limit how long you are in the kennel with the puppies at any given time, even if you are a serious buyer.

WHAT SHOULD A BORDER COLLIE BREEDER ASK YOU?

Many people who are buying a puppy from a breeder for the first time feel a bit overwhelmed by the information that the breeder requests. It can seem rather gruelling! This is done to ensure that the puppy will be properly cared for and treated once it is sold.

Answering the breeder's questions and making any recommended changes in your arrangements will increase your chances of obtaining a puppy.

The Border Collie breeder may typically ask the following:

What is your home and yard like? The breeder may ask to come and visit your home, just as you are visiting the kennel or the breeder's home.

What are your intentions for the dog? The breeder may require that you spay or neuter the dog, or only breed to animals that they approve.

They may ask for a history of your pets, and may require you to sign an agreement regarding how you will train, use or show the dog.

They may ask the situation and schedule of your family, and may want to know how many people will interact with the dog, and how old any children are in the family.

The breeder may require that you train the puppy at a particular trainer, or using a particular method.

The breeder may require that you return the dog to them before selling or giving the dog to someone else, in the event that it does not work out for you to keep the dog.

The more information that you know about the breeder and the breed, and the more information the breeder knows about you, the better the match will be. Discuss your concerns or issues with the breeder, and take the time to do some research before making the first visit. Attending some dog shows or events may help you to determine which breeder you would like to work with.

HOWMUCHWILLABORDERCOLLIECOST?

Border Collies are a very popular breed, and many breeders have long waiting lists for puppies from proven working and herding lines. While all Border Collie have natural herding instincts the proven lines have actually demonstrated this ability in some sort of trial or competition and have earned points and prestige from their behavior and abilities.

If you have never attended a working dog competition you definitely should plan to attend to see the beauty of these dogs as they work in perfect harmony with their handler.

PET STORES

Many pet stores offer Border Collie or Border Collie cross puppies for sale at prices ranging from two to four hundred dollars which is about equal to that of many breeders. The problem with purchasing a Border Collie from a pet store is that there is usually very little information about where the puppy is from, the temperament of the parents, or the health conditions that may exist in the lines. Pet stores are not generally a good option for purchasing a Border Collie if you wish to make sure the puppy is healthy and in good condition.

RESCUES

There are many rescues for Border Collies all across North American and the United Kingdom. Australia, New Zealand and other countries also have rescues designed to help find homes for adult, young and senior Border Collies. The advantage to adopting from a shelter is that you have an idea of the temperament of the dog as well as the traits and abilities that it has. The dogs are all neutered or spayed as well as vaccinated and health checked before they leave the shelter.

Most shelters charge a basic fee for the adoption that can range from one to two hundred dollars, depending on the shelter. The rescues in the UK ask for donations of between eighty and one hundred and fifty pounds, depending on the length of time that the dog was with them.

In addition some rescues will ask for an additional donation if the dog required special treatment or vet visits. Many of the dogs are in poor condition when they arrive but are always completely healthy when adopted out. The vets usually donate their time to treating the dogs in the rescue so the additional donated money goes to providing medicines, food and shelter for future Border Collies in the rescue.

BREEDERS

Located in virtually any country in the world Border Collie breeders are the best option when choosing a puppy. The cost of the Border Collie puppy will depend on several factors including:

- Trial performance of the mother and father
- Back ground of both lines
- Reputation of the breeder
- Color and markings on the puppy

The more unique or different that the coloration is, the more expensive the puppy may be. In addition the championship lines will be more costly than non-performance dogs. In the United States the average cost of a Border Collie puppy is between two hundred and twenty five and six hundred dollars. Championship working dog parents may cause the puppies to be worth closer to eight hundred to one thousand dollars.

In the United Kingdom Border Collie puppies range in price from one hundred to five hundred pounds, with several Border Collie crosses being advertised with the purebred dogs. Often these breeds are very good companion and working dogs although they are not a purebred Border Collie. Many of the lines in England and Scotland go back to the leading sires of Border Collie including Wiston Cap and Old Hemp. These lines are often more expensive simply because of the quality of working dogs that have been produced.

Canadian breeders tend to mirror the prices of the UK and American breeders. Purebred Border Collie puppies with a good history of working dogs behind them range in price from two to six hundred dollars with the championship litters getting closer to eight to nine hundred dollars.

As with all breeds there will be additional expenses for shipping. Most breeders will have the puppy microchipped prior to being picked up. Registration paper and health certification should be included in the price of the purebred Border Collie puppy.

RESCUE CENTERS

If you would like a Border Collie but are not sure that you have the time or energy to train a puppy, you may wish to consider adopting an adult dog from a shelter. These animals are loving, usually well trained and really need a good home. They will quickly adjust to a new environment and the staff at the shelter can provide help and advice.

In addition the staff will have knowledge of how the Border Collie responds to children and other pets and can help ensure that there is a match between the dog your environment. Since the correct dog and family must be chosen, you may have to wait for a suitable animal to be brought to the rescue shelter.

Volunteers run most rescues so a donation is required to cover the cost of the vet treatment, spaying and neutering, as well as caring for the Collie before it is adopted. The minimum adoption fee is approximately one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars, but most people choose to donate more to help the rescue center keep going.

WHAT DOES THE PRICE INCLUDE?

If you are purchasing a puppy from a reputable breeder the cost of the puppy should include:

Registration papers for the puppy

Vet check information

Health guarantee

Eye check-up certification

Vaccination record

Puppy food to get you started

Feeding schedule information

Information about the breed and general dog care instructions

Bill of sale

Contract for breeding or non-breeding as well as issues around returning the dog at any time

In addition many breeders also include:

Micro chipping

Temporary pet insurance

Book on care of the breed

References to services available in the community

Invitation to a Border Collie club or association meeting

Different breeders offer different options, so it is important to ask around and make sure that your questions are answered before you purchase your Border Collie puppy.

CHOOSING A HEALTHY BORDER COLLIE

It is always an exciting event to finally get to choose your Border Collie dog or puppy. In order to have the best possible start to the relationship, it is important to know what to look for in a healthy animal, and what signs may indicate that there is a health condition with the dog. Since there are some differences between dogs and puppies, it is a good idea to be aware of the traits of a healthy Border Collie of any age.

MATURE DOGS

A mature, healthy Border Collie will have the following characteristics:

Intense, inquisitive look about the face and eyes

Immediate attention to any changes in the environment

Mobile ears and eyes that turn towards sounds or movements very quickly

A healthy, gleaming coat that shines

A longer, rougher outer coat and soft and silky undercoat. There may be shedding depending on the time of year and the temperature. Shedding that is natural will be uniform across the body and will not just occur in one or two patches.

Skin that is clean and healthy looking with dead skin cells or dry or irritated looking areas

A soft, moist and supple nose and nostril area

Clear bright eyes with no visible discharge

Alert ears that are free from waxy deposits or bad odors

Clean teeth that are not yellowed from tarter build-up

A scissor bite that allows the teeth to be tightly matched to each other with the top jaw slightly overlapping the bottom

No visible limping or favoring of either the front or back legs or paws

Well developed and muscular legs

Not over or underweight

Overall positive and attentive demeanor and temperament without any signs of aggression or excessive shyness.

Remember that a working dog may have some teeth that are chipped or missing, depending on their age and how much they have been used for herding. In addition, the Border Collie breed is a bit reserved when meeting new people, so be prepared for the Border Collie to “check you out” before they decide to be friendly. This is not a fault of the dog; rather it is a way for the dog to determine that you are a safe person before getting too close.

Be sure to inquire about the feeding habits and any possible history of health concerns. A mature dog should have a vet check and vaccination record and this should be available to you upon request.

PUPPIES

To choose a healthy Border Collie puppy look for the following traits and behaviors:

Friendly and willing to be handled, especially by the breeder or owner

Good relationship with littermates and the female, not hanging back all by itself or being overly aggressive towards the other puppies.

Eyes should be clear and bright looking with no discharge

Ears should be free from wax or build up

Teeth should be very white and not jagged or damaged but may be missing depending on the age of the puppy

Puppy should not appear overly “pot-bellied” as this can be a sign of worm infections that usually mean poor living conditions and care

Coat should be soft and somewhat wooly, not harsh or rough to the touch

Nose should be moist but free from any kind of clear or mucous discharge.

Be sure to check the conditions of the kennel or whelping area, and ensure that the puppies have access to clean water and food, depending on their age. The puppies should have time to be outdoors or exercised in larger areas, and should not be confined continually to small areas.

One of the most important things to consider is the puppy's temperament. A healthy Border Collie puppy is naturally curious, but will react quickly by running away to loud or sudden noises. This is perfectly normal, and a Border Collie puppy that does not respond may have an ear infection or other hearing problem.

Healthy puppies will already be started on a premium puppy kibble prior to being sold. Be sure that you start the puppy on the same type of food at your home, and then gradually switch to the brand of your choice if you so desire.

Even healthy puppies should be checked by your own vet within 72 hours of coming to your house, unless the breeder has done this for you. If you currently have other pets, it is a wise decision to keep the puppy separate from your other dogs until a full health check can be completed. Be sure to have a guarantee of health from the breeder, as well as certification that the puppy has been checked for hip problems, as well as the other genetic conditions that can be problematic.

REGISTRIES, REFERRALS AND CONTRACTS

In almost every country there will be a kennel club or national organization that acts to enforce the standards of each breed of dog that it recognizes, as well as to keep records of registrations of new puppies to the breed.

The national organization will also host and sponsor dog shows and events, and will provide an opportunity for breeders to show their dogs for championships. These registries will also keep a point total, that can help breeders and other interested individuals determine the strength of various lines within a given breed.

In Canada, the governing body is the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC). In the USA it is the American Kennel Club (AKC) and the United Kennel Club (UKC). In the United Kingdom there is The Kennel Club (KC). In addition to these major registries, there is also the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI), which is the World Canine Organization. It is different from the kennel clubs in that it does not register animals or provide pedigrees; rather it recognizes dogs of a particular country.

CONTRACTS

A breeders' contract is more than just a bill of sale for a Border Collie puppy or a dog. It is the agreed upon rights that both the buyer and seller have with regards to the dog. It is important to realize that the contract is a binding agreement, and if you have any concerns with the contract, you should get them clarified before signing and finalizing the document. At the very minimum the contract should include:

A bill of sale

This bill of sale is important to prove ownership of the animal. Make sure that you understand the legal aspects of buying a dog or puppy. Many areas require that the animal have basic health vaccinations and a clean veterinarian's report. There may also be laws that require the seller to take the animal back if it is found to be unhealthy within 48 hours of purchase.

Registration Application

This will be partially filled out by the seller. The seller will need to complete the sections for the breed, color, sex and identifying features of the dog or puppy, the date of birth, the registration numbers and names of the sire (father) and dam (mother). The breeder will also have to indicate their name or the name of their kennel, as well as their signature.

A basic health guarantee

This indicates the responsibility the breeder has to ensure the animal is free from disease. This includes hereditary and genetic conditions that may not be visibly present at the time of purchase.

Lineage

The breeder should also provide a lineage chart or guarantee of lineage statement. This will be important if you plan to show or breed the dog or puppy.

In addition to the basic clauses listed above, many breeders will also require the following **ADDITIONAL** clauses:

Breeding restrictions

The breeder may indicate that the pet must be spayed or neutered if not shown. They may also state that the dog cannot be bred until the age of 2, and only in consultation with the breeder. This is done to ensure strong bloodlines, and to prevent people from breeding the dogs inappropriately. In addition many breeders require that the dog be spayed or neutered if it does not meet breed standards.

Showing dogs

The breeder may indicate that the dog must be shown so many times per year. In addition, as the buyer you will want to confirm that the contract guarantees that the animal can reproduce, and is free from genetic concerns.

Health notification

Many breeders that are concerned with improving the lines and developing the breed will require that they be notified of any health issues that develop with the dog after the purchase. They may also require that in the event of the dogs' sudden or unforeseen death, an autopsy be performed and the results sent to them.

Selling or giving away the dog

Most reputable breeders will insist that, if for any reason you decide not to keep the dog, it be returned to them. This means that you cannot sell or give the dog away without consulting with them. Again, this shows the commitment that the breeder has to the individual animals, and his/her love of the dogs they have bred.

Choosing the correct Border Collie breeder, and carefully reading the contract will help you feel confident with your purchase. A good breeder will spend the time that you need to understand the contract. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get clarification on all issues prior to signing the contract and paying for the dog. Make sure that the contract is available when you pay for and pick-up the dog or puppy, as it is your written agreement regarding the animal.

4

BRINGING YOUR BORDER COLLIE HOME



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BRINGING HOME A NEW BORDER COLLIE PUPPY

It is very exciting to get a new puppy and to be able to bring him or her home. Often people are not aware of how challenging this process can be. It is important to plan for the arrival of your new Border Collie to avoid frustration, damaged items and to provide the safest possible environment for your puppy and family.

Spending a few hours to puppy-proof your house and to insure the proper introduction of the puppy to the home will set the tone for your relationship with the puppy.

While there are several things that you need to consider, one of the first aspects of bringing a puppy home is to have the correct supplies. In addition to the supplies, you'll need the right attitude to work with the puppy, a space that is designed for the puppy to stay in, as well as a schedule for feeding and exercise.

You should also have a basic idea of the training methods you are going to

use with the puppy, as well as a good grasp of how you were going to start this process.

BASIC SUPPLIES

Before bringing your Border Collie puppy home it is important to have all the basic supplies to make the puppy feel at home. Talk to the breeder or the previous owner if it all possible, to determine what type of food the puppy was eating and any special dietary requirements that the breed may have. The basic supplies are:

A good book on Border Collie puppy health, care and training methods. Check with your breeder to see if they have a particular book or author that they recommend. If the puppy has begun a training method, make sure that it continues as much as possible with the already established commands.

A wire or plastic dog crate that is the correct size for the Border Collie puppy that you have purchased. A small dog will require a smaller crate than a larger dog, naturally.

Good quality bedding material for inside the crate that cannot be easily chewed or destroyed. It is important that this material be washable, as there will be times when it will meet to be cleaned.

A special puppy collar that is of a soft fabric or woven material. The collar should have a buckle fastener and should not be too tight for the puppy's neck. You should be able to easily insert two fingers between the puppy's neck and the collar. If you cannot, the collar is too small and a larger size will meet to be purchased. A good lead will also be needed when walking the puppy. Many people use a retractable lead to make walking the dog much easier.

Purchase an identification tag that can be put on the collar. A Border Collie puppy purchased from a breeder may already be microchipped or tattooed with identification. While this is an excellent way to identify the dog, it is also important to have an easy to read tag in the event that the puppy wanders away or becomes lost. Make sure your phone number and name is on the tag.

You will also require any grooming supplies that the dog may need. A shorthaired dog will require a simple brush, comb, or soft cloth, but a long-haired dog will require more grooming, and you may wish to purchase clippers to be able to trim the coat.

It is important to talk to the Border Collie breeder to find out at what age you can begin to clip your dog. Most dogs do not get their full adult coat until after 10 months of age and it is important to not clip prior to the time. Check with your breeder, groomer or veterinarian to understand the specifics for your breed.

To keep your Border Collie puppy busy and entertained when you're not able to play with them, it is important to get some puppy toys. They should be hard plastic and without any parts that can be chewed and swallowed by the dog. Remember, if the puppy has toys to play with they will be less likely to chew on household items.

You will need to have good quality dry puppy food ready when the puppy arrives. Ask the seller what type of food they have started your puppy on, and begin feeding that at your home. You can then gradually change over to a different kind of food, by combining the new food with the old food until the puppy adjusts. This will prevent sudden shocks to the puppy's digestive system that could result in diarrhea or other stomach concerns.

One stainless steel or heavy plastic bowl for water and one for food. Make sure that you buy a bowl style that cannot be easily tipped over. Puppies will need clean water at least twice a day. Some people choose automatic dispensing feeders and water bowls. While this does make it easier for the owner, it is not essential.

If you have stairs in your house or you would like to keep the puppy confined to one area, you may wish to consider purchasing baby gates. These can be used to prevent the puppies from being able to enter or exit different rooms of the house.

You may also wish to consider purchasing a spray-on no-chew product. These can be purchased commercially from any pet store. If you wish to use a homemade spray, you can mix one part of apple cider vinegar and one part of water. Be careful with this spray as it may cause discoloration to furniture. It is also important to test the commercially available products prior to spraying.

SAFETY

Just like having a new baby in the house, it's important to make sure that the home environment is safe for the puppy. Puppies are very inquisitive by nature, and often get into all kinds of things around the house.

Even something as simple as a cord hanging from a set of draperies can be a safety hazard for small puppy. It can become wrapped around the puppy's neck, or stuck in the puppy's teeth. When puppy-proofing your home check the following:

Pick up all strings or cords. A small string can easily be swallowed by a puppy and cause digestive problems if it becomes wrapped up in the intestines.

Remove all small objects that the puppy may swallow.

Check houseplants to make sure that they are not poisonous. If they are, remove them to a room or area that the puppy does not have access to.

As much as possible, keep electrical cords away from the areas the puppy is in. If the cords cannot be removed, try treating them with a no-chew spray or rub them with laundry soap to make them unpleasant to the taste.

Keep the puppy confined to the kennel, crate or puppy safe room when you are not home or able to watch the puppy.

TRANSITION

If the puppy has been living with its littermates and mother up to this time, it will feel lonely coming to a house where it is an only dog. Try having a hot water bottle, stuffed toy or ticking clock in the crate or kennel with the puppy.

Using a crate will really help the puppy feel that this is a space of its own, and will help you be able to confine the puppy at night or when you are not home. In addition, you may want to place a piece of clothing that you have worn in the crate or kennel with the puppy. This will allow the puppy to adjust to your scent.

ATTITUDE

The best way to have a positive attitude when bringing your Border Collie puppy home is to be knowledgeable. Read a book; ask friends, breeders, groomers and veterinarians any questions you may have before bringing home the puppy. The internet offers many suggestions and breed specific information for preparing for a puppy.

Schedule walks, exercise, feeding and play times as much as possible. This will help your puppy adjust, plus it will also make sure that the puppy is cared for properly. If there is more than one person caring for the puppy, make sure that everyone is using the same schedule and methods. In addition, take the puppy for a complete medical check up as soon as possible.

EXPECTATIONS

While all breeds develop at slightly different rates, there are some common stages that all puppies go through. Below is a general chart indicating the ages and stages of puppy development. Be sure to check with your breeder or veterinarian to get the specifics for your Border Collie.

Birth

At birth, puppies cannot control their body temperature, cannot eliminate waste from the body without stimulation from the mother licking them. Nor can they see or hear. They are born with a strong desire to suck from the mother, and they can smell, taste, and sense by touch. They are able to cry to signal hunger, fear or cold. A puppy will double in weight in the first week of life.

Weeks1-7

At approximately 12 days after birth the puppies' eyes will start to open. They are always born with blue eyes, and the puppies are very sensitive to bright lights at this time. Slightly before the eyes open, at about day 10, the puppy's ears will open and they are immediately able to hear.

Weeks 2-3 are known as the transitional stage. The puppy is now able to recognize his or her littermates and knows the mother dog. It begins to learn to recognize humans in its life between weeks 3-4. The puppy will also start to notice and respond to loud noises and negative events, so it is important to make sure that there are few if any stressful events in the puppies' life at this time.

From birth to 7 weeks it is important the puppy stay with the mother and the litter. This is the time the puppy learns about how to be a dog, how to communicate with other dogs, and how to respond. This is the very beginning of the socialization period, and helps the puppy to understand how to interact with other dogs and how to respond to correction.

The puppy learns that biting a littermate results in being bitten in response, and that crying will get a response from the mother dog. The puppies will play together, and begin to chew and mouth objects in an attempt to understand their environments.

The puppies should not be handled excessively or removed from their mother and littermates for more than 10 minutes at a time. They may become anxious and fearful if they are separated for longer than this.

Avoid punishing the puppy at this time, and focus on rewarding for positive behavior and appropriate response. Expect housetraining mistakes to be frequent at this time due to the small size of the puppies bladder and their developing muscle control.

Week8–Month3

The period from 7 to 12 weeks is called the Socialization Period. This is the time to introduce the Border Collie puppy to as many new positive experiences as possible. Their nervous systems are developed at this time, and they are able to learn about the world around them, including humans, other animals, and new experiences.

This is the best time to change environments with a new puppy, as they will quickly adjust and will form bonds with people easily at this time.

The Fear period occurs with the socialization period. This is the time when the puppy begins to register fear of situations that cause pain or discomfort. The puppy will cower or hide from loud noises or harsh voices, and it is important to not punish the puppy at this time.

Every effort should be made to avoid any fearful situations at this time, as it can lead to difficulties in training or adapting to new environments for the life of the dog. The puppy will respond to praise and rewards, and will require constant contact and interactions with family members.

Month3–Month4

At this time the puppy is trying to determine who is the master, him or you. The puppy will be challenging to deal with at this time, and may be seen as difficult to work with. This developmental time for the puppy is similar to the toddler stage for humans.

The puppy may start to want to play fight or bite at you, and it is critical to stop this behavior as soon as it starts. A direct and sharp “No” command, followed by lack of contact or interactions for a few minutes will usually correct the problem.

It is important to be firm and positive when working with the puppy in this stage. They need to understand that the human is dominant and that they are to obey. This can be done very gently and positively, and does not require negative training methods or harsh punishment.

Avoid involving the dog in games that encourage fighting or aggressive behavior. Even a game of tug-of-war can be interpreted by the dog as a show of dominance and may quickly escalate.

4to8months

This stage is the independent puppy stage. The young dogs want to be on their own to explore, and many books refer to this as the “Flight instinct period”. The Border Collie will want to get out on his own. He or she may not come when called, and may ignore commands that previously were responded to.

Border Collie puppies will need to be kept on a leash when outside of the yard, as they may decide to ignore commands to return. It is important to deal with this immediately, perhaps through a puppy training class. In human terms this is the adolescent period for the dog. There will be an increased need to chew and the permanent teeth will come in. The puppy, if a dominant type dog, will continue to try to become the leader in the family.

Small children should not be left without supervision with puppies at this age

as they may jump or even bite in an attempt to show dominance. A puppy at this stage may also begin to show sexualized behavior, and it is important to isolate the puppy from any other dogs that have not been spayed or neutered. Plan to have your dog spayed or neutered at this time as well, to prevent unplanned litters now or in the future.

6to14months

This is the second fear imprint stage. The dog may appear to be shy or unwilling to try new activities. With extra positive rewards and time this stage will pass. The Border Collie now looks like a mature dog, but they are still a puppy at heart. They love to play and socialize with other animals and family members.

The puppy will have lots of energy at this time, so it is important to provide exercise and socialization activities. Often people choose to take their young adult dogs to an obedience training class to enhance their skills.

Keeping active with your puppy will continue to build the bond between you and your pet. Staying positive and rewarding good behavior will keep your relationship happy and enjoyable. Continue to socialize your Border Collie throughout the states of development and into adulthood to develop a calm, happy, well-rounded dog.

Maturity

For the rest of the dog's life there will be a consistent behavior pattern. You may notice that there are issues that arise and have to be dealt with by re-training or reinforcing existing training. Generally, there should be no extreme behavior changes if the animal is well cared for and checked regularly by a veterinarian. Changes in environment may cause a regression in behavior, but a little extra attention and care at this time will usually resolve the issues.

Bringing home a new Border Collie puppy is an exciting time, and the start to a wonderful relationship. Making sure that you have everything you need for the puppy at the house will get this relationship off to a positive and rewarding start for both of you.

PREPARING TO BRING HOME A GROWN BORDER COLLIE DOG

Bringing home a full-grown dog does not need quite as much attention to detail as bringing home a puppy. A grown Border Collie will most likely be completely house broken, and will be trained to be in the house and behave appropriately. It is important to not take this for granted, however. Talk to the owner or to the rescue shelter workers and find out how the dog has behaved in the shelter or at the home.

SUPPLIES

You will need basic supplies when bringing home a full-grown Border Collie. The benefit is that you already know how big the dog will get, so hopefully you will only need to purchase one set of the basics. You will need:

A good quality hard plastic or stainless dish for water and one for food. Make sure they are sturdy and do not tip easily.

A kennel or crate for the dog to stay in at night. Many people prefer the dogs to have a crate, kennel or bed as opposed to sleeping elsewhere in the house. This is a personal preference, and may not be required.

Washable bedding material for the bed, crate or kennel.

A collar, identification tag and lead for the dog. The collar should be loose enough that two fingers can easily be inserted between the collar and the dog's neck. For larger breeds, a chain collar may be used, but care must be taken when using one. A retractable leash or lead is ideal for allowing the animal to roam while still maintaining control.

High quality dry dog food. It is a good idea to start with the same brand that the dog is currently eating. If you wish to change brands, do so gradually. Start by adding 1 part new dry food to 3 parts of the old. Gradually over a two or three week period, increase the new food and eliminate the old food. Watch for changes in the animals eating and fecal production. If you notice any signs of diarrhea or other stomach conditions, discontinue the new food.

A few sturdy dog toys are always a great idea to keep the dog entertained and busy when you are not at home.

PREPARING YOUR HOME

If you have other pets in the home it is important to make sure that they are kept separate from your new Border Collie until you can properly socialize the animals. This is important if you have dogs or cats, as you want their first contact to be positive and free from fighting or chasing.

In addition you may wish to dog-proof your house until you get a clear idea of how the animal will behave in your home. Remove any chewable or leather items from the area the dog will be in. In addition, remove any fragile or delicate items until appropriate behavior in the home is clearly demonstrated. Remember that this is a new home to the dog, and they will be excited or stressed, and may revert back to puppy-like behavior for the first few days.

Check for electrical cords, items hanging off tables and food items that may be tempting to dogs to chew on. Once the dog has demonstrated that it is able to behave in the house these items can be returned to the room.

It is important to talk to your children about the new dog. Children will naturally want to pet and play with the new animal. The dog may not be used to children, or may need time to adjust before being introduced to kids and other family members. Avoid over exciting or stimulating the dog for the first few days. Keep the people interacting with the dog to a minimum to allow them to get used to the house and their new family.

WHAT TO EXPECT

When you first bring your new Border Collie to the house, make the experience positive. Have all the basic supplies in the house and establish an area for the dog within the first few hours. Plan to have the dog examined by a veterinarian within the first day or two.

For the first week to two weeks, expect the dog to be slightly nervous and uncertain of commands. You may note that female Border Collies tend to be more anxious and male dogs will be more aggressive at this time. It is important to quickly establish that you are the master, and reward all compliance in a positive manner.

Spend extra time with the dog, and ensure that they are walked, exercised and fed on a regular basis. Follow breeder or veterinarian-specific information on any special dietary needs they may have.

After the second week, the dog should have adjusted to the new home and family. At this time you may find that there is some re-training needed if the Border Collie has bad habits that have not been corrected. Taking the dog to a trainer or a dog obedience class is an option to correct these issues.

Re-training is often harder than the original training, so it may be necessary to get some professional help. Research a good obedience trainer in your area, or ask for recommendations from the rescue shelter, veterinarian or individual you obtained the dog from.

Plan to spend as much time as possible with your Border Collie. This is pleasant for you and the dog, and a strong bond will form over the weeks and months that follow. Many breeds respond better to one owner, and it may take longer for the bonding to occur. Be patient and positive with your new dog, and you will soon have a friend for life.

INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO OTHERS

Most people who love dogs also love other animals, and often have a variety of pets in the house. Even if you don't have any other animals, you will encounter other dogs, cats and wildlife while you are out walking your dog.

It is important to socialize your Border Collie as much as possible, to avoid complications and negative behavior when your dog meets other dogs or other species. As with most activities with dogs, a bit of advanced preparation can make the introduction much easier and have it be a positive experience for the dog, the other pet and all humans involved.

INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO ANOTHER DOG

Each Border Collie, like each person, has its own temperament and comfort level with other dogs. There are some breeds that have been developed to be watchdogs or guard dogs, and they will naturally be more aggressive than a breed that has been bred for other reasons. Keep in mind the nature of your dogs breed.

If you are planning to add a new dog to your home it is also wise to keep in mind that spayed or neutered animals tend to get along better than intact breeding dogs. A spayed female and a neutered male will generally get along better than two males or two females. Keep in mind that a neutered male and breeding female will act the same as a breeding pair, and both dogs can become more aggressive when the female is in heat.

The first time the dogs meet, it should be in a place that is new to both dogs; such as a park or other location. Keep the dogs on a leash but have them interact with the human they are with. Gradually move the dogs closer, but keep the attention of the dogs on the handlers. When they become comfortable move them closer.

Avoid having the dogs on very tight leashes, as this tends to excite them more and the chances of aggression increase. Handlers should remain calm and relaxed. Introducing the dogs several times before having them play together will allow them to become familiar with each other.

Be prepared for any aggression by either of the dogs. They will most likely attempt to establish which dog is dominant, and this may be done by growling, posturing or even fighting. Keep a close eye on the dogs, and have a way to separate and contain the dogs immediately if there is any aggression.

If you keep the dogs in crates, they can be placed closer together at night when both dogs are contained to allow them to become familiar with each other.

INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO A CAT

Not all dogs are cat chasers, and not all cats are afraid of dogs. It is helpful if the Border Collie and cat are introduced when they are young, or that at least one of them is familiar with the other species. Care should be taken when introducing a puppy to a mature cat, as the cat can seriously harm the puppy with its claws. Likewise an adult dog, even a small breed, can easily kill a kitten. Until they are safe together do not leave the dog and cat unsupervised.

More than one dog with a cat can lead to problems, as dogs tend to hunt in packs, and may become excited in the presence of another dog and kill or seriously hurt a cat they have been friendly with in the past.

Introduce the Border Collie and cat slowly. Crate training the dog can really help as it allows the cat freedom without fear of fighting. It also allows the dog to become familiar with the cat. Remove the cat litter box and food from areas that the dog has access to. Not only will the dog eat both the food and the fecal material in the litter box but the cat will often start using other areas of the house as a litter box.

Keeping the Border Collie on a leash when in the presence of the cat for the first little while works well. Don't be disappointed if the cat and dog don't actually socialize or play together, as long as they respect each other. Be sure to reward both the dog and the cat when they behave appropriately together.

INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO OTHER SPECIES

Many dog owners also have birds, rabbits, guinea pigs or other small animals in the house. While you may be able to introduce your Border Collie to these animals following the steps outlined for cat introductions, it is not recommended that there be interaction without human supervision.

There are some breeds of dogs that get along very well with other species, but most dogs have the hunting instinct. As dogs tend to react by instinct, when they become excited or scared they may react with aggression towards animals that they have previously interacted with.

INTRODUCING YOUR BORDER COLLIE TO STRANGERS AND CHILDREN

There will be times when you will want to introduce your Border Collie to strangers. The best time to start socializing your dog with other humans is when they are puppies. Encourage people to come over and pet the dog, making the event a positive one for the puppy. Even trips to the vet should be positive, and all good vets will strive to make the experience as good for the dog or puppy as possible.

When introducing your Border Collie to strangers or children, keep the dog on a leash. If they are barking or hiding, speak calmly to the dog and interact with the animal until they are calm. Have the child or stranger then step closer, moving slowly and speaking calmly to the dog. At any sign of anxiety have the child or stranger stop and let the dog calm down before moving closer.

Have the child or adult extend their hand towards the dog's nose, but stopping out of range of the dog's head. Allow the dog to lean forward and sniff at the extended hand. Gently begin petting the dog, continuing to speak in a calm voice. Have the child or stranger start petting the dog with you. Monitor any change in the dog's behavior.

CHILD SAFETY AND DOGS

Many children are very familiar with dogs, and may mistakenly assume that all dogs will be as gentle as family pets. It is important to teach your children about dogs and to supervise your child's activity with all dogs, including your own. Most experts recommend that careful selection should be given to what breed of dog is most suitable for families with small children. Highly aggressive breeds or breeds trained for hunting are not advised.

In addition, children must be taught not to tease or torment a dog, even though the children may see this as play. Most dogs will attempt to move away from an uncomfortable situation, but children may not realize why the dog is leaving.

Occasionally, there is a misconception by adults that a child and a puppy will learn together. It is simply not true. Often having a child responsible for caring for or training a puppy is unsafe for both the child and the dog.

Children can be excellent caregivers for family pets, but will require adult supervision to make sure that the situation is safe. Even the calmest family Border Collie may bite or snap if cornered or overly excited.

Teaching children how to properly play with and care for dogs is critical to making the relationship positive and non-threatening for both the dog and the child. Children will need to learn that dogs may interpret behaviors such as throwing a ball or picking up a toy as possible threats to them.

Children will need to be aware that all dogs are not safe. While the family pet may be docile and love to be petted and touched, strange dogs or strays may not like to be approached, and may react in aggressive ways.

Children should be taught to watch for the warning signs that a dog is becoming fearful or aggressive. Children should know to immediately leave a dog alone that growls, or attempts to run away when they approach. Young children should not be left unsupervised with puppies or dogs. They may accidentally hurt the dog or puppy, and this may cause the animal to respond with aggression.

Children should also be taught that dogs do not reason the same way that humans do. Children may assume that the dog will understand the child's intention is positive, and will become upset if the dog growls or tries to run away.

Food and feeding is another area of safety concern. A small child should not be responsible for feeding a dog, as there is a possibility of the dog knocking the child down to get at the food. Even a small dog jumping up on a child can knock them off balance and cause a fall. This is unsafe for the child as well as a very bad habit for the dog to develop.

Feeding time is a high excitement time for most dogs, and if the dog is being fed with other dogs it can also be a very competitive time. A small child is more likely to be seen as a threat to the dog if the child approaches a dog or puppy before it has been trained to understand that human's can interact with it while there is food present.

It is important to remember that dogs are creatures of instinct, and will act based on that instinct. If care is taken to socialize, supervise and interact with your Border Collie in a positive manner, the relationship between your family, your dog and other pets will be a long-lasting and rewarding experience.

5

YOUR NEW DOG'S NEEDS



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EXERCISING YOUR BORDER COLLIE

Just as exercise is important for human health and well-being, it is equally important for dogs. All dogs require some exercise, and some breeds require considerably more exercise than others. It is important to start your dog on a regular exercise routine to prevent obesity and other health-related problems. Regular exercise will help your Border Collie:

Stay more alert and content

Sleep better

Socialize better

Live longer

Build strong bones and muscles

Improve the cardiovascular system

If you have a puppy it is great to start with walks, scheduled play activities, and allowing them time to run around in a yard or other enclosed area. Older Border Collies may not self-exercise as much as a puppy, and owners will need to be more encouraging and participate more in the exercise program.

It is important to consider the energy level and exercise level needed for individual breeds. Many of the breeds of small dogs and very large dogs require limited to moderate amounts of exercise.

Mid-sized to large dogs require more exercise than either small or very large dogs. Terrier breeds, sporting breeds and working dogs are known for their love of exercise and their enthusiasm for games such as fetch and Frisbee. Often these dogs, if kept in pairs, will play for hours with each other and get enough exercise this way.

There are several factors that influence the level of exercise that your Border Collie will need.

AGE

Very young and very old Border Collies will require special exercise to avoid exertion and strain. Try a slow walk with lots of stops for the dog or puppy to explore the area. Avoid excessive running or rough play with either a puppy or an older dog. If you have more than one Border Collie, it may be necessary to keep the older dog or the puppy away from the more active dog unless you are there to supervise.

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Just like humans, Border Collies can become “couch potatoes”. It is important to start out slowly when exercising with your dog. Try a short fifteen-minute walk twice a day to get started. Gradually increase the length of the walk and the pace that you are walking at. Watch for any signs of distress in the dog such as panting, wheezing or other respiratory problems.

Be aware that dogs with short noses such as Boxers, or Bulldogs (and sometimes the Border Collie) may have trouble breathing when they are exerting themselves. Try keeping the walks shorter but more frequent for these breeds.

Remember that smaller dogs have smaller legs, so a Border Collie will require less walking to get the same amount of exercise that a longer legged dog will. It may be difficult to exercise a long legged and short legged dog together. Avoid walking the dog right after eating, especially if the dog is not used to physical exercise.

An ideal walk for most Border Collies is half an hour twice a day at a brisk pace. If you are in shape, and your dog is as well, you can try slow jogging with your pet, but watch out for their very short legs! It is a great way for you both to stay in shape and spend some time together.

If your Border Collie appears to have difficulty exercising, it is important to see a veterinarian. They may require a weight loss program for the dog, or perhaps a change in food. Make sure that you check your dog's feet for cracking or damage to the pads of the foot. Cement, pavement, gravel or sharp stones can irritate the dog's feet and make walking painful and unpleasant for the dog. If walking in the winter check that ice and snow is not building up between the pads.

VARIETY

It is important to stick to a routine of exercise with your Border Collie, but it is just as important to add a little variety. Any of the following activities can add a little spice into your daily routine:

Play fetch with a ball

Take a walk in a new neighborhood or park

Invite a friend with a dog to walk along

Try some Frisbee chasing

Try jogging for a few minutes and walking for a few minutes

Use a retractable leash that allows the dog more freedom while still maintaining control

Take the dog to an obedience or training class

DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES

Occasionally you will see individuals exercising dogs in ways that are dangerous to both the dog and the owner. Please do not exercise your Border Collie using a car, bicycle, skateboard or while roller blading. There is too much danger of the dog's leash becoming tangled and severe injuries to the dog or others resulting.

In addition, avoid exercising your Border Collie in the heat of the day. A dog pants to cool itself, but this also causes dehydration. Make sure to bring water for the dog or plan the route to have water available. Border Collies that overheat suffer from heatstroke, a condition that can be fatal.

The early signs of heatstroke are rapid breathing, heavy panting, staggering gait and salivation. The dog, if not taken to the shade and cooled by applying water to the neck and head, will begin to vomit and can start to convulse. Give a dog that has overheated a bit of water at a time, as too much water will cause vomiting.

With a bit of care and planning you and your Border Collie can enjoy exercising together. Make sure the exercise is appropriate for your dog's age and current fitness level, and gradually work towards a more rigorous exercise. Add some fun elements to your daily routine, and enjoy the health benefits that both of you will soon notice.

DIET AND NUTRITION BASICS

Not all dog foods are created equal, and not all dogs' needs are the same when it comes to nutrition. It is important to understand what type of diet and nutrition is best for your breed of dog. If you consider this logically, it only makes sense that a housedog, such as a Border Collie, would have different nutritional requirements than a working dog such as an Australian Shepherd. Knowing some basic diet and nutrition facts will help you determine what type of a diet is best for your dog.

OMNIVORES NOT CARNIVORES

There is a misconception that dogs are only meat-eating animals called carnivores. This could not be farther from the truth. In fact, most dogs enjoy vegetables and some types of fruit as much as they seem to enjoy their dog food. Border Collie dogs require many of the same vitamins and minerals as humans to be healthy and maintain shiny coats, good teeth, bones and muscles, as well as keep energy levels up.

WHAT ARE THE DIETARY NEEDS OF A BORDER COLLIE DOG?

Border Collies require a variety of foods that include all the building blocks of life, including:

Vitamins

Minerals

Carbohydrates

Proteins

Fats

Amino acids

If you notice that your dog has any skin conditions, hyperactivity, listlessness, or poor coat quality, you will need to examine the label of the food that you are currently feeding. A veterinarian can advise you on the proper amounts of the dietary elements that your Border Collie may need.

You should avoid foods that contain primarily corn or wheat, by-products or excessive amounts of chemical preservatives. To check if your food has more cereal components than protein, soak the dry feed in water for 20 minutes. If the feed becomes mush, it is mostly corn or wheat.

In addition, check the protein content of the food. A less active dog will need a lower amount of protein, with the base being about 21%. The more active the dog is, the higher the amount of protein that is needed in the diet. Puppies and pregnant females will require special diets to deal with the stresses that their bodies are going through.

Many diets are available for dogs, including the raw food diet. Just as expected, this diet advocates that feeding of raw meaty bones, raw vegetables and some offal. There are commercial diets available that encompass this diet, and many breeders and vets recommend the raw diet for active dogs and dogs in training.

Since it is difficult for most individuals to carefully control the amount of protein, complex carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals that their dog consumes in a day most people use a commercially prepared food. A good commercially prepared food will have all the vitamins and supplements needed for a healthy diet.

WHAT NOT TO FEED YOUR BORDER COLLIE

It is important to avoid feeding your Border Collie excessive amounts of "human food" in the form of table scraps or little treats. While your dog may gaze longingly at you while you are snacking, it is in the dog's best interest to avoid these morsels.

Dairy products such as cheese and yogurt may cause diarrhea in lactose intolerant dogs. A dog's diet should never exceed 10% of the total amount as table scraps or human food. In addition, never give a dog human vitamins or supplements as they can cause health concerns.

Cooked bones of any kind can easily splinter in the dog's mouth and cause damage to the gums, throat, and lining of the stomach and digestive system.

In addition, the bones can lodge in the throat and cause severe damage. Raw meaty bones are the best for dogs, and should be removed when the meat is removed.

Raw eggs may cause salmonella, or decrease the rate and amount of absorption of biotin - leading to poor quality coats and hair problems in adult dogs and puppies.

Salt may cause electrolyte imbalances and dehydration in dogs. It should be eliminated from the diet as much as possible. Onions and garlic contain sulfoxides and disulfides that can lead to anemia in dogs.

Avoid feeding your Border Collie cat food or any other type of pet food. Cat food is designed for cats, and they have different dietary needs than dogs. Cat foods tend to be higher in sugars and proteins, and this can cause complications for dogs as they age.

Raw pork, lamb or rabbit should not be fed to dogs. These meats can contain various diseases such as tapeworms that can be fatal to dogs if not treated. In addition internal meats such as liver and kidney should only be given to dogs if it is organic, as there may be toxins concentrated in these organs.

Do not feed your Border Collie candies or chocolates. Candies contain high amounts of sugars that are not healthy for dogs. Chocolate consumption can cause toxicity in dogs that can be lethal, even in small doses.

FEEDING YOUR DOG

Going to the pet store to pick a brand and type of dog food can seem particularly overwhelming when you walk down the aisle and see the dozens upon dozens of varieties of foods available. If you take the time to read the labels and understand the basic needs of your dog, you will find that there are only a few feeds that meet your dog's needs.

During a Border Collie's lifetime, the feeding requirements will change. A puppy should be fed at least three times a day until it is four months old. A young puppy must be fed more often, because it has a smaller stomach and is growing at a very fast pace.

After four months of age it is recommended to decrease feeding to twice a day. Some adult dogs only require feeding once a day, or may be given free choice food if they are outdoors or are not over-eaters. Any changes in feeding should be closely monitored to determine the effect that they are having on the overall health of the dog. Fresh water should always be available for all dogs and puppies.

Regularly scheduled feeding will help with housetraining as well. A schedule of feeding means a schedule for toileting.

WET VS. DRY

The first decision that you have to make is whether you are going to feed wet, dry or a combination of wet and dry foods. There are advantages and disadvantages to both types of food.

Wet food is often more palatable for dogs of all ages, and can be particularly important to feed when your puppy is very young or your Border Collie is very old. Dogs with dental or intestinal problems may need to be fed wet food at least for a short period of time on recommendation by a veterinarian.

Most breeders and vets do not recommend a diet of only wet food, as it does not have the same fiber and consistency as the dry food. Dogs that are fed only wet food often have issues with producing excessive amounts of gas and needing to go outside often to defecate.

Dry food is often rather unpalatable to a dog, particularly if they have previously been fed a diet of wet food. Increasing the amount of exercise and mixing a small amount of wet food in with the dry will gradually allow them to switch over. If a dog is on a diet of dry food, the food acts to clean the teeth and promote healthy digestion.

When feeding dry food, it is important to make sure the dog has free access to clean water at all times. Make sure that the major ingredient in the dry food is not corn, corn meal or wheat, as this is largely filler that will swell up in the dog's stomach when the food is consumed.

Check that veterinarians or breeders approve the food that you are using. This is usually indicated on the dog food bag. Your local veterinarians will be able to provide a list of premium dog food brands available in your location.

In addition in both wet and dry foods, check to make sure that the food contains the balanced nutrients your dog needs. It will need to have carbohydrates, proteins, essential fatty acids, minerals and vitamins.

By feeding this food based on the recommended serving size for your Border Collie you can be assured that your dog is getting their basic dietary needs met. If your dog seems to be hungry or is not eating all the recommended amounts of food, always check with your veterinarian and adjust the amounts if necessary, based on the vets advice.

SCHEDULED FEEDING VS. FREE FEEDING

Once you have decided on the type of food you will be feeding, you then need to decide *how* you will feed. While, as the human, you may have a preference the final decision is really up to the dog, many dogs require a scheduled feeding. This simply means that the food is presented to the dog for up to twenty minutes and then is removed, whether eaten or not. This is a good habit to get in with indoor dogs, as it helps plan for exercise breaks and trips outside.

Free feeding is used for many dogs. It is simply placing an automatic feeder or bowl of food out for the dog, so they may access exercise choice of when and how much to eat. This is a good way to feed if the dog is not a glutton, or if there are dogs that get along well together.

If you have a dominant dog, it may prevent other dogs from accessing the feed, or may eat until it is stuffed to prevent others from getting any food! This is unhealthy for both the dominant and the submissive animals. Avoid feeding dogs together if they are in anyway aggressive towards each other.

HOME COOKING FOR YOUR BORDER COLLIE

If you have the time, there are some great home recipes that you can make for your dog. This allows you to ensure that your Border Collie is getting fresh, high quality foods that are prepared in a clean environment. It is difficult to calculate the exact nutrient balance, however, so dry or wet premium quality foods should be used to supplement the home cooked items.

There are many different recipes for home cooked dog meals. Most include the following:

Carrots

Parsley

Zucchini

Celery

Broccoli

Cauliflower

Beans (any variety)

Beef (lean)

Chicken

Turkey

Any combination of the above can be added to a crock-pot, covered with water and allowed to simmer. This mixture is cooked until soft and then allowed to cool. It can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 5 days and then discarded. The meat is usually ground or cubed before cooking. Remember to avoid using onions, mushrooms or garlic in the food as this can cause a reaction with some dogs.

In addition, many home made dog food recipes call for brown rice or oatmeal to be added. This may be done, but do remember these should constitute the smallest amount of the total ingredients, not the largest.

PREMIUM FOODS

If you don't have the time to make your own food, or are concerned about your dog eating a balanced diet, it is best to purchase premium brands of dog food. These brands are usually a little more expensive than the store "own-label" brands, but provide balanced nutrition for your pet. In addition, they contain all the supplemental vitamins and minerals that are essential for a healthy dog. Some premium brands of dog foods include:

Eukanuba

IAMS

Science Diet

Breeder's Choice

Black Gold

Hills

Nutrience

All dogs will have a preference for the kind of food that they like. Most of the premium dog food manufactures offer different sizes of bags, and even samples. Check with your local pet store, vet or breeder to see if any samples or coupons are available for a trial of a food before buying a large quantity of an expensive food only to find your dog hates it!

6 TRAINING YOUR DOG



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TIPSFORTRAININGYOURBORDERCOLLIE

Training your Border Collie does not have to be a difficult time in your life, or in the life of your dog. By following a few simple tips and strategies, the process can be pleasant and rewarding for all involved.

The major issue in training a dog is to make sure that your puppy is at the correct stage of its life to be able to understand and internalize the training.

As discussed earlier, there are seven distinct stages that a puppy goes through, and some stages will foster independence and assertiveness in the puppy, while others will be more “training friendly”. By understanding these phases and stages you can avoid a lot of frustration and learn to work with the dog, rather than fighting nature.

For purposes of this discussion, the focus will be on training a puppy rather than retraining an adult dog. The strategies used will be similar however, and can be interchanged. Remember that different breeds respond differently to training techniques, and the individual personality of the dog will also impact on the strategies that are most successful.

In addition you should research your breed and talk to trainers about the different stages and temperaments of the breed. In general hounds and dogs from the working group tend to be high-energy puppies, and may be rambunctious and have difficulty focusing on training exercises.

Toy breeds such as Border Collies can tend to be high-strung and prone to barking. The larger dogs such as Akitas, Shepherds, Rottweilers, Malamutes and Huskies tend to be very stubborn dogs and require firm and consistent training and work best with one trainer rather than multiple people. Small breeds can also be very stubborn, and usually tend to bond closely with one or two people initially. They can then come to respond to others appropriately later.

MAKE TRAINING FUN

Make sure that you are in a positive and enthusiastic mood when you begin training sessions. If you are tired, stressed or unhappy this will be communicated to the dog, and it will make the session less pleasant and more difficult. Take time to praise the puppy when something is done correctly.

Small healthy treats and lots of verbal praise, pets and hugs make the dog feel positive about training sessions. Try to have a play session at the end of each training session when the session has gone well - this will help the puppy focus on the training.

In addition, always exercise your puppy *before* the training session starts. This allows their excess energy to be burned off and gives the puppy the opportunity to focus. If a puppy is not exercised before training, it may be focused on running around and having fun rather than on the business of learning.

Most puppies enjoy learning, being praised, and spending time with their owners. They will look forward to these training times if they are done in a positive atmosphere where the puppy feels successful.

MAKE TRAINING NATURAL

Remember that Border Collie puppies are not full grown, nor do they have complete control of their body functions. Take the puppy outside multiple times per day, and positively reward the puppy when it urinates or defecates outside. This process can also work when the puppy sits on its own or comes to you. Catch them being good and reward swiftly.

KEEP TRAINING CONSISTENT

This is one of the most critical tips for puppies. It is very hard for the puppy to understand expectations if they change from day to day or between people in the house. Make sure that everyone is using the same commands with the puppy. For example if one person is using “sit” and another is using “down” to get the puppy to sit on its bottom, the puppy will be confused. This gets even more confusing if, when the puppy jumps up, he is told to “get down”. Keep commands simple and consistent.

In addition to the command language, it is also important to keep the expectations the same between people in the home. If, for example, the children let the puppy sleep on the bed but the adults insist the puppy stays off the furniture, it will take much longer to teach the puppy.

Talk to other family members about the commands and expectations for the puppy. If you are attending a puppy training class, invite all the family to attend so they can see how the trainer is indicating the commands should be used.

PATIENCE IS THE KEY

Remember that Border Collie puppies are just like toddlers, and will need to be given lots of opportunity to learn. Housebreaking is one of the first lessons that most people would like puppies to learn, but it is also one of the hardest. Puppies have a small bladder and need to frequently urinate. Take the puppy out for a short walk or exercise break at least every hour or two during the day. By avoiding situations where the puppy will have to mess in the house, you can positively reward for good behavior.

Remember also that sound or movement easily distracts puppies. Try to plan training times in an area where there is a minimum amount of distraction. Avoid having the TV on, or the children playing in the same area. Allow the puppy to focus as much as possible on the task at hand. Remember also that puppies have a short attention span, so stop the training when you notice the puppy is beginning to “tune out”. Short, frequent trainings will be more effective than long training sessions.

NEVER HIT A PUPPY

A puppy bonds with a human, and through this bond learns trust and obedience. If there is negative physical contact between the owner and the puppy, this trust and bond is weak, or is not formed at all. A Border Collie that is afraid of its owner will be very difficult to train, and may become extremely shy or very aggressive.

Rewarding for positives, and using a sharp “No” followed by withdrawing attention will be more effective than physical punishment. It will also

strengthen your bond with the dog, and encourage the puppy to learn to work for your praise and attention rather than fear of punishment.

GET IN A ROUTINE

Just as you schedule walks, exercise and feeding try to schedule a routine for training. This helps the puppy to understand the difference between play and training, and will encourage them to focus. Use natural training as well - when the puppy responds correctly to a command outside of the training session, praise them, hug them and give them lots of attention.

Have a positive attitude for the training, and be consistent with your commands and training methods. You will be amazed how quickly your puppy will respond to your commands. Remember that there will be good days and not so good days, and try to focus on the positives. Understand the characteristics of your breed and talk to a breeder, trainer or veterinarian if you are noting any unusual behavior.

THEBASICSOFDOGTRAINING

After you have researched the Border Collie breed, set your training schedule and routine and determined your course of action it is important to get started. The basic commands that most people would like the puppy to be able to respond to are:

Sit

Come

Down

Stay.

Once the puppy has mastered these commands and behaviours, you can advance to more difficult commands.

Starting training as early as possible is far more effective than allowing the puppy to learn negative behaviors and then trying to retrain them out of these and into the desired behaviors. Use naturally occurring events to reinforce training.

When the puppy walks towards you on his/her own choice immediately say “come” and then praise and reward the puppy when it arrives. Only do this if the puppy is headed towards you directly. After being with the puppy for a short time, you can easily determine if it is heading your way. This allows the puppy to pair the word “come” or “sit” with a natural behavior that the dog wanted to do anyway.

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO COME

This is one of the most important commands for a Border Collie puppy to learn. It is important for safety reasons, as well as allowing the puppy more freedom, because once you know that the puppy will come consistently, you can then allow off-leash walks in appropriate and safe locations without having to worry that the puppy may take off on you.

The first step to get the puppy to come is to understand the reasons that a puppy might not want to come. Perhaps they are really enjoying what they are doing, or are engaged in chasing or playing with another pet or family member. If the puppy is off the leash and having fun it will quickly learn that when it is called to the owner and responds, the owner will put on the leash and take it away from the fun.

If the puppy does not respond it gets to keep on playing, and quickly realizes that being free is infinitely more pleasurable than being on the leash. To avoid this response it is important to keep the puppy on the leash when out of the training area until training is completed.

To teach a Border Collie puppy to come, the easiest method is to use food as an incentive. For this to be effective the puppy must be a little hungry, and interested in the bite of kibble or the puppy treat offered. By choosing healthy treats and sticking to limited feedings throughout the day, the puppy will be interested in the treat but also still getting the correct diet.

Make sure that you have the puppy's attention in a quiet and distraction free environment. When you first start this activity you will need to be only a few feet from the puppy.

1. Call the puppy, which we will name Bingo, by name, saying “Come Bingo” or “Bingo, Come!”
2. Show the treat.
3. Immediately reward the puppy when he arrives to you.
4. Make sure the puppy enjoys the treat. Pair the treat with petting and lots of praise.
5. Continue this training, gradually moving farther back.

6. Once the puppy is coming consistently and immediately, gradually start eliminating the treats, and rely on the praise.

The training sessions should be done in short periods, multiple times a day. Try moving throughout the house or yard, and play almost a hide and seek game with the puppy. If the puppy appears to lack interest, make sure that you are not training right after eating or during times of stress or distractions. Remember to verbally reward the puppy and give lots of attention when the puppy responds.

Once the puppy has the concept start adding distractions. When first training outside or in unfamiliar territory, keep the puppy on a leash and being firm but gentle, focus the puppy's attention on you. Use a longer and longer lead until the puppy is responding every time before taking the leash off.

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO SIT

Sitting is a natural behavior for a Border Collie puppy or dog, so take advantage of this.

1. Whenever you notice your puppy getting into position to sit, simply say "Sit". This allows the dog to understand that SIT means "put my bottom down on the ground". Once the puppy understands this, training is much easier.
2. You can also encourage the puppy to sit by using treats.
3. Simply get down on the floor with the puppy, and hold the treat over its head, moving it slightly backwards. The puppy will raise its nose to the treat and move the head back, causing it to sit.
4. As soon as the back quarters start to lower, say "Sit" and present the treat when the dog's bottom is on the floor. This happens very quickly, so be prepared.

Keep these training sessions very short. Remember to say "sit" when you notice the dog sitting outside of the training session. Avoid having the dog sit more than 3-5 times in any one session. Mix up the "come" and "sit" commands, so the puppy is kept thinking.

Praise the dog both verbally and with lots of petting when they do the correct behavior. As the puppy gets better at sitting, gradually fade out the treats and increase the verbal and physical praise.

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO LAY DOWN

The command of “down” can be taught very similarly to the sit command.

1. Have the dog sit, and then place the food, in your fingers, on the ground in front of the dog. This will usually encourage the puppy to lie on his stomach.
2. If they do not respond to this, or if they stand up, try gently moving the dogs front legs out while giving the command of “down”.
3. Immediately reward the dog with food and praise.
4. The puppy will want to stand up immediately, and allow this until he gets the idea of laying down on the command. Once he has mastered this, encourage the puppy to stay longer by petting the dog while it is down, as well as holding back the food reward for longer periods of time.

As with the sit command watch for times that the dog is naturally going to lie down and give the command.

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO STAY

After the puppy has successfully learned to sit and lay down, it is important to get them to stay. This is a gradual training, and will not happen overnight, as the puppy will naturally want to go with you, not remain behind.

1. Start by having the puppy sit or lay down.
2. Give the stay command. Many people pair this command with a hand signal like the “stop” signal that is used in traffic.
3. Step back and reward your puppy even for the slightest amount of time spent staying.
4. Gradually increase the time and space. Once the puppy gets the idea of what you want they will stay for longer and longer periods of time.
5. Do not reward the puppy when they come prior to your request. Avoid punishing the puppy, as you do not want them to become nervous of coming to you.

WALKING WITH A LEASH

The best way to prevent issues with a leash and collar is to not allow bad habits to form right from the start.

Make sure that you are using a collar that fits correctly and is not too tight or too loose. A collar should allow two fingers to be inserted between the collar and the neck, and should be a soft fabric collar with the buckle for adjustment. A collar that is too tight will cause discomfort and the puppy will not want to have it on. A loose collar will allow the puppy to slip off the lead.

Do not use a choke style collar with a Border Collie puppy.

Use treats and praise to keep the puppy walking in the same direction as you would like to go.

If the puppy begins to pull immediately reverse directions given a quick tug on the leash.

Do not drag or pull the puppy, as this will teach the puppy to pull on the leash.

If the puppy does begin to pull, you can also stop walking, and not start again until there is slack in the leash.

Keep the puppy on a short leash when starting the training. Give lots of praise and keep the leash loose with no tension unless the puppy begins to pull.

Stop; allow the puppy to determine when the pressure comes off the leash. This will only happen when he comes close to you.

Border Collie puppies will quickly learn that staying by your side keeps the walk going, and prevents any pressure on their neck.

Remember that a Border Collie puppy has small, short legs and easily tires. Do not take long walks; rather short, frequent walks will work best. A harness may also be used with a puppy, and the same techniques can be used for training with a harness.

Work with your puppy on the leash in your home and yard before taking him out on the streets or in the park. Remember that it is easier to learn without distractions, rather than in a very new and interesting environment.

Training your puppy should be as natural as possible, and every effort should be made to ensure that the process is positive for the puppy. This makes the training more enjoyable for the owner as well. Avoid power struggles with the puppy, and reward them for responding correctly.

Treats are a great tool and should be used to get the process started. Once the behavior has been learned, continue to reinforce good behavior with praise and attention, and gradually eliminate the food treats.

HOUSETRAININGYOURPUPPYORDOG

Usually very high on the list of training priorities for a Border Collie puppy or a dog is the issue of house training. Teaching your Border Collie to avoid eliminating in the house is important for several reasons - the most obvious of which is the odor and mess that a non-house broken dog will make.

In addition, there are health concerns for the humans, dog and other animals if there is fecal material in the same area that food is prepared or consumed. Often dogs will eat their own waste, so keeping the animal away from this material is also important to prevent bad and unsafe habits from forming. The concerns with coprophagia (fecal eating) will be discussed in a later section.

CRATE TRAINING

One of the most successful ways to train a puppy is to use the crate training method. The crate is seen by the dog as a safe area or den that he or she can use to sleep in, or just to spend time.

There are several benefits to crate training your puppy that will continue to be useful as your dog matures. A crate provides an excellent environment for transporting your Border Collie, a comfortable yet confined place when you are not at home, a method to control challenging behaviors such as digging and chewing, as well as a tool for scheduling toileting, sleeping and other activities.

It is important to allow your Border Collie puppy to adjust to the crate and to learn that the crate is a good place to be, not a punishment.

1. Start by placing the crate on the floor, and place inside some dog treats and toys.
2. Close the door, and let the puppy sniff around the crate. The puppy will soon realize the treats are on the inside, and will whine or scratch to get into the crate.
3. Praise the dog for wanting in, and open the door. Leave the door open, but don't praise the dog for coming out. The puppy needs to learn that inside is better than outside.
4. To get the puppy to go back into the crate have a few more treats and toss them towards the back of the crate.

5. Positively reward the puppy for walking in and eating them.
6. Gradually begin to close the door behind the puppy. If the puppy does start to whine or bark make sure that you do not let him or her out until there is quiet, or you will be reinforcing the whining behavior.
7. Always have a treat or two inside the crate, and start saying "Crate" to alert the puppy to go in for a treat.
8. Never force the puppy into the crate or it will start to be seen as a punishment.
9. Increase the time in the crate but do not exceed thirty minutes to avoid any accidents or stress on the puppy.

Puppies can sleep in the crate, but should be taken outside if they cry or whine and need to toilet. If they are whining or crying for attention, do not take them out, or it will cause this behavior to increase.

Crate training can also be used when you leave the house. Once the puppy is comfortable in the crate, they will be happy to remain in there while you are away. Avoid any excessive amounts of time in the crate, as this can make housetraining more difficult.

Watch for any signs of separation anxiety while you are gone, and address these with a trainer to correct this situation as early as possible. Soiling the crate, excessive drooling or panting, or frantic behavior when you return may be signs that the puppy has some separation anxiety.

The crate can also be used to housetrain your Border Collie. This method is based on the premise that the natural tendency of the puppy or dog is to avoid soiling its own area or den. The key factors involve being able to confine your puppy to the crate for short periods of time, so that the puppy is able to hold their urine or feces.

Remember that puppies have very small bladders, and that their control is not as good as a more mature dog. After a short period of confinement, the puppy must be taken immediately to the area that it is to use to relieve itself. Once the puppy does urinate or defecate in the selected area, it should be immediately praised for the positive behavior.

If your Border Collie is kept in the crate for longer than the time it can control its bladder, it will begin to mess in the crate. This creates a bad habit and will seriously affect the ability of the puppy to learn to eliminate only when outside or in a designated area.

To start the crate training process, take the puppy out of the crate every hour and allow them access to the outside area. As soon as the puppy does

urinate or defecate, provide immediate praise and attention. If the puppy does not do anything, return them to the crate and try again the next hour.

Keep a journal of when the puppy eats and when it needs to go to the bathroom. You should be able to see a pattern develop. Allow the puppy to have free run of the area until about an hour before they usually need to urinate. At this time put the puppy in the crate to prevent any accidents. At the appropriate time take the puppy out, and if the mission is successful, provide rewards and let the puppy have free run again.

If the puppy doesn't go to the bathroom, return him to the crate and try again in 5-10 minutes or so. Watch for any changes in food or water intake that might indicate that the puppy will need to go outside more often.

As the puppy gets older and has better control of bowels and bladder, the time between crating will increase. Usually in two to three weeks after starting crate training the puppy will be basically housetrained.

Be aware that mistakes and accidents will happen, despite the best scheduling and planning. Try to clean up the mess as quickly as possible. Avoid punishing the dog as this will lead to anxiety and more accidents. Make sure to reward and praise the dog for the next successful outing, instead.

Crate training should only be used if you are able to get to the puppy to allow them out when needed. If you are unable to be with the puppy at this time, crate training may not be the best method. Avoid using crate training techniques if the puppy is vomiting or has diarrhea, or if they have any difficulty controlling their bowels or bladder. Check with a vet and get medical support before deciding if crate training is right for your puppy if it is having control problems.

Crate training can also be used as a quick 30 second time out area if the puppy is overexcited or not listening. Avoid using the crate too often or for long periods of time as a punishment, as it will no longer be a positive and secure place for the puppy. Too much time in the crate will limit the socialization of the puppy, and will also decrease the amount of exercise the puppy has.

PAPER TRAINING

Paper training is a great option if you are not able to be at home with your puppy to crate train. Start with a small area that you can confine the puppy to. It is important that there be no carpet in the area, and that the floor be easy to clean. Place a layer of newspaper or other paper over the entire floor area. The puppy will simply go where the urge strikes him, but he will always be eliminating on paper. Clean the paper every morning and evening, or more often if possible.

You should begin to notice that the puppy only messes in certain areas of the room. Begin taking up the paper that is in areas that the puppy does not mess in. Gradually decrease the amount of paper in the room until you have a small, manageable area. If the puppy messes outside of this area, simply cover that area with paper and start decreasing the size again.

Once the puppy is only using the paper that you have placed down, you can begin gradually moving it to the area of the house that you would like to use. Avoid allowing the puppy out of confinement until it is using the paper all the time with no mistakes.

LITTER BOX TRAINING

This method is effective with small breeds of dogs, such as the Border Collie. Dogs, unlike cats, will not use a litter box naturally; so will need to be taught. Start with the puppy in a confined space, and use the same method as the paper training. Spread the litter on the floor and have the puppy become accustomed to feeling the litter under its feet when it is eliminating. Gradually decrease the space the litter is spread in the room or area.

Move the litter to a box when the puppy is ready. Make sure that the litter box is the correct size for the puppy, as they may not be able to get in and out of the box. This method is practical, but may be more difficult to manage in the initial training stages.

TIPSFORHOUSETRAININGANOLDERBORDER COLLIEDOG

Most older Border Collies already have bladder and bowel control. If your dog continues to soil inside the house, have a vet check the animal for any disease or existing conditions. Start the dog in a living area or den. Play with the dog in this area and feed and water the dog here. Most dogs will not soil their living area, as they are naturally clean animals.

Provide a toilet area as well, usually an outdoor area. Watch where your dog naturally goes to eliminate. Border Collies that have been trained on gravel or grass will naturally want to go to these areas. Take advantage of the dog's natural tendencies, and provide this area as the toilet area.

Take the dog out to the toilet area after eating, sleeping or exercise. Praise the dog for using the correct area and avoid punishment for accidents. If the dog is bored, it may drink excessive amounts of water, or may over eat if allowed free access to food.

Consider scheduling meals at regular times, and then taking the dog for a walk afterwards. It is important for any dog to have lots of fresh, clean water but you may want to remove water or limit the amount if they are drinking out of boredom. Try providing some toys or other distractions for the dog. Talk to your vet before restricting any water to the animal.

If the dog is messing in its living area, check to make sure that you are not unrealistic in your expectations of how long the dog can go without being toileted. Breeders, trainers and vets can provide appropriate guidelines for dogs of different ages and stages of development.

Remember that old dogs, like puppies, may experience difficulty in controlling their body functions. Special accommodations and frequent trips outside will be required for senior Border Collie dogs.

7

MAINTENANCE OF A HEALTHY DOG



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GROOMING YOUR BORDER COLLIE

Since the Border Collie is a working dog, it is important to maintain that appearance both in the ring and in the trial competitions. A Border Collie has a natural double coat, consisting of a soft downy like under coat, with a longer, rougher textured outer coat. The inner coat provides warmth, while the outer coat acts to shed water and snow, as well as to protect the dog in rough landscape and terrain.

BRUSHING

Use a good, stiff pin or bristle brush to groom the Border Collie. Again, like with bathing, start with the under hair and move to the outer coat. Brushing on a regular basis prevents the formation of knots and tangles and makes grooming a more positive event for both the dog and the owner.

Brush in small sections until the coat is tangle free, and then use a paddle brush to smooth down the glossy outer coat. A good conditioning mist can be used to both detangle and add shine to the coat. Use a wide toothed comb to brush the feathers on the legs, and be very careful when brushing around the ears and face as this is a sensitive area for all dogs.

CLIPPING

Border Collies generally are not clipped for show, and the AKC and KC fault dogs that are overly clipped. The legs are usually trimmed below the knee and any long hairs on the feet or between the pads are also trimmed. For those Border Collie not being shown, they can often be trimmed in hot climates over the summer months. This helps keep the coat free from tangles, and prevents skin conditions if the dog is constantly in and out of water as it aids in drying the hair faster.

Never clip the Border Collie down to the undercoat, rather trim the longer outer hairs up to but not beyond the undercoat. A smooth coated Border Collie will require little clipping, but a rough coat may need a bit of a trim to keep looking in top form.

BATHING YOUR BORDER COLLIE DOG

Since the outer coat of the Border Collie contains natural oils to help repel water, it is important to avoid over-washing the coat. This can lead to dry hair and problems with tangling and matting. In addition it strips the hair of the natural oils and leaves the coat looking lifeless and lackluster. Border Collies should only be wet bathed when necessary, no more than once every three or four months or even longer. Dry power may be used to help clean the coat between baths if required.

If you are wet bathing your Border Collie, be sure to use only specialized pet shampoos. These products are pH balanced and are usually perfume and alcohol free to avoid drying the coat. Human shampoos and conditioners should not be used on pets.

The key to bathing your Border Collie is to be sure to remove all shampoo residue from the hair. This can be challenging with the double coat, so be sure to rinse with the outer coat pushed away from the skin. A hand held nozzle is most effective as simply running water over the dog's back will just be repelled by the outer coat. Rinse until there is no sign of shampoo either in the rinse water or against the dogs skin. Pay particular attention to the stomach and chest areas of the Border Collie, as these are difficult to rinse and cleanse.

When drying your Border Collie, be sure to dry the undercoat first. This can be accomplished by using a good quality pet dryer and simply holding the longer outer coat up towards the back and then drying the undercoat. Gradually the outer coat is brushed down. If you do not have a pet hair dryer, consider a good soft absorbent towel pressed against the hair to absorb moisture. Avoid rubbing as this can cause mats and tangles.

There are some commercially available “dry bath” powders that work well for quick deodorizing and freshening of the dog’s coat. Care needs to be taken when using these powders to avoid contact with the eyes, mouth and ears. Some dogs may be sensitive to the chemicals or perfumes in some soaps, shampoos or powders, so check a small area of your dog before treating the whole dog.

