

Bimberg Reg'd Boxers Natural Ear Training

Why Train a Natural Ear?

Over the last 5-10 years there has been a shift in the North American show world in recognizing the merits of an uncropