

# HUNGARIAN VIZSLA CLUB OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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## Puppy Book

### **Introduction:**

This booklet is written by the **Hungarian Vizsla Club of NSW** Inc to give new owners of Vizsla puppies the advice they need to raise a happy co-operative pup that will be a valuable addition to the family. It is written with the average Vizsla pup in mind but your pup might not be exactly average and might develop some interesting behaviours of his own.

So we encourage you to join the Vizsla Club. Our newsletter keeps Vizsla owners in touch with each other and has articles which will help you understand and train your dog. The Club also has shows, trials and picnics where you can meet other Vizsla owners and swap stories and training tips. If you have any questions or problems after you read this booklet please feel free to contact any of the committee of the club. They will always be pleased to help you.



### **Typical Vizsla Behaviour:**

Your Vizsla is not like other dogs and may do things you haven't seen before. They are very demonstratively affectionate. Your return home will be greeted with much excited jumping about and perhaps a Vizsla "song" (you will know it when you hear it). Many Vizslas like to take their owner's hand or arm in their mouth. This is a sign of affection.

Your Vizsla will probably point at things, typically pigeons and similar. It will stalk slowly with head and tail extended then freeze, perhaps remaining motionless for quite a long time. This is instinct. It is a hunt-point-retrieve dog, and all purpose gundog.

It may like to carry things in its mouth, perhaps presenting you with a shoe or toy. This is its retrieving instinct.

If your Vizsla is bored it may become destructive and/or noisy so adequate exercise, occupation and company are very important.

### **Food and Health Care:**

Your breeder will have explained to you the food that your pup is used to. Most breeders feed either a good quality kibble or a raw food diet including lots of raw, soft bones. If you want to change your pup's diet it's best to do it gradually.

Some pups are not hungry for the first couple of nights in their new home. Don't worry and definitely don't fuss. Give him 10 minutes to eat his food and take the leftovers away without comment. Once he settles down his appetite will return.

Your pup will have been immunised and the breeder will have explained when his next immunisation is due. After his puppy immunisations are complete he will need immunising yearly. Your pup will also need treatment for intestinal worms, heartworm and fleas. Your puppy's breeder and your vet can advise you about the products that are available.

### **Grooming:**

Hungarian Vizslas have little doggy odor and tend to keep themselves clean. They just need an occasional bath using a canine shampoo. Grooming mitts – a glove with bumps on it, are great for a weekly brushing.

Check your dogs ears regularly – some need cleaning more than others. Some cotton wool and canine ear cleaner from the vet or pet shop will do the job.

It's a good idea to get you dog used to having his claws clipped right from the start. You might need to ask someone to demonstrate how to do it. Some dogs' nails grow faster than others but unless your dog does a lot of digging his nails will need to be clipped from time to time.

### **Where should my puppy sleep?**

Vizslas have short hair with no undercoat so they need a warm place to sleep. Since your Vizsla will want to be a part of your family we suggest that he sleeps close to you.

He might wake up crying for the first few nights, missing his litter mates, and if you can reach down to reassure him without getting out of bed everyone will get more sleep.



Many Vizsla owners teach their pups to sleep in a wire crate. This has lots of advantages and is a big help with toilet training. As your pup becomes more reliable he might graduate to a doggy bed but many continue to prefer their crate. We must also admit that some Vizslas learn to share their owner's beds.

### **Home Alone:**

While your Vizsla will always enjoy time spent with your family he also needs to learn to be relaxed when he's alone. Gradually accustom your pup to spending short, then longer times alone in the yard or wherever he will stay when you are out. He might need some distracters like toys or bones to start with.

Even if there is usually someone at home he needs to be able to be comfortable by himself at the times when it's necessary for him to stay home alone. Avoid allowing him to be your shadow all the time when you are home then suddenly banishing him to the yard because you need to go out.

### **Socialisation:**

Puppies are most impressionable in between 3 and 16 weeks of age. During this time they learn about their world. New experiences, whether they are good or bad will be remembered. As they get older they are more cautious about new things.

The breeder of your pup will have introduced him to a variety of experiences – handling, noises, movement, people, pets and, most importantly, children. Until your pup has his final immunisation you will need to balance the health risks against his socialisation needs and you will probably avoid taking him to places where he will meet unimmunised dogs. However, you can invite lots of people to your home (especially well-behaved children), take him for rides in the car and visit the homes of friends.

Well-run puppy preschools are a great opportunity for socialisation and most teach the basics of pet obedience. Check on the training of the person running the preschool and make sure that your dog will be allowed to join in at his own pace. If you teach your pup with rewards you will be surprised at how quickly he will learn.