In order to bath your Border Collie, follow these few simple steps.

Clean all foreign matter out of the dog’s coat as much as possible. With a longhaired breed this may take a bit of time. Small twigs or other objects in the coat can cause tangling in the bath, so removing them ahead of time will save effort in the long run.

Fill a sink, bathtub or other water container with luke-warm water and place the dog in the water. The water should not be deeper than the top of the animal’s legs or the bottom of its belly.

Use your hands and arms to support the dog until it is comfortable and is not struggling. It is important to avoid any falls or slips at this time. Keep one hand gently placed on the back of the dog’s neck, or under the stomach for small breeds such as the Border Collie. Keep praising and talking to the dog in a reassuring manner. Praise the dog for standing still.

If you have a shower nozzle and hose, this is an ideal way to wet the dog down and rinse off the shampoo. Make sure that the water is warm to the touch, but not hot or cold before applying the water to the dog. Use only the gentlest setting if there is more than one way to adjust the water output from the nozzle.

Begin slowly pouring water from a plastic pitcher or other plastic container onto the back of the dog, starting at the tail and moving towards the neck. It is important to avoid using glass objects in case of breakage. If the dog becomes nervous and tries to move, stop and calm the animal before proceeding. Do not pour water over the dog’s head, as this is very frightening to the animal.

When the dog is wet from the tail to the neck, apply a good quality pet shampoo and lather. Again, keep one hand as a support for the dog and lather with the other. For larger breeds of dog it is usually easier to have two people to complete this task.

After the dog is completely shampooed, rinse thoroughly with warm water. Work from the top of the dog to the bottom to make sure all shampoo is removed.

You can complete the bath with a good skin conditioner/hair conditioner for dogs. Rinse thoroughly.

After the bath Border Collies will want to shake, which, depending on the dog's enthusiasm, can be very messy. Immediately after the rinse remove the dog from the water and dry with fluffy towels. Keeping your hand firmly on the back of the neck will prevent them from shaking, or will minimize the amount of shaking until you can dry them with the towel.

A soft washcloth rinsed in warm water can be used to wipe the face and ears clean after the bath. Avoid using any shampoo or conditioner on the face, as the eyes, nose and ears may be particularly sensitive.

After the bath the dog will immediately run outside and roll, given the opportunity. This often undoes all your hard work. It is wise to keep the dog confined to the house until the coat is completely dried.

After a few baths, your dog may look forward to the event. You can increase the likelihood of bath time being positive if you reward your dog for good behavior in the bath and do something special after.

EARCAREFORDOGS

Most healthy Border Collies will have few problems with their ears. There are, however, several conditions that can arise with regards to a dog's ears. The general symptoms of ear problems with dogs are:

Frequent scratching of the ears

Repeated and frequent shaking of the head

Ears appear red and are sensitive to the touch

Tumors or scaly appearing skin in the ears

Discharge or foul smell from the ears

A veterinarian should immediately check any dog exhibiting these signs. Often the cause of the symptoms are ear mites, water in the ear, or other conditions that will need specific medical intervention. The conditions can become very severe and can result in loss of hearing or even death.

GENERAL EAR CARE

Knowing your breed is the most important factor in determining how much attention you will need to spend on your dogs ear care. Usually dogs with ear flaps or ears that are covered by the long part of the ear will have more complications with ear problems than dogs with open ears have. This is largely due to the lack of air circulation and accumulations of wax. A dog with open ears has lots of air circulation, and wax is naturally expelled from the ears on a regular basis.

The first sign of a wax accumulation is usually a slight greasy discharge from the ear, along with a strong waxy smell. A dark colored discharge may be a sign of an ear canker and will need to be treated by a vet.

For a clear or light discharge the ear can be cleansed using a commercially prepared ear solution and a cotton ball. Soak the cotton ball or pad in the solution, squeeze out any excess moisture and gently apply to the inside of the ear. Do not push the cotton ball into the ear canal or allow any of the solution to enter the ear canal. Under no circumstances should you use a Q-tip or any other object. The danger with this is that a sudden movement of the dog's head could result in permanent hearing loss.

Occasionally, the wax build up will be farther down in the ear canal. The veterinarian can irrigate the ear canal and flush out the wax. This will usually need to be done several times if the build-up is severe. Again, this should only be done by a veterinarian, or other professional animal health specialist.

Long hairs in the ear may cause irritation and increase itching and redness of the ears. Trim or remove long hairs if this is a problem for your dog.

Avoid using water to clean the dog's ears. Not only is water in the ear canal often a cause of the discharge, but also it can lead to the growth of bacteria in the ear canal. Stop any cleaning activity that appears to be increasing the irritation and immediately see a vet.

Professional groomers can assist with regular ear cleaning when the dog is bathed. Most groomers include ear cleaning with the bath, and can let you know if they note any discharge or problems.

Ear mites are common in dogs, and require treatment for several weeks. If you have more than one dog and one has mites, you will have to carefully monitor your other dogs, as mites travel easily between animals. They are hard to see in the dog's ears, but can sometimes be seen if the wax from the dogs ear is thinly spread on a piece of paper. White spots in the wax are the mites.

YEARLY CHECK-UPS

Even if you do not take your Border Collie to a groomer, you should check your dog's ears if you notice any changes in behavior such as scratching or head shaking. A vet should check any discharge or strong odor as soon as possible. If your dog has a tendency for wax build up, the ears should be cleaned frequently using a cotton ball and a commercially prepared solution.

In addition, the vet will check your dog's ears and hearing at their yearly visits. Older Border Collies may have a decrease in hearing that is normal, but they may also need their ears to be cleaned more frequently. Following the advice of your vet will assist in this matter.

CLAWCLIPPINGANDCAREFORCANINES

Dogs have claws or nails that are made of a similar material to human fingernails and toenails. The nails or claws of a Border Collie are much harder and thicker than human nails, however, and do require some special care.

Dogs have two different colors of nails, black and white. The white nails are generally easier to clip at home as they are somewhat transparent and you can see where the "quick" ends and the nail begins. The quick is the tissue and blood supply part of the nail, and under white nails it will appear pinkish. The claws themselves are dead tissue, and have no nerves or blood supply, so will cause no discomfort to the dog when being trimmed.

Dogs with black toenails or claws are more of a challenge. The quick cannot be seen through the nail, and the chance of nicking the quick is much greater. This is a painful experience for the dog (think of cutting your own quick – ouch!), and the quick will often bleed profusely. If you are not completely sure that you know how to do this, get a vet or groomer to clip the nails for you.

Many Border Collies will not need their nails trimmed if they walk regularly on cement or other rough surfaces such as paved sidewalks. These surfaces act like natural nail files to keep the claws short.

CLIPPING THE NAILS

Purchase a good quality dog nail clipper. Do not use a human nail clipper as it will cause the nails to splinter, and will make the experience painful for the dog, as the nail may be twisted. Dog nail clippers will either be guillotine style (where the claw is placed in the clipper), or a scissor style (that has a notch in the blade to place the claw in). Do not use regular scissors as the risk of slippage is high.

Clip the nails short but be careful not to touch the quick or apply pressure to the area. Cut at a 90 degree angle to the pad, to provide a flat surface when the dog is standing. A nail file or electric file can be used to smooth the surface of the claw.

Many Border Collies and other breeds of dog are afraid of the clippers and become frightened when they realize that they cannot pull their paw away from you. Starting this procedure with a puppy is the best way to train the dog to have his nails clipped.

Small dogs can be placed on their back in the owners lap and the clipping can be done in a very relaxed and playful fashion. Or often dogs can be trained to lie on their backs and have someone rub their tummies to take their mind off the clipping procedure. Occasionally the "clip" sound will irritate the dog or startle the puppy, so talking to the dog will help distract from this.

Most Border Collies can be trained to allow you to hold their paw while clipping. They should be praised for not pulling away. Avoiding clipping into the quick and giving lots of praise and rewards will make the experience pleasant for you both.

DEWCLAWS

Dewclaws are the little nail that grows on the inside of the dog's legs, a little way up from the actual pad of the foot. Dogs may have single or double sets of dewclaws.

A lot of Border Collie owners remove the dewclaws, to prevent them from catching on anything while the dog is playing or running, and possibly causing infections or problems. It is largely a personal choice, as dewclaws that are compact and tight to the leg run little chance of being damaged.

Loose or floppy dewclaws may cause more problems. Dogs will have to be anesthetized, and the whole toe is removed, not just the claw. Most dogs have this done when they are being spayed or neutered, or the breeder may have it done when they are puppies.

If you are planning to show your dog, check your breed standards to see if they are required to have dewclaws for your competition.

VACCINATION REGIMES

It is critical to the safety and well-being of your Border Collie and other dogs to make sure that you follow an established vaccination regime. While there may be special situations in different areas that require additional vaccinations, the basic shots for dogs will be the same. Check with your local veterinarian,

breeder or pet store for literature and information on vaccination protocols for your location.

The following vaccinations are required for puppies at 7, 10, 13 and 16 weeks of age:

Parvovirus

Parainfluenza

Leptospirosis

Hepatitis

Distemper

Often these various vaccines are combined in one vaccination called DHLPP. Annual boosters will be required after this to keep the puppies and dogs healthy and free from these conditions.

Up to the age of about 8 weeks the antibodies received from the mother dog will protect the puppies. Puppies that are being kennelled or in contact with other dogs may also require an intranasal bordetella vaccination at 8 to 16 weeks. This prevents against kennel cough and is required before the puppy can be left at most reputable kennels. If the puppy or dog is in contact with other dogs frequently, this intranasal treatment should be repeated every six months.

Rabies shots will be given between 4 to 6 months. They will require rabies shots yearly, and in some areas an additional booster may be needed between the first shot and the second yearly vaccination.

Your veterinarian can advise you on any other vaccinations that may be required. Additional diseases that can be treated with vaccinations are:

Lyme Disease: can cause some arthritis and lethargy in the short term. It is usually not fatal in dogs and can be treated with antibiotics. The dog can have relapses from the disease months after the infection if it has not been vaccinated.

Coronavirus: will cause diarrhea in puppies that can be serious if another condition co-exists. The coronavirus will not be serious or fatal unless combined with parvo or other more serious disease.

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to keep your dog's vaccinations up to date. Disease like parvovirus, rabies and parainfluenza, which can cause death in puppies and adult dogs, can only be controlled if all dog owners responsibly vaccinate their dogs every year.

A vaccination works by introducing a killed or altered form of a disease to the dog in a manner that is not harmful to the animal. The animal's immune system responds by making antibodies to fight the vaccination. When the animal is exposed to the disease in the future, the body already has the antibodies to fight the disease, and the animal does not become ill.

SIDE EFFECTS

Occasionally some Border Collies may have a side effect to vaccinations. They may appear tired, or refuse to eat for up to forty-eight hours after having the vaccination. They may scratch at the injection site, develop hives or a swelling of the face. They may also begin to vomit.

If this happens you should immediately contact the vet, who can then prescribe antihistamines to counteract the reaction. In the future, the vet will give the antihistamine with the vaccination to prevent the reaction from occurring.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

It may not be advisable to vaccinate dogs that are already ill with an existing condition, even if it is not one that the vaccine is for. If your dog appears to be sick, has been vomiting or not eating, or generally listless and unhealthy, discuss this with your veterinarian before proceeding with the vaccinations.

Occasionally the veterinarian will recommend treatment of the existing condition prior to vaccination. Puppies should not be vaccinated prior to 6 weeks of age, as they do not have the ability to develop the antibodies. Female Border Collies should not be vaccinated while pregnant or nursing, unless under the direction of a veterinarian.

8

MEDICAL CARE OF YOUR DOG



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PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE

As with most things in life, spending a bit of time attending to problems before they arise will save time, effort and money over the long run. The same is true with raising your Border Collie. However, it is important to remember that a dog is not like a car or a machine, it is a living, breathing, loving member of your family.

When your pet becomes ill, it places a great deal of stress on the whole family. Spending some time on a simple plan to keep track of your Border Collie's health and well-being will help you note if there are any changes in the dog's performance or behavior that may indicate health concerns, or may require a trip to the vet.

DAILY AND WEEKLY

Spend a little time watching your Border Collie every day.

Note if they are interacting with other dogs or people in the family, or staying isolated. If your dog is normally aloof this is not a concern, but

a normally social dog that does not want to interact could be ill or in pain.

Watch how your dog moves, and note any stiffness or changes in gait. Keep track of this from day to day to monitor if it disappears, stays the same or gets worse. Dogs, just like people, can overexert themselves resulting in stiffness. The older the dog the more likely this is to occur. Try to limit the strenuous activity that older dogs are asked to do, as they often will do their best to keep up, even though it is painful for them.

Watch your dog eat. Make sure that they are chewing their food and not gulping it down. Border Collies may gulp their food if they are not being fed enough and are constantly hungry, or if they have dental problems and find chewing painful.

Watch for any blood in the saliva around the mouth when eating.

If the dog is overly hungry, increase the amount of food that is being fed, or feed several small meals a day rather than one or two larger meals.

Monitor the amount of water the dog is consuming. Drinking too much water can be a sign of several health conditions. Drinking water and then vomiting should be noted, and immediate veterinary assistance sought. Many conditions of the kidneys, liver and digestive tract can be detected early by the amount of water that is consumed. A dog that is not drinking enough water may have kidney conditions, that can lead to toxicity if the dog stops urinating.

Check to make sure that there is adequate fresh clean water for the dog, as often a dog will not drink unclean or fouled water.

Watch for any irregular activity in either urination or bowel movements. Diarrhea is common when food is changed or excessive table scraps are being fed. It can also be a symptom of serious and life threatening diseases such as parvovirus.

If the diarrhea does not clear up in two to three days, the dog should go to the vet. The vet may require that you bring in a stool sample to help with the diagnosis. In addition, some worms or internal parasites may be visible in the stool. Roundworms and hookworms can be fatal to puppies, and can also be transmitted to humans. Worms can also cause anemia and poor overall health and coat conditions

WEEKLY TO MONTHLY

It is a good idea to weigh your Border Collie once a month. Overweight dogs, like overweight humans, have greater risks for many health conditions. Weighing your dog will help you monitor if it is eating properly and not overeating. If you notice that the dog is gaining weight, try decreasing the food a bit at a time, cutting out the table scraps or treats, and increasing exercise.

Spend time exercising with your dog and note if there are any changes in the dogs stamina or general fitness level.

Trim your dogs nails, clean their ears and eyes and check the condition of their skin at least once a month. Run your hands completely over the dog to check for any swellings, tumors or growths. Watch for dry or scaly patches on the skin or hair loss. These can be signs of fleas, mites or mange conditions.

Schedule regular vet visits for your Border Collie – adult or puppy. Follow all vaccination schedules and report any changes in your dogs behavior or condition to the vet if they do not clear up in 24-48 hours. The old saying “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is really crucial when working with dogs. They don't have the ability to talk for themselves; they have to rely on your attention to them to note if they are not well or need any changes in their environment. Acting sooner rather than later will catch any problems before they lead to larger complications.

DENTALCARE

While it may seem a bit strange, it is very important to care for your Border Collie's teeth throughout its life. Many people mistakenly assume that a dog will be able to care for its own teeth, much as nature intended. This may have been true if dogs only ate all natural ingredients and foods such as they would have eaten had they remained wild animals.

Domesticated animals, like dogs, eat a variety of foods and chemicals that are never found in nature. They are subsequently susceptible to dental health issues in the same way as humans are. In addition, dogs live much longer than they would in nature, and senior dogs benefit from good dental care throughout their lives.

TEETH

Puppies start to get their puppy teeth at the age of 3 to 4 weeks. They will start with 28 puppy teeth. These teeth will be replaced with their 42 permanent adult teeth at about the age of four months. Dogs have four different types of teeth:

Molars – used for chewing

Premolars – hold and break up the food

Canines – used to hold and tear the food into small pieces

Incisors – cut and nibble

Many veterinarians estimate that approximately 80% of all dogs over the age of three have some form of gum disease. This causes problems for the dogs with chewing food, which can lead to digestive problems. Just like with humans, this also causes teeth to be easily damaged or start to fall out. This condition becomes progressively worse as the dog ages, and can even lead to fatal health conditions.

Border Collies love to chew so keeping their teeth in good condition isn't usually all that difficult. A good quality Nylabone or other dental cleaning bone can be used to scrape tartar from the surface of the teeth. Be sure to remove any of the dental bones before they are small enough to be swallowed, as they can be a choking hazard for your dog.

PROPER CARE OF CANINE TEETH

While it is not necessary to brush your Border Collie's teeth daily, it is a good idea to do this at least twice a week, or every two or three days. If you notice that the gums are red or the teeth appear yellow, try brushing your Border Collie's teeth during the grooming routine. A finger-brush is a good option as it is like a little sleeve that fits over your finger. It is texturized to provide a scrubbing action, and is much less likely to accidentally and painfully bump the dog's gums during the cleaning.

In addition purchase some doggy toothpaste, the human kind will not work at all as dogs intensely dislike the taste. Simply slide the brush over your finger, apply some dog toothpaste and gently rub the textured surface over the dog's teeth and gums.

Starting this routine when the dog is very young will help them become used to the procedure. Show dogs will require more frequent brushing to keep their teeth bright and healthy.

BONES

A good, raw, knuckle or beef marrow bone is a natural way for your dog to clean their teeth. Avoid using a cooked bone or a straight flat bone, as these can splinter and cause other health issues. When you notice the bone is beginning to shred or is getting small enough to be accidentally swallowed, remove it from the dog. The larger the dog, the larger the bone will need to be. Most butchers will save knuckle bones for you if you ask them.

