

Survival Dogs: How To Start And Build Your Kennel (2)

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You've decided to start your kennel and already learned a lot about how to choose the perfect breeds of dogs for survival. What about the physical aspects of your kennel and what types of areas you'll need in order to breed, birth and raise your puppies?

Don't worry, stay tuned and read this article!

In [the first part of this series](#), we discussed how to decide what to breed and how to choose your puppies. And now we're going to go into a bit more detail about breeding, training, finding good homes for your puppies, and difficulties that you may expect.

Find a Good Trainer

Once you've gotten your puppies, you need to find a good trainer. Chances are good that you'll have a few months to do this but be aware that really good trainers are often booked up for several months in advance. This is footwork that you may want to do before you even get your puppy.

Again, refer to the breeders clubs that you used to find your breeder. They often offer a list of reputable trainers who, even if they're busy, can suggest other trainers.

If you feel comfortable training your own dog, begin from the day you bring him home. Bond with him and teach him manners. When he's old enough to start his "work" training, be diligent about it. Part-time training builds more bad habits than no training at all.

Be confident and diligent in your training and use every possible opportunity as a training opportunity and reward the dog well for a job well done, or even for a valiant effort in the beginning.

If you don't know what you're doing, don't hesitate to take your dog to a trainer. Find one that's willing to work with both you and your dog so that you can learn how to teach him while you're at home.

Your First Breeding Experience

Just as with all animals, dogs will only breed under certain circumstances. First, let's discuss the bitch because the potential sire is fairly simple. You can expect your bitch to come into her first heat cycle anywhere between 6 and 24 months of age and then about 6 months thereafter. Smaller dogs tend to come in earlier while larger dogs come in later.

Males have mature sperm between the ages of 6 months and 15 months old, depending upon breed. Small dogs tend to mature sexually younger than large dogs. They're typically at their sexual prime between 15 months and 5 or 6 years old; after that, sperm starts to lessen and can't penetrate the egg as well.

As you can see, if you start with puppies, you'll be waiting awhile but it will be worth it because you will know exactly how your dog has been handled and whether or not it has the temperament to breed a good litter. You'll also have the benefit of having properly trained sires and dams to show to potential buyers.

It's not recommended that bitches be bred during their first heat cycle because her eggs aren't yet mature; in fact, even if your dog comes into heat (or season) early, you should wait for her to reach at least 18 months of age so that she's physically mature.

She should also pass a thorough physical before you breed her. Let her skip a heat cycle in between breedings and don't breed her after the age of 5 because you're risking both dam and puppies at that point.

Breeding

If you've never seen dogs breed, you're going to be in for a bit of a surprise. The process involves a step called tying. This phenomenon occurs because the bulbus glandis of the male's penis swells inside the bitch's vagina. They are locked together for 15-20 minutes though 2 – 30 minutes is nothing to worry about. It's common for them to turn butt to butt during this process so don't panic. They'll untie once the process is over.

If it's your dam's first time, she may panic a bit. Get down with her and calm her down. Stay calm and it will help to alleviate her fear.

You don't need a particularly private place for this to happen though you should separate them from other dogs. Wait 24 hours before the next breeding so that the sperm can build back up.

Preparing Your Whelping Area



When your dog goes into labor, she's going to need a quiet spot to do so. The light should be fairly dim and the area should be padded nicely but with a top sheet or blanket that you don't mind throwing away.

You can wash them if you'd rather but they can get pretty messy. If she were to pick it herself, it would probably be under your bed or in your closet, so try to emulate that as much as possible if you're trying to designate an area.

Whelping

Research your particular breed to see if they typically have difficulty whelping. You should have your vet's number close at hand when she actually goes into labor. Once she has actually started pushing, it should only take her 2-10 minutes to birth the pup.

If it gets stuck or is breech, you need to help pull it out or it will drown. She may rest for a bit between puppies but if she appears to be in distress after she starts pushing but you can't see a problem, call your vet. [Educate yourself on this process](#) before you have to handle it in real life.

Caring for the Puppies

This is where things can get expensive, assuming you had an easy birthing process. Puppies need shots starting at 6 weeks of age, then every 3 weeks until 16 weeks of age. The standard vaccinations include distemper, canine adenovirus-2 (hepatitis and respiratory disease), canine parvovirus-2 and rabies. There are optional shots as well but you can discuss those with your vet.

Your puppies will also need to be wormed at 2, 4, 6, 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age, then again at 6 months and 1 year. Then they should be put on a regular adult de-worming schedule.

Proper nutrition is also critical to development. Your puppies will be able to start eating solid food at about 4 weeks old in order to start the weaning process. Feed them a high quality food and you may want to wet it a bit in the beginning to make it easier for them to eat.

Finding Proper Homes for Your Puppies



This is the hardest part of breeding, especially if you've become attached to the puppies. Start advertising your puppies as soon as they're born, or even a couple of weeks before they're born so that you can start vetting possible owners.

Find out about their work schedules, their experience with dogs and why, exactly, they want one of your puppies. Make sure that they have enough money to care for your puppies. You may even want to do a home visit and ask for references. You don't want to give your puppies to just anybody.

Building Your Own Kennel

Just like your home, dog kennels can be as fancy or as simple as you'd like them to be. Remember that even if you're keeping your dog kenneled, it still needs time out every day to run and exercise. A basic kennel involves a shelter with a run extending from it built from chain link fence.

The flooring should be something that is easy to clean yet comfortable. Make sure that it doesn't get hot and that it doesn't have holes big enough for your dog's foot to go through. It should also be

comfortable for the dog to walk across. Many people use rubber mats.

If your dog is going to spend a lot of time in the kennel, make it at least 10 feet long so that your dog can run a bit in it. It should also be plenty wide enough for your dog to turn comfortably around in. There are many designs available online that you can search through and emulate.

Beyond all of this, remember that dogs are sentient beings that deserve a comfortable, safe environment in which to thrive. They love their people and are great survival assets that can help with everything from personal and home protection to helping you herd and protect your livestock. Don't take dog breeding lightly and educate yourself well before you decide to take on the task.

If you have anything to add, please feel free to do so in the comments section below.

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