Use this time to give him a huge variety of experiences with different animals and people and make sure that all his experiences are happy ones.

### **Toilet Training Your Puppy:**

Toilet training is simply developing the correct habit in your puppy. If he toilets in the house he will develop that habit so you need to make sure that he always toilets outside. The tricky part is predicting when he needs to go outside.

Take your pup outside regularly – after a sleep, after eating, after playing. He will probably need to go every hour or so. After a while you will start to learn his schedule.

When he goes on the grass praise him and give him a reward. You can also train him to eliminate on command by using a word just as he starts. Choose your word carefully, though, one day you'll need to use it in public!

If you have a crate you can use it for short periods when you can't watch your pup. He will not want to toilet in the crate so he will be keen to go when you let him out.

If you need to leave the pup alone in the house for more than an hour it's a good idea to leave him in a room like a bathroom or laundry where you can remove anything that he can chew. Place a bed in there and a litter box with some soil in it. If you also give him a kong stuffed with some food, he has something to do. It's a good idea to develop a kong habit at an early age. When he gets to the serious chewing stage you'll appreciate it if he likes to chew kongs.

Never punish if your pup makes a mistake in the house. If you find a puddle he will have no idea why you're annoyed. If you catch him in the act and punish him he might learn not to toilet in front of you. That can lead to all sorts of problems.

Be vigilant and reward your pup for toileting outside. He'll soon get the idea.

### **Crate training:**

Many Vizsla owners teach their dogs to sleep in a portable wire crate. When your dog is accustomed to his crate it will become his own 'den'. Crates are useful as portable indoor kennels, they are a valuable aid in toilet training and can keep puppies out of mischief for short periods when you're too busy to supervise them. When you're travelling, the crate can go with you so your dog always has his own familiar sleeping place.

It is easy to accustom a puppy to its crate. First lure the pup to the crate with a treat and place the treat inside the crate for the pup to eat. When the pup gets used to going into the crate happily, wait a few seconds before giving it the treat. While the pup is in its crate, pet it and talk to it. You can also feed your pup in the crate and give it chew toys and bones that it only plays with in its crate. As soon as it comes out of the crate take the bone or toy away for a while.

Close the door for short periods once your pup is entering the crate happily. Slowly extend the time your pup can spend with the door closed. Accustom him to your leaving the room for short periods while he chews his bone.

Avoid letting the pup out of the crate when it is fussing. You don't want to reward unwanted behaviour.

You can use the crate if the pup becomes overexcited but don't make it seem like a punishment. Give him a favourite toy to play with while he settles down.

### **So you want a Calm Vizsla:**

Most Vizslas are very active and that's one of the things we love about them but the activity level of puppies can sometimes be overwhelming. Take heart! They settle as they grow older and in the meantime there are a number of things we can do to teach them to be more calm.

Firstly, you need to make sure that your dog has enough exercise and daily stimulation. Take him for a walk at least once a day. Play games with him but play by the rules – *Fetch* means bring it to you. Tug-of-war stops when you say so.

To teach a dog to be more calm, remember the first principle of learning – if a behaviour is rewarded it increases. So if you reward calm behaviour you will get more of it. There will be certain times during the day when he is more quiet. Give him little treats during those times to help him remember the calmness. If you reward calm behaviour you'll get more of it.

Training can help, too. Find a good training school or club that teaches with rewards. Teach him to sit and lie down, he will enjoy having something to think about.

Practice doggy massage. Do long, slow strokes along his body and especially his ears. Do small circles with your fingertips, just moving the skin around. You'll find that this is relaxing for you, too.

Take note also of his active times. Puppies are often very active just after a sleep. Make these times play times and enjoy his exuberance.

### **Biting:**

Adult Vizslas often like to greet their human friends by holding their hand or wrist gently in their mouths. Puppies, however, do bite and they need to learn to be gentle. This is important, because if a dog has learned to bite gently he is less likely to hurt if one day he bites in pain or fright.

Puppies learn to play nicely together because if one is too rough its playmate will yelp and run away. We can teach puppies to be gentle with us the same way. If your pup used his teeth roughly you can yelp and go away for a few minutes. Then he will learn that if he wants to play he needs to be gentle.

### **Saying Hello Politely – Not jumping:**

We don't want our dogs to jump up on us when they say hello.

What *do* we want them to do? Sit in front of us is a good alternative.