There are also commercially available "tarter bones". These bones are good for all sizes of dogs as they come in several thicknesses. Care must be taken to remove these when they become small or the dog may ingest the whole bone.

CONCERNS

When you are brushing your dog's teeth, watch for any signs of inflammation, redness or even bleeding along the gum line. This will be normal if the puppy is getting adult teeth, but is not normal in adult Border Collies after about 6 months of age.

Look for any heavy deposits of tarter along the line of the gums or extending up the teeth. It will have a yellowish to brown color, and may not come off with simple brushing. If the tarter build up is severe, the dog will need to have it removed by a veterinarian. This process is known as scaling, and requires that the dog be anesthetized, so is a fairly costly procedure.

While dogs are not known for sweet smelling breath, it is important to get your dog to the vet if you notice a foul smelling breath over a period of time. This can be an indication of a dental or digestive problem, and it is always better to determine these issues as soon as possible.

MEDICALCARE

When researching, purchasing or adopting any breed of dog, individuals should be aware of the possible health problems associated with the breeds or breed that they are interested. The Border Collie is no different, and careful selection and knowledge of health issues with the breed can prevent complications in the future.

The Border Collie is an extremely intelligent, hard-working breed that is generally very healthy and fit. As with any breed of dog Border Collies, from time to time, will become ill. Breeders and owners should be well aware of a few hereditary diseases and illnesses so they can manage and even help prevent these problems.

HIP DYSPLASIA OR H.D

Hip dysplasia affects the hip joint ball and socket, and happens when they do not fit together correctly. Border Collies with Hip dysplasia, unlike other breeds of dog, often show no physical signs or symptoms, show good movement and appear normal. X-rays are the only way to diagnose this hereditary disease and the degree of hip dysplasia in dogs that are affected.

With the help of a veterinarian and proper diet, some cases of hip dysplasia are manageable. There would be more understanding of the disease and less affected animals bred if more Border Collies were x-rayed and scored.

COLLIE EYE ANOMALY OR CEA

This genetic disease affects Border Collies. The optic nerve, retina and choroids develop abnormally and affect the Border Collie's vision. Born with this disease, it remains the same and never worsens with age. At six to ten weeks of age, have the puppy tested by a vet that specializes in canine eyes. This is a painless test using eye drops and the Border Collie only ever needs testing one time.

With varying degrees of abnormality, CEA affects both eyes or one, and ranges from reduced vision to retinal detachment and total vision loss. To produce offspring with CEA, both parents must be affected or carry the disease. Since it is hereditary, it is important to avoid breeding any males or females that exhibit sight impairment from CEA.

NEURONAL CEROID LIPOFUSCINOSIS OR CL

Border Collies inherit CL, which is a lipid storage disease. There is a progressive accumulation of pigments and affects all body cells, but particularly nerve cells. The symptoms in a young dog are often confusion, not being able to see or walk properly and unpredictability of movement.

Unfortunately, this disease is often fatal. A blood test can determine if a dog either carries the gene or affected by the CL gene. This test will tell if the dog is:

Clear – the Border Collie will not develop the disease

Affected – CL will develop and pass the gene on

Carrier – will not develop CL but will pass it on

Some breeders want to eliminate the disease, and so they remove dogs from sale and keep Border Collies that are affected and carriers of CL from breeding.

OSTEOCHONDRITIS DISSECANS OR OCD

This degenerative disease involves the cartilage and joint bone, defined by complete or partial detachment of fragmented bone and abnormal growth of joint cartilage. Usually a dog will show symptoms of OCD between six months and a year. The only way to detect this disease is with an x-ray. OCD surgery is required in severe cases.

PROGRESSIVE RETINAL ATROPHY OR PRA

PRA, a hereditary disease of the retina, is a blinding disorder with dogs normally losing their night vision first. As PRA progresses, daytime vision is lost. An infected eye has a 'shine' and the lens often appears opaque or cloudy and often causes a cataract.

ANAL GLANDS

Always check the anal glands/sacs of your Border Collie to see if you need to express them. If infected glands become impacted, not only is it extremely painful for your collie but in extreme cases, they can rupture.

Anal glands are two sac-like structures that secrete a mucous substance. They are near the anus, just under the skin. When your Border Collie defecates, they expel a small amount of secretion from the anal gland. These sacs often fill up with this thick, foul smelling secretion. When you do not express the anal glands on your Border Collie, it may cause:

- Tumors
- Impacted anal glands
- Ruptures
- Infections

Border Collies with infected or impacted glands will often display some signs such as:

- Sensitivity and discomfort to this area
- Reluctance to have a bowel movement
- Scotting around with their rear ends on the floor, grass, etc
- Continuously licking their anal glands

The odd time, a Border Collie with infected/impacted glands will show no signs at all. Usually, in most uncomplicated cases, expressing the Collies anal glands will solve the problem. While some never need this, others need them expressed often.

ALLERGIES

Every breed of dog has the potential to suffer from various forms of allergies. Dogs, just like people, can be allergic to perfumes, soaps, food, carpets, dust, bugs, fleas, mites, or just about anything else that they could touch, eat or smell.

A dog that has allergies or an allergic reaction can react by:

- Scratching excessively
- Biting or licking at its body or feet
- Chewing at its skin
- Tearing from the eyes
- Developing hot or dry patches on the skin
- Hair loss
- Changes in eating or drinking habits
- Excessive rolling
- Rubbing the face or ears on the ground
- Diarrhea or vomiting

These behaviors can also signal serious medical conditions, so a vet should examine the dog as soon as possible. If it is determined that it is allergies, the first thing is to remove anything new that has been introduced to the environment. This can be room fresheners, carpet or fabric sprays, carpet, food, perfumes or products used on the dog, or other new items in the house.

The food should be kept basic, and there are some non-allergic foods available on the market. Watch for foods that have little or no wheat or gluten products or meals. Gradually add back items into the environment and watch for any signs of symptoms re-occurring.

Dogs can be treated with antihistamines to help with allergy control. These can be administered in the form of capsules or pills, liquids, or even once a month shots given by a vet. Talking with your vet and working together to eliminate the source of the allergy is important in conjunction with a treatment plan.

Border Collies are very energetic dogs, and noticeable changes in their overall level of energy and vitality can be a sign that there are underlying medical conditions. Be very careful to check the dog's food and water intake and note any changes in behavior. While it is natural for dogs and puppies to have some days where they are not as active or don't eat as much it is very problematic if these episodes last more than two or three days with no obvious reason.

Regular vet checks and vaccinations are important for Border Collies as with all breeds. Be sure to talk to your vet if you have noted any changes or have any questions regarding your Border Collie's behavior or medical conditions.

SPAYING AND NEUTERING YOUR DOG

Part of being a responsible pet owner is make sure that your Border Collie does not reproduce unless it is a planned event. There are so many unwanted puppies it is often hard to find homes, and often these animals have to be destroyed. In order to prevent this issue from continuing, it is important to have your dog spayed or neutered as soon as possible.

In addition to the puppy issue, there are several health and behavioral benefits to spaying or neutering your Border Collie:

- Male dogs have a lower rate of testicular and prostate cancer

- Females have a lower rate of uterine and breast cancer when spaying occurs before the second estrus cycle

- Prevents females from getting pyometra, a fatal disease involving and infection of the uterus

- Decreases aggression towards other dogs

- Decreases aggression and dominance towards humans

- Decreases sexual behaviors such as mounting in males

- Eliminates discharge during the estrus cycle in females

- Decreases roaming in males and females

- Decrease the number of male dogs that will "camp out" when a female dog is in heat

- Prevents you from having to keep your female dog locked up when she is in heat

Spayed and neutered Border Collies are generally less "hyper", and are much less prone to engaging in sexualized behavior. This behavior can be aggressive in nature, and is of great concern if there are small children in the family or in contact with the dog.

WHEN TO SPAY OR NEUTER

A Border Collie puppy can be spayed or neutered any time after they are 8 weeks of age. This is not a common practice however, and most veterinarians prefer to wait until the puppy is four to six months old. It is important to speak to a vet and not assume that your young female Border Collie cannot get pregnant - do not allow her to run or be in contact with non-neutered male dogs.

Many times the first estrus cycle is very short without many physically observable signs and often owners do not know that the female is pregnant. This is not healthy for the young mother or the unborn puppies. If you notice male dogs paying any sexual attention to your female puppy, immediately isolate her from the males and schedule an appointment with your vet. By spaying and neutering early, you will prevent any unwanted litters and many health concerns.

By neutering a male Border Collie puppy at close to the 4 to 6 month stage, you can eliminate a lot of the socialization and dominant behavioral problems that can occur with dogs of this age. While this is particularly true for large breeds, the small breed males can also become aggressive and highly sexualized at this time.

WHAT ANIMALS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BREED?

Although it may be tempting to consider raising your Border Collie puppy for breeding purposes, it is really a difficult and very serious decision. Not only does the average pet owner not understand the importance of knowing the breeding lineage, there are also special accommodations that need to be made to care for the mother while she is pregnant.

Remember that breeders spend a considerable amount of their time showing their dogs and keeping up with the latest medical information and breed information. They are serious about breeding only the best possible dogs to enhance the breed.

Most breeders require that you agree to spay or neuter the dog, unless you are actively showing the animal. They may also require that you consult with them before breeding the male or female dog.

Prior to making the decision to breed your Border Collie, you should have a veterinarian complete a full physical on the animal. You should then research the lineage that is best suited to promoting genetically sound and healthy puppies. In addition, you should ensure that you have buyers for all puppies that may be born. It is important to know this information in advance so you are not left with unwanted puppies.

Overall, unless you are working closely with an established breeder, it is not advisable to attempt to breed your Border Collie. Spaying and neutering your

dog is recommended - to increase the lifespan of your pet and to eliminate many behavioral concerns that occur with non-spayed or neutered dogs.

PREGNANCY

So you have decided to breed your dog: If you have a purebred female Border Collie and have planned to have her bred to a good line, you will be eagerly awaiting confirmation that she has become pregnant.

The first step is to make sure that the female and male dogs have the opportunity to successfully mate. As this can be a difficult procedure, especially if this is the first time the female or male has bred it is important to have an experienced breeder there to facilitate the process. Once the female comes in heat there is a limited amount of time to have her breed with the male, so timing is critical.

Once the two have mated you may begin to note signs of change in the female's behavior.

PREGNANCY SIGNS

The female may appear to stay in heat longer than usual, and her vulva may stay swollen for longer than ordinary.

She may become very affectionate towards humans and other dogs and will appear to be lazy and not as active as normal.

At around 3 weeks she may experience signs of morning sickness and may vomit or dry heave frequently. You will notice that her teats become enlarged and may be warmer to the touch than the rest of her body.

Between 28 and 32 days a vet or breeder can check for pregnancy by palpating the abdomen.

At about day 35 it is important to gradually start to switch the female's food from dog food to puppy formula dog food. This process should be completed over about a week by gradually increasing the amount of puppy formula dog food mixed into the regular food. Pregnant females will eat about one and a half times more food than non-pregnant females.

Smaller breeds may begin to appear to thicken throughout the ribcage by the end of the fourth week.

Weeks 6-7 will show a noticeable pregnancy. The female may also have a clear discharge at this time. This is normal, and there is no need for concern unless it is discolored or bad smelling. If there is any concern schedule a vet appointment.

By the eighth week, you might hear the heartbeat of the puppies if you have a larger breed of dog. They will be most noticeable down the outer edges of the female's abdomen. You may also feel the puppies kicking and moving.

In the ninth week the abdomen will drop and the female will prepare to birth the puppies. She will start to nest and become more secretive.

The normal gestation or pregnancy period for dogs is 63 days.

BIRTH

Once the female Border Collie begins to make a bed, it is a good indication that she is close to giving birth. In order to prepare for this you should make available a quiet, warm and private area for the female. Line it with soft, washable material that is free from lint, strings or other potentially damaging materials. Avoid using perfumed or scented materials as this can irritate the female and the puppies.

A whelping box is a great idea, and can easily be constructed of wood or other solid material. It should be big enough to allow the mother to stretch out in when she is delivering her puppies.

The bottom of the whelping box can be lined with paper during the delivery to help with clean up. Soft clothes or towels can then be used to help the puppies move about. The sides of the whelping box should be short enough that the female can easily get in and out but the puppies cannot.

The box should be available to the female prior to the time of the birth, so she has ample time to get used to the box. If it appears stressful to her to stay in the box, let her find a suitable place that is comfortable to her, as an alternative.

The female Border Collie will appear restless just before labor. You may notice her standing up and circling repeatedly. She may dig or otherwise try to make a bed for herself. Her temperature will drop slightly about 24 hours before delivery.

Be aware that some females become very secretive at this time and may not want to have people or other dogs around. Provide as much privacy for her as you can, while still being able to monitor for any complications.

Know your vets emergency number and have transportation available to get the mother to the vet if there are any complications. For larger breeds it is far easier to have the vet come to the dog. Check with your vet to see if house calls are an option.

FALSE PREGNANCY

Many females will go through false pregnancy, know as pseudocyesis. They will exhibit all the physical and behavioral signs of pregnancy, but will not actually be carrying any pups. If you have any questions as to whether or not your female is actually pregnant. a vet can complete an x-ray or ultrasound to confirm the pregnancy.

Usually false pregnancy will resolve itself in a few weeks, but you should be aware that females that have had pseudocyesis once are at a high risk to exhibit the signs again. Therefore, they generally should be spayed to prevent the condition from continuing once they have had one or more instances.

9

MANAGEMENT OF COMMON DOG BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS



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CONTROLLING UNNECESSARY BARKING

Barking is a natural process for a dog. It occurs as a response to a situation, event or stimuli that is exciting or fear-provoking for the dog. There are many instances that may cause a Border Collie to bark:

A ringing doorbell

A stranger in the house, car or yard

Another animal

Unfamiliar sounds

Times of excitement

Boredom

Need for attention or affection from humans or other dogs

Some types of barking are encouraged; such as barking at strangers or letting you know if there is someone driving up the lane. Other types of barking are less desirable, and in fact become a nuisance. Helping your dog understand good and bad barking is important, and needs to start as soon as possible in the training cycle.

Some breeds are more prone to nuisance barking. These tend to be the toy breeds, small breeds, and terriers – and this list includes your Border Collie! Larger breeds may also bark and generally are much louder than the smaller breeds. There are some interventions that prevent barking, but it is much easier to train dogs **when** to bark as opposed to teaching them when **not** to bark.

PUNISHMENT

Punishment is not an effective way to stop a Border Collie from barking. Usually a dog barks for the reasons listed above, and punishing does nothing to change the stimulus of the bark. Rather, it is more effective to distract the dog from the bark and then reward the dog for the following silence. Rewarding longer and longer times of silence will help the dog understand that you are OK with a short bark, but then you require the dog to cease.

TRAINING

Start your puppy as soon as possible becoming used to new situations and people. Socialized dogs tend to bark much less than unsocialized puppies, as they are more comfortable and less stressed in different environments. In addition, leave your puppy alone for short periods of time, so he or she understands that you will often be gone and then come back. Leave toys and other favorite play items to keep the puppy busy and to help prevent barking from boredom.

If your Border Collie is already a barker, try training them in familiar situations.

1. Have the a known person knock at the door.
2. Let the dog bark once or twice, then give the “Quiet” command and have the person enter.
3. Immediately reward the dog for not barking at the familiar person.
4. Repeat this activity several times in a row so the dog understands that the knock at the door is not necessarily a stranger.
5. Reward every time the dog stops barking, immediately. The dog then realizes after the command he will be rewarded for not barking. The reward also acts as a distraction from the stimulus of the knocking.

The owner can also use a distraction method such as shaking an empty soda can with some pebbles or pennies in it immediately after the command to stop barking is given. Then immediately reward with a treat and lots of attention and verbal praise.

A water bottle that can squirt a small amount of water onto the dog's face can also be used. The dog may begin to associate the owner with a squirt of water, however, and this should only be used very carefully – a clever dog will simply work out they need to bark and then run!

There are some commercially available collars that squirt water or sound an alarm when the dog barks - these are also effective. These "bark-activated" collars are ideal for dogs that bark in multiple situations and in many locations. Avoid using any kind of electronic shock collars, however, as these are potentially dangerous to the dog. If you feel that there is no other option other than an electronic collar, speak to your veterinarian.

A professional trainer may be able to work with you and your dog to resolve the issue. Many trainers will come to the home to work in the environment that the problem behavior is occurring. Remember to positively reward the dog when any situations arise where the dog quits barking on command.

JUMPING

Jumping is a problem in all breeds of dogs, and is particularly problematic in adolescent puppies. They become so excited that they attempt to jump up on humans and other animals, in their efforts to be noticed and to get attention or food. This behavior is a nuisance, and can even be dangerous if the dog is in contact with small children or elderly people. Even in its mildest form jumping up become irritating with the dog constantly dirtying your clothes and knocking things from your hands.

PUPPIES

Start your puppy off right and do not reward or recognize the puppy when engaged in jumping behaviors. It is hard not to reach down and pet them, but avoid the temptation. When the puppy stops jumping, immediately praise and pet them, providing attention for **not** jumping and engaging it the right kind of behavior.

Puppies respond to all kinds of interactions, and if your puppy seems to be a "jumper" try to discourage activities such as wrestling or rough housing with the puppy. Direct your puppy's playfulness towards a toy rather than you. When the puppy is playing with the toy and not jumping up, reward them with positive praise.

Talk with all the individuals that interact with your puppy, and have a commonly understood clear understanding of the behaviors that are acceptable and those that are not. Puppies have a hard time learning when they are receiving mixed messages about what is correct and what is not. Puppies will naturally want attention, praise and treats, so use this to your advantage.