- Teach your dog to sit. Give him lots of rewards for sitting in front of you until he really likes sitting.
- When he wants to say hello ask him to sit. If he jumps up fold your arms and ignore him till he sits. (You might say Sit to remind him the first few times but don't get excited.) When he sits, squat down and give him a cuddle or a scratch under the chin.
- Practice lots of times with all the adults in your house. When he is good with adults, practice with the children.
- When he gets good at greeting politely, ask your friends to help him practice. (Start with the ones that like dogs.)

### **Retrieving:**

Retrieving is the basis for lots of games with your dog – and the chance to exercise him without wearing yourself out! Games based on retrieving help you develop a great relationship with your dog. Most Vizsla puppies will chase a ball or toy, pick it up and bring it at least part of the way back to you. If you reward this behaviour you will have a keen retriever in no time at all.

Encourage the pup to come right back to you and when he gets to you give him lots of pats and praise. Don't take the toy out of his mouth straight away, let him keep it for a few moments. When you gently take it out of his mouth, praise him enthusiastically and maybe give him a little treat then throw the toy again. After a few turns put the toy away. Don't let him keep it. The message is that it is your toy which you graciously allow him to play with from time to time.

Once he is willingly giving up the toy, start using a word like *Give*. This is a very useful word when he steals your best shoe or makes off with your socks. You must never punish him for taking these things, reward him for giving them back and tell yourself to put them away in future. After all, it's better to have a pup who gives stolen things up willingly than one who hides to chew them up or runs away.

Once he is good at giving things up on cue you can introduce tug-of-war games. Use a different toy (not your retrieving toy) – a knotted rag or a piece of rope. Tease your dog and encourage him to pull. After a while use your Give word and take the toy out of his mouth. Give him a reward and play again. It is especially important with tug-of-war that you control the game. Your dog is learning that you are fun to be with and that you are the gamemaster.



### **Training Your Vizsla:**

It is a good idea to accustom your Vizsla before he's 3 months old, to all the experiences he will have as an adult. While Vizslas are usually easy-going, they can, like all dogs, be suspicious of new things after the critical 3 months. So introduce him to people of all kinds, especially children of different ages, all sorts of dogs (nice ones) and animals. Teach him to enjoy being handled all over – paws, ears and teeth. Attention to these experiences while your pup is young will help ensure a calm, confident adult.

While your Vizsla will always enjoy time spent with the family he also needs to learn to be relaxed when he's alone. Gradually accustom your pup to spending short, then longer times alone in the yard or wherever he will stay when you are out. Even if there is usually someone at home he needs to be able to be comfortable by himself when it's necessary for everyone to go out. Avoid allowing him to be your shadow while you are home then suddenly banishing him to the yard because you need to go to work.

Vizslas respond well to training with rewards but tend to become confused by training that uses punishment. There are many good puppy preschools and an increasing number of training schools and clubs that use rewards instead of punishment. Check on the methods used and the qualifications of the instructors before you enrol.

Known as 'the Versatile Vizsla', these elegant golden dogs were once prized by the Hungarian Magyars for their ability to hunt, point and retrieve game. These days, they are generally enjoyed as a superb companion dog. A Vizsla is a 'fun' dog with an immense ability to enjoy life.

Vizslas are very trainable and are often chosen by people who wish to compete in obedience, agility, or one of the many other canine sports.

Their short coat is low maintenance and they have very little 'doggy' smell. Their nails should be clipped and ears checked regularly.

Highly intelligent and people orientated, a Vizsla will thrive when involved in family life and trained with positive, reward based methods. A Vizsla that is neglected will be unhappy, and if trained harshly, may become confused, snappy or timid.

Vizslas are generally excellent with children, but as with all dogs, interactions with young children should be supervised. A young child doesn't know how to train a puppy to

behave, and your puppy may learn unwanted lessons such as how to jump up, lick faces, and thief food, to name a few! A close eye should also be kept on kids with dogs when the dog is going through its confused, hormone-driven adolescence. (This may also apply to adolescent humans ;-).)

A Vizsla is a very active dog and requires a commitment to DAILY exercise. Without this exercise it may become destructive.

The lifespan of a Vizsla is about fourteen years and it's important to remember this when thinking about purchasing a puppy. It is a long-term commitment.

A Vizsla is not the dog for everyone – but if it is right for you, you will wonder how you ever got along without one.

The Hungarian Vizsla Club of New South Wales Inc. has many experienced members who can give you help and advice with any aspect of Vizsla ownership. You will be welcomed (whether you own a Vizsla or not) at any of our events.

For further information, please contact us.

Hungarian Vizsla Club of NSW Website: [www.vizsla.org.au](http://www.vizsla.org.au)