ADOLESCENT DOGS

Adolescent Border Collies will jump mostly for attention. If not corrected while they were puppies they now become more of a nuisance than the cute little puppy jumping up. Even small breeds that jump can cause people to trip and fall, potentially hurting both the human and the dog.

One of the most effective ways to work with a dog between 6 months and one year is to use a leash training method. This requires two people, and a dog trained to sit on command. One person has the dog on a collar and short leash. The other person approaches the dog. As soon as the dog begins to jump up the handler tightens the leash and commands the dog to sit. The dog does not have the opportunity to jump. Both people then reward the dog for sitting and not jumping up.

This has a double benefit, in that it trains the dog to sit when greeting a person, a nice habit for a well-behaved dog to acquire. The key is to reward and praise for the desired behavior, and control the dog to prevent the undesirable behavior.

With a small dog such as a Border Collie, the handler may have to kneel or sit on the floor to be able to control the jump before it starts. Care is taken to not jerk the dogs neck, rather it is a constant tension on the leash that prevents the jump.

It is important with any breed of dog to be consistent. It is difficult for the Border Collie dog or puppy to understand how to behave if some people allow the jumping and reward it with attention, and other people punish. Try to be as consistent as possible, and ask others that interact with the dog to do the same.

In addition to working with people the dog knows, try including people the dog is not familiar with. Have them provide the treat for a dog that is sitting rather than jumping. Always pair the treat with lots of petting and praise.

BITING AND NIPPING

Biting and nipping is usually associated with smaller breeds of dogs and is an extremely disturbing habit for your Border Collie to develop. Not only does it make your pet unpleasant to be around but it can lead to having to have the dog put down, if it bites a child or other person.

Many breeds will bite or nip by nature. Herding breeds such as Shepherds, Heelers and Collies use nipping as a way to control other animals such as sheep or cattle. While this behavior is valued and desired when herding is required it is not desired in house dogs or companion dogs.

REASONS DOGS BITE OR NIP

Border Collies that were removed from the mother and littermates too early may bite or nip because they were not properly socialized with their own species. They may bite or nip to gain attention, show displeasure or to try to show dominance or aggression.

In a litter puppies play with each other by mouthing and nipping at each other. They learn that if they bite another puppy or the mother too hard they will get bit in return.

Puppies that are removed too soon do not understand this process, and will simply bite. Often, as owners, we make the situation worse by allowing puppies to bite and nip at our hands and feet in play. Puppies should only be allowed to bite or mouth toys in play, never humans.

Biting and nipping can also indicate that the dog is in pain, or is suffering in some way. It is important to determine what the conditions were that led to the dog biting, and if it is an isolated incidence or a behavior pattern that has developed.

TRAINING A PUPPY

The best way to train a Border Collie puppy to be gentle and not bite or nip is to stop the undesired behavior from the very first time it happens.

1. Play with the puppy normally, but if a puppy does bite, say "No" or "No bite" loudly and do not interact with the puppy until it is calm.
2. Another good option is to simply yell "Ouch" and ignore the puppy. This very closely mimics what happens in a litter when one puppy bites too hard. Most puppies will respond quickly to this treatment.

3. When you start the play again, provide a toy for the puppy to hold in its mouth or chew on.
4. When you again offer your hand and the puppy does not bite it, praise the puppy for good behavior.

If the puppy does get your hand in its mouth, make your hand as large as possible, usually by forming a fist. This will cause the puppy to release your hand as it is uncomfortable in the mouth. Offer a toy to play with. Caution should be used with this method to prevent any injury to the mouth of a small dog.

To stop nipping at your heels, try carrying a spray bottle of water or a very diluted mixture of vinegar and water. The ratio should be 1 part vinegar to 8 parts water. When the puppy follows you and nips at your heels, loudly say "No" and spray him in the face with the water solution.

If the puppy is simply over excited, try returning him to his crate for 30 minutes to calm down. The crate should not be used as a punishment, just a place to relax and calm down. When the puppy is calm, bring him back out. Start by taking the puppy for a walk or outside to run for a while before petting or engaging the puppy. Offer him a toy before the opportunity to bite presents itself.

Avoid any games that involve biting or nipping - such as chase, tug of war, holding toys in the air for the puppy to jump to, or any other bite associated games until the puppy is more mature and can distinguish between your hand and the toy.

TRAINING OLDER DOGS

Biting and nipping behavior is much more serious and much harder to stop in older dogs. If your Border Collie has suddenly started nipping or biting, look for other health issues. Have a veterinarian check for any disorders, painful conditions or nervous disorders that may have caused this condition.

If there are new pets or new situations in the house, the dog may be stressed and just needs some time to adjust. Isolating the dog from the new pet and spending some extra time working with the dog may be all that is needed.

The biting or nipping behavior must be corrected immediately and not allowed to become a pattern. Speak sharply, and use the spray water method to correct the dog if nipping or biting is an issue. If the dog is biting, keep children or unfamiliar people away from the dog until you get the issue completely corrected. Keep the dog on a leash at all times to prevent any injuries.

Seek professional advice for this serious problem. Vets, breeders and trainers will be able to provide direction and recommendations. Remember that some breeds are naturally more protective and may be more inclined to nip or bite.

Learning how to work with and control your dog is the key. Start this training when you first get the dog, don't wait until the dog actually bites someone. Many states and countries have firm laws on the putting down of dogs that have bitten someone.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

A certain level of separation anxiety is normal in Border Collie puppies. This anxiety results when the puppy first realizes that it is alone. If the puppy has just come from a kennel and has been with its littermates and its mother all its life, being alone is a very scary situation.

Most puppies will cry, bark and howl when first left alone. Gradually, within a week or so, they will realize that you will leave them alone but then will be back. The process can be sped up a little by placing a hot water bottle, stuffed toy, ticking clock, radio, or item of your clothing in the puppy's sleeping area. This allows the puppy to feel that he or she is not alone. In addition, providing toys for distraction and entertainment will help the puppy pass the time until you get home.

Occasionally puppies and full-grown Border Collie dogs do not grow out of this stage. They continue to bark, howl, dig and chew in an attempt to get out and locate their owners. These dogs will usually eliminate in the house, even if they were fully housebroken. The dogs are so panicked that they are literally not in control of their own behavior.

The exact cause of separation anxiety in dogs is not completely understood. Often it occurs when a traumatic event such as a move, a death in the family, a long period of separation, a trip to a kennel, or a change in the daily routine happens. The dog may initially seem unable to adjust to these incidents. Dogs that are not socialized, or who have not been away from people often tend to have the most serious episodes of separation anxiety.

SEPARATION ANXIETY BEHAVIORS

The following are behaviors associated with separation anxiety in adult Border Collies:

Excessive loud barking, howling or crying when you leave the room or the house.

Scratching, biting and clawing at doors or windows when you are gone. Outside dogs may chew at their runs or try to dig under fences.

The dog does not want to go outside by itself when you are home.

Follows you around the house and will sit and cry or whine if shut out of a room that you are in.

Extremely frantic greetings even if you have just been gone a few minutes.

WAYS TO HANDLE SEPARATION ANXIETY

If your Border Collie has mild to moderate separation anxiety, there are a few simple techniques that you can use:

Just like with a puppy, provide an old, well-worn and unwashed t-shirt or other item of clothing for your dog and leave it with them when you leave.

Avoid greeting the dog immediately upon returning; delay the greeting for a few minutes and keep it low key.

Leave for very short periods of time, and try to avoid leaving the dog alone for extended periods until it becomes accustomed to your leaving and returning.

Leave a favorite toy or a nice raw knuckle bone for the dog to chew on and entertain itself with. Bones can be messy, so this may only be a good idea if the dog is in a confined area of the house or outside.

Try acting like you are leaving, and then sitting down again. The dog will then not begin to become anxious every time you pick up your keys or put on your coat.

Once the dog no longer whines or cries when it thinks you are leaving, try stepping outside, closing the door and then returning immediately. Gradually extend the period of time that you are outside and the dog is inside.

If the dog begins to become anxious slow down the process and keep your separation time shorter until the dog is calm again.

Try giving your dog a signal to indicate you will return. This can be a phrase like "I'll be right back" before you step out the door. Turning on the radio or the TV can signal the dog that you are leaving but will return. However, the radio itself is not a companion, nor will it alleviate anxiety for your dog.

After you are able to reach the 30-minute absence mark, the dog should be able to stay calm if you are gone for longer periods.

Talk to your veterinarian, as this condition can be very stressful for both you and the dog. If the dog chews and destroys household items, there could be a danger that the dog could eat something harmful or injure itself. There are some anti-anxiety medications for dogs that can be prescribed by a veterinarian to help while you work on the behavior modification training.

A professional trainer may also be able to help you with some different techniques and approaches. Make sure that they have experience working with separation anxiety, as basic obedience training will not help this situation. Getting another dog will also not solve the problem, as the dog is not necessarily lonely, it is worried about being away from you.

DIGGING

Digging, like many of the behaviors that our dogs do, is a natural behavior that has its roots in the early development of the species.

REASONS FOR DIGGING

Dogs in their wild state, or in their domesticated state, dig for several reasons. Often dogs will dig to bury that wonderful bone that you just gave them. They will cover it with dirt and leave it there for a while to “age”. They will then dig it up and enjoy it at a later time.

They may also dig to find cooler bedding in the warm summer months. Dogs will also dig in snow to make a bed that will hold body heat. Pregnant females will dig to make a nest or bed to have their puppies in.

Many breeds are bred to be digging dogs. Terriers and other hunting dogs may have strong instincts to dig, and careful breeding has developed this. Although digging is not an essential characteristic for survival anymore, this instinct is still there.

Most dogs dig to escape, or because they are bored. If you feel your Border Collie is digging to escape, you will have to determine if they are suffering from separation anxiety, or if they are trying to escape to someplace more entertaining. If it is not separation issue, consider how can you make your yard a more entertaining place for your dog when you are not home.

PREVENTION

Dogs may dig to get to playmates on the other side of the fence. If your Border Collie digs out of your yard to get to your neighbors' dog, maybe he or

she just needs a companion. If you have the space and would like another dog, then providing a companion may be the answer. Alternatively, perhaps you can work with the neighbor to allow the dogs to be together in the day - provided they get along well and are both spayed or neutered.

Providing lots of toys, bones and other activities for the dog while you are gone will help them remain contented in the yard. Make sure there is shade and a cool area in the summer for the dog. A heated kennel or other bed area in colder climates may be necessary.

If your Border Collie digs random holes in the yard, try fencing off or providing a "digging area" for the dog. Encourage the dog to dig in this spot, rewarding them for digging in the specified location. Provide lots of soft dirt for the dog to dig in. Fill existing holes with water, as most dogs do not like to dig in mud.

A few drops of pennyroyal essential oil, citronella or a sprinkle of red pepper or cayenne pepper around the hole will naturally repel the dog. Often the pepper is very effective, and can also be used to keep the dogs from digging in flowerbeds, and around trees and shrubs in a landscaped yard.

For more enthusiastic diggers, you can fill the hole and place a layer of chicken wire over the filled hole. Cover with a layer of soil. When the dog returns to dig it will stop, as the chicken wire will foil his efforts. Care needs to be taken that the wire does not damage the pads on the feet if the dog persists in digging.

Try exercising the dog for at least 30 minutes before leaving them alone in the yard. Provide distractions and other companions to help them spend the day without resorting to digging for entertainment.

CHEWING AND TEETHING

Teething is a troublesome time for Border Collie puppies, just as it is for children and infants. Puppies lack the ability to talk, so they use their mouth as a way to communicate, play and interact with their brothers and sisters. Puppies learn through playing with their littermates that hard bites cause pain, and they quickly learn to control their biting. Puppies need to be aware that humans are not littermates, and that there is no level of biting or mouthing that is acceptable.

PUPPIES AND CHEWING

During teething puppies will want to chew on objects, this is a natural developmental stage. Tough and durable plastic toys, or special teething bones made of synthetic materials can be purchased from your local pet store. Avoid human toys for puppies, as they can be easily destroyed and the small parts swallowed. This can lead to choking or damage of the digestive system that can result in long-term health problems for the puppy.

Most Border Collie puppies get their first set of puppy teeth in the first four weeks of life. These teeth are very sharp, and puppies need to learn that they are not to bite or chew on objects other than toys.

By providing toys in the puppy's box or den area and eliminating other objects to chew on, the puppy will become accustomed to chewing on what you want them to chew on. Smaller dogs will need smaller toys, and larger dogs need bigger chew toys. Avoid leather or rawhide toys that can shred and choke a puppy. Toys that are too small for larger puppies may also present a choking concern.

Puppies then get their full set of adult teeth at approximately 4 months. At this time the mouth may be sensitive and the urge to chew will be evident again. Providing fresh raw bones, particularly knuckle and marrow bones when outside can help relieve some of the pressure of teething. Prepare the house for this time, removing all items that the puppy may be tempted to chew on. Since this is often difficult, confining the puppy to a room may be appropriate when you are not home to supervise.

Preventing any negative chewing during teething is much easier than trying to correct the problem once it gets started.

Avoid playing any games that involve the puppy biting, mouthing or wrestling with the humans in the family – this cannot be emphasized enough. They need to understand that you are not a littermate, and they need to be able to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.

This policy of **no biting** should be consistent between all family members. It is very confusing to a puppy if they are allowed to chew on one person's fingers but not on another's. Use a toy as the biting or chewing object in any games. Do not get into dominance issues using tug of war games with the puppy at this time.

CORRECTING A CHEWER

If puppies do chew on furniture or other items, there are commercially available spray-on products to make the item distasteful and prevent the

puppy from chewing. Always test these products beforehand, as they can discolor certain types of furniture and carpets.

Provide a variety of toys and synthetic bones for puppies to chew on. Praise the puppy when it is chewing on the correct items.

Never hit or harshly punish your puppy if it chews on an item. Physical punishment will lead to distrust, and will make training the puppy harder in all areas. A loud and firm “No chewing” when you catch the puppy in the act will usually stop the chewing. Provide an acceptable toy to the puppy, then praise him or her when she chews on the right object. Remove the previously chewed item from the dog’s reach until they have the concept of chewing only on toys.

For adult Border Collie dogs, a quick squirt with a water bottle coupled with a stern “no” may work well, but only if you catch the dog in the act of chewing. Again, provide the appropriate replacement item and praise the dog for doing the right thing. Most adult dogs chew out of boredom, so try to add some new toys or distractions to their day. Long walks and more exercise may also help an adult dog from resorting to chewing behaviors.

If the chewing does not stop despite your best efforts, see a veterinarian. In rare cases the dogs may be chewing due to an imbalance in the diet or a medical condition. The vet may also be able to recommend a trainer that can help you learn to work with your dog to correct this issue.

EATINGRELATEDPROBLEMS

Some eating related problems in Border Collies may be caused by psychological issues, but for the most part dogs with eating disorders are either eating the wrong diet or not receiving enough exercise. Many owners feed their dogs excessive amounts of table scraps, human treats, and other items that are simply not healthy for dogs to consume. Some of these items, such as chocolate or onion, may in fact cause toxicity in dogs and can lead to death in some cases.

FOOD

There are many different brands, types and styles of dog food available on the market. While price is a factor, the most expensive is not necessarily the best. A good quality premium dog or puppy food will contain all the essential elements that a healthy dog will require. A dog that has other health issues may require a specialized food and this can be prescribed by your vet.

A good quality dog food should contain:

22-25% protein from a high quality protein source
21-24% fat

Watch the label for high levels of low-quality protein products such as meat by-products and bone meal, by-products and corn gluten meal. Look instead for whole meats as the key source of protein, rather than “meat derivatives”.

Specific diet recommendations can be obtained from the breed registry or a breeder.

DENTAL PROBLEMS

Some eating disorders marked by rapid weight loss and a disinterest in food may be due to poor dental condition or painful teeth. If it hurts a dog to eat, it is less likely that they will consume as much food. Check the dog's teeth and gums for any signs of disease, bleeding or swelling. Try changing to a softer dog food until the vet has the dental issue under control.

LACK OF EXERCISE

Dogs can become lazy and more sedate as they age. If your Border Collie has slowed down due to aging, you may need to adjust their food intake accordingly to prevent obesity. Obesity in dogs is not a healthy condition, and can complicate respiratory, circulatory and other body systems.

Try encouraging your dog to exercise more, playing fetch or Frisbee, or just going for a long walk together. Remember if your dog is out of shape they will need to work up to long walks or runs, just like an out of shape person needs to do. Try to spend time with your dog and make the exercise pleasant for you both.

Dogs that experience a sudden weight gain with no major change in diet will need to be seen by a veterinarian as this can be a sign of serious conditions.

PICA

Pica is the name of a medical condition where the dog attempts to eat inorganic or non-food items. This is more than just chewing, as the dog actually chews and swallows the item. It may be caused by a chemical imbalance, a nutrient, vitamin or mineral deficit in the body, or a nervous or psychological condition. A veterinarian can complete blood tests to determine if there is a medical reason for the behavior. Adjusting the dog's environment and diet may be required to correct this issue.

Coprophagia, or the eating of feces, will be discussed later. This is a very embarrassing and potentially dangerous behavior for the dog to engage in.

REFUSING TO EAT VS. FINICKY EATERS

Border Collies that refuse to eat when there has not been a change of diet or other traumatic event should be immediately taken to a veterinarian. This is usually the sign of a significant medical concern if the dog does not eat at all in 24 hours and there have been no changes in diet, environment or living conditions.

Dogs may choose to not eat if they are finicky or picky eaters. This is easily determined to be the case if the dog will not eat the balanced dry dog food but will eat table scraps or wet food, or their favorite dry food or treat. You can avoid creating a finicky eater by:

- severely limiting the amount of table scraps or treats given during the day
- gradually switching to a new food so the dog acquires the taste for the new food
- scheduling feeding times, and only leaving the food out for the dog for twenty minutes twice a day
- mixing a very small amount of the desired food in with the balanced food and gradually eliminate the mix
- exercising the dog more so they are hungrier at meal times
- avoiding free choice food, as you will be unable to monitor how much is being consumed

Many people mistakenly feel that a dog will get tired of one kind of food over and over. This is not true, as dogs will actually benefit from a consistent, high quality food that meets all their nutritional requirements.

COPROPHAGIA

As mentioned earlier coprophagia is the eating of fecal material. Dogs may eat their own, other dogs', or even other animals' droppings. This is an embarrassing and frankly disgusting behavior, especially if your Border Collie is an indoor animal that spends time with the family.

It is normal for puppies to go through a phase of coprophagia, and the female dog will often clean the whelping box or other area that the puppies are in by eating the waste material. Keeping the area as clean as possible will eliminate this issue, and puppies should never be kept in areas that are soiled.

ADULT DOGS

Adult Border Collies may eat feces out of habit, as an attention seeking behavior, or due to health concerns. If you have more than one dog and you notice that they are both eating one of the animals' waste it may be a sign that this particular animal is not properly digesting its food. In addition diabetes, thyroid disease, Cushing's disease or the use of certain steroids can trigger unusual eating habits in adult dogs.

The first step if you note an adult dog that suddenly starts this behavior is to talk to a vet and have your dog in for a check-up.

For the most part adult dogs eat their own stool or other animals' feces out of habit. This behavior can be started early in the puppy's life if the kennel or whelping box is not kept clean. If a puppy or dog is caught in the act of eating feces, undue attention (positive or negative) will reinforce the behavior. Try as much as possible to restrict your puppies' or dogs' ability to come in contact with fecal material.

CORRECTING THE PROBLEM

As described above the first step is a trip to the vet. Once you are satisfied that it is a behavioral issue, not a medical condition, try the following:

Keep your dog exercised and playing to avoid boredom

Remove any and all fecal material immediately. This includes cat litter boxes, as they are often the target of a dog that has coprophagia.

The vet can prescribe a compound that is added to the dogs food that has no taste initially, but after going through the dog's digestive tract will give a unpalatable taste and odor to the feces.

Sprinkling cayenne pepper or red pepper powder on fecal material often works!

In addition, keeping the dog on a leash, and teaching it to come to you and sit down for a treat immediately after defecating can help teach a rewarding and socially acceptable replacement behavior. Try praising your dog for not eating fecal material, and provide a toy or a reward immediately for the desired behavior.

CONCERNS

The most obvious concern about socially unacceptable behavior has already been addressed. In addition, this can also be a cause for concern about parasite infestations.

Most worms and internal parasites lay eggs in the intestinal tract of infected animals. When your dog then eats the feces, he or she will become infected with the same worms and parasites. Chronic infestation leads to anemia, poor health and weakness of the immune system and even death.

As with many of the conditions discussed, prevention is the key. If your Border Collie puppy is not exposed to fecal material, and your dog's pen, yard and other environments are kept as clean as possible, the opportunity to develop this habit is virtually eliminated.

Avoid punishing a dog that engages in coprophagia, as this may make the situation worse. Focus instead on positive behavior. Be prepared to change foods slowly to prevent any undigested portions being left in the stool due to stomach upset. Check with your animal health specialist if you notice any coprophagia, to make sure it is not a symptom of a serious medical problem.

10

THE AGING DOG



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CARE OF THE AGING DOG

A Border Collie's needs, behaviors and temperament will change as they age. While this is an inevitable process, there are some things that can be done to make this positive for all involved, both humans and dog. The key to focus on is keeping the dog as active and involved in a routine as possible.

Aging Border Collies will have the same issues as any human when they age. You will notice that your dog may have:

Decrease in appetite

Decrease in stamina and desire to exercise

Loss of eyesight

Loss of hearing

Loss of memory

Incontinence

Possible temperamental changes

One of the key points to working with an aging Border Collie is to know the expected life span. Some breeds live longer than others, and you should know the average to determine if some of the medical and behavioral issues with your dog are due to aging or a more serious medically treatable condition.

All dogs should have yearly vet checks, but older Border Collies may require more frequent visits. Since older dogs don't have the stamina and energy that younger dogs have, they may be more affected (even by simple conditions) than they would have been if they were younger. Below are some of the more common medical conditions to watch for in an aging dog.

ARTHRITIS, PAIN AND STIFFNESS

Senior Border Collies are often stiff, particularly in the mornings or after long periods of inactivity. Since older dogs become more sedate naturally, it is important for the owner to watch for any signs of pain or discomfort when the dog is moving around. Any indications of pain or discomfort can be treated with arthritis medications, and even some natural remedies that work well with dogs. Talk to your veterinarian about options to treat and reduce the symptoms of arthritis.

INCREASED WATER CONSUMPTION

Excessive water consumption can be associated with diabetes and kidney dysfunction. If the urine production increases, or the urine is very strong smelling or very pale, a veterinarian should be consulted as soon as possible. Urination can be a sign of loss of bladder control without any other complication, and there are diapers and other products available on the market to help owners and dogs cope with this issue.

BLINDNESS AND HEARING LOSS

There are many conditions that can cause a Border Collie to go blind or to become deaf. Most of these conditions can be treated or minimized with proper medical treatment. Some dogs will go blind or deaf as they age, and there is no specific treatment to prevent these conditions. Dogs can still lead a normal life even without sight or hearing.

Keep the environment the same, particularly with blindness. Keep the dog on a leash or in a fenced yard at all times, as they will be unaware of dangers such as cars or other aggressive dogs. Your dog will rely on his or her sense of smell so make an effort to leave a worn item with the dog when you leave the house or the room.

Sudden blindness or hearing loss may be due to toxicity in the dogs system. Any sudden loss should be investigated by a veterinarian, through a check-up and blood tests if necessary.

CHANGES IN WEIGHT OR APPETITE

Senior Border Collies will often require a special diet. They may have digestive problems that cause mal-absorption of nutrients from certain kinds of food. Talk to your vet or breeder about the best type of food for senior dogs. Watch for any signs of bleeding of the gums or foul smelling breath, as this can signal dental or digestive issues. Dogs that have a history of digestive or dental problems in their early years often have the condition reoccur in their senior years.

MEMORY OR COGNITIVE LOSS

You may notice that your senior Border Collie does not seem to remember some commands that haven't been used for a while. This is normal, and spending some additional time to re-train using positive reinforcement can be rewarding for both you and your dog. The dog may also have difficulty hearing commands, so be aware of this issue.

Staying as positive with your dog as possible is critical. Avoid any kind of punishment as it really is not the dog's fault if they don't respond because they have cognitive loss. Keep commands to the basics; sit, come, and stay. Remember if the dog has arthritis it is painful to sit and stand repeatedly, so don't ask for a lot of this type of activity.

There are several ways to make your Border Collie's senior years rewarding for you both. Avoid trying to keep your dog doing the same activities that he or she did as a puppy and an adult dog, rather try looking for appropriate activities for a senior dog.

EXERCISE

Remember that a senior Border Collie may not realize his or her limitations, and will often try to complete the same activities that it did as a much younger dog. Do not put your pet in this situation. If your dog is having difficulty with movement and exercise, keep the walks short and frequent, rather than long and infrequent.

Avoid overexerting the dog with games of fetch and Frisbee, rather try rolling the ball a short way for the dog to retrieve. Many dogs will stay playful long into their senior years, and others may not want to play. This is dependent on

the personality of the dog, so respect their changes in temperament with regards to play.

Avoid jogging with a senior Border Collie unless you gradually condition the dog to this activity. Even with conditioning, pay close attention to any changes in breathing or any changes in gait when the dog is exercising.

FOOD AND WATER AND BEDDING

Keep high quality food and fresh clean water in easily accessible areas for your senior Border Collie. They may have difficulty in getting around the house, so keep one room with all the basic necessities in it for the dog.

Many pet stores now sell extra thick dog beds for senior dogs, to provide extra warmth and padding. Be careful to make sure the bed and food area is at ground level, so the dog does not have to jump or step up if this is difficult.

JUMPING UP

Many dog owners allow their pets to sleep and sit on the couch or bed. Be aware that as dogs get older, this becomes more and more difficult. There are commercially available ramps and steps that can be easily moved to the couch or bed for the dog to walk up, if you wish. This prevents the need for jumping up, which can be dangerous if the dog falls.

If you don't have the steps or ramp, try to anticipate when your dog would want to sit with you, and simply pick them up and place them with you. In addition, remember that senior dogs will need assistance with getting on and off the furniture.

MANAGING INCONTINENCE

Incontinence in dogs will occur to some degree in every dog when they age. Females that have been spayed in earlier years are more prone to incontinence than are neutered male or intact male or female Border Collies. This is not directly related to the surgical aspects of spaying, rather it is due to a decrease in the estrogen production.

This decrease leads to loss of muscle tone in the bladder, which causes leakage. Mostly the leakage will occur with the dog is complete relaxed and lying down or asleep. Estrogen supplements and other medications can be used to decrease this problem. Once the dog starts on an estrogen supplement, a decrease in the leakage will be noticed almost immediately. Check with your vet to make sure that the condition is not due to a bladder infection, or other disease of the urinary tract.

Older Border Collies require just as much attention as younger dogs. They can lead happy and healthy lives with just a bit more care and attention than they received in their earlier years.

If you have small children it is important to monitor their interactions with a senior dog, as an older dog is usually more lethargic and less tolerant of children. Make sure you praise and pet your senior dog, and keep him or her as active as possible. Find activities that are more suitable to an older dog and enjoy spending time together.

CONCLUSIONS



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The Border Collie is a wonderful breed. Border Collie owners are taken by the unique character of these loyal breed which seems to be a big dog in a little dog's body. Their keen intelligence makes them a great companion, and Border Collie owners value the personality and nature of this breed highly, and recommend them as a hardy and faithful companion.

Here are some FAQ asked by people with, or contemplating a Border Collie.

BORDERCOLLIEFAQ

1. *My Border Collie has one blue eye and one brown. Is that normal or does he have something wrong with his eyes?*

It is very normal for Border Collie to have both a blue and brown eye, and does not signify any type of eye problem or defect. It is also possible for a Border Collie to have flecks of blue within brown eyes.

2. *My Border Collie puppy is constantly nipping at my legs and feet. What can I do to stop this?*

Most puppies go through a chewing phase. To let your puppy know that you don't approve of him or her chewing or nipping at your legs simply say "Ouch" or "NO" when the puppy nips, and then immediately

provide an appropriate chew toy. The puppy will quickly learn that when it feels the urge to nip it needs to get a toy.

3. *My Border Collie is constantly getting out of my yard. Why?*

A Border Collie that constantly tries to escape is usually not getting enough stimulation or exercise within its own environment. Try spending more time with the dog, providing more exercise times and doing at least 20 to 30 minutes of fetch or another game that involves the dog working with you prior to leaving the dog in the yard. In addition be sure to provide lots of toys that move such as balls for the dog to play with.

4. *Can a Border Collie be left outside not in a fenced yard?*

A Border Collie does not do well without a fence. The natural herding instinct will have them trying to herd cars, cyclists, joggers and other animals and people in the neighborhood. Not only is this very dangerous for the dog but it is annoying for the other people in the area.

5. *My Border Collie tries to chase cars when he is on the lead or off. What can I do to stop this behavior?*

What a Border Collie is actually trying to do is to practice its herding skills. Chasing cars is a very dangerous substitute for sheep. Ideally the goal would be to use the dog's skills in herding events, and begin working with the dog with livestock.

Since this is not practical for most people entertaining the dog by throwing sticks or bouncing a ball will often distract it from the car chasing. When cars go by without the dog responding be sure to give lots of praise and spend some time in a game with the dog.

6. *How can I start training my Border Collie for herding or competitions?*

Begin by teaching the basic commands of sit, come, stay and lie down. Once the dog is comfortable doing these basics in a familiar environment try moving to new areas such as the park, a busy sidewalk or even at a playground. When the dog is able to attend to you in these locations he or she is showing focus and maturity needed for herding or competing.

Always make these events fun and play lots of games and give tons of praise when a job is well done. Keep the dog on a lead at all times until

he or she is completely trained and under control to avoid any potentially dangerous situations with the dog darting out onto a roadway.

7. *I walk my Border Collie every day but he still chews, barks and digs while I am gone. What can I do?*

Walking is just a physical activity for a Border Collie. They need to be challenged mentally as well. Consider adding some activities like described above to your daily walks. Have the dog sit, stay and lie at random times to keep his or her mind engaged in the walk. Follow different routes and go to areas where there are different parks, situations or people. A Border Collie needs to be working and thinking, not just exercising.

8. *How can I teach my Border Collie to follow hand signals?*

This is relatively easy to do with these highly intelligent dogs. Simply develop a hand signal that can easily be done and is very visible to the dog. For example, a hand in a “stop” position is often used for stay. A hand held flat and parallel to the ground that is moved in a downward motion can mean sit or lie down.

When the dog is proficient with the verbal commands begin pairing the verbal with the hand signal. Be very consistent and always use the hand signal with the verbal. Give lots of praise for responding to the verbal and sign pairing. Gradually try just giving the hand signal. If the dog doesn't respond pair the verbal and hand immediately, then reward the dog.

Usually with a few attempts the dog will quickly catch on. Try starting with just one hand signal first, usually sit is one of the first that is taught. Add more as the dog masters each signal.

9. *Are Border Collie good swimmers?*

Border Collies love to swim and are naturals in the water. They do need to become comfortable in the water so if you are in an area with lots of lakes or ponds start your Border Collie in the water as early as possible. When they are young they need constant supervision as they may become tired or panic and end up becoming afraid of water.

10. *Do Border Collies shed?*

Yes they do. They are moderate shedders and will lose their inner coats usually twice a year. Brushing at this time can help a bit with

hairs on the carpet and furniture but until they shed out there is no way to completely prevent any stray hairs in the house.

11. How long does a Border Collie usually live?

The average lifespan of a Border Collie is 12 to 13 years, with many living to be 15 years of age. They are a very active dog all through their lives and do not become lethargic like some breeds as they age.

12. Why do some breeders of Border Collie refuse to register with the AKC or CKC?

There is a controversy between breeders of Border Collies. Some breeders in the AKC (American Kennel Club) and CKC (Canadian Kennel Club) want to breed for conformation to a set of standards, whereas the more traditional herding Border Collie breeders want the dogs to be judged totally on working ability.

Most of the breeders on either side of the debate agree that the working dog aspect of the breed is the key factor, and that it should be emphasized more than the appearance aspect of the dog. The Kennel Club of the UK offers a general breed description but the emphasis continues to be on ability and performance.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR BORDER COLLIES

UNITEDSTATES

<http://www.bordercollie.org/>

<http://www.bcrescue.org/>

http://www.akc.org/breeds/border_collie/index.cfm

<http://www.abcollie.com/>

<http://www.bordercolliesociety.com/>

<http://www.usbcha.com/>

<http://www.usbcha.com/>

CANADA

<http://www.canadianbordercollies.org/>

<http://www.canadasguidetodogs.com/bordercollie.htm>

<http://www.petfinder.org/shelters/BC52.html>

<http://www.bordercollierescue.org/Foriegn/Canada/bcrcanada.html>

<http://www.hoobly.com/31/1720/0/>

<http://www.canadianbordercollies.org/cbcnews.htm>

<http://www.rrbordercollies.com/>

<http://www.colliewobbles.com/>

<http://www.rivalkennels.com/page8.html>

AUSTRALIA

<http://www.bcra.org.au/>

<http://www.bordercollie.org.au/>

http://www.dogzonline.com.au/breeds/community/border_collie.asp

http://www.burkesbackyard.com.au/2001/archives/2001_archives/roadtests/dog_breeds/border_collie

<http://members.optusnet.com.au/~molasseslass/>

<http://www.benshiva.com/>

UNITEDKINGDOM

<http://www.bordercollierescue.org/>

<http://www.bordercollietrustgb.org.uk/>

<http://www.mastamariner.com/border-collie-spider-page.html>

http://www.petplanet.co.uk/petplanet/breeds/Border_Collie.htm

<http://www.bordercollieclub.com/>

<http://www.wizaland.com/>

<http://www.workingsheepdog.co.uk/links.htm>

GENERALDOGWEBSITES

<http://www.toppetinfo.com/?gclid=CMKyrOqO7IUCFShpUAodSgfgkg>

<http://dogs.about.com/>

<http://www.dogdirectory.info/Results.aspx?query=Dogs&sessionid=ymltu0v1n05v1145k4303c3i&cc=us&ns=1>

<http://www.i-love-dogs.com/>

<http://www.akc.org/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/dogs/>

<http://www.fivehundredgrand.com/3kw/of-the-dog.html>

<http://www.dogweb.nl/hondenrassen/dogbreeds.html>

<http://www.dogs.info/>

<http://www.ukcdogs.com/>

<http://www.bunnytime.com/dogs.htm>

<http://www.digitaldog.com/>

<http://www.dogsx3.com/>

<http://www.nhm.org/exhibitions/dogs/formfunction/smell.html>

<http://www.abka.org/>

<http://www.dog-care-supplies-online.com/>

<http://personal.uncc.edu/jvanoate/k9/dogs.htm>

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<http://www.asksharda.com/support>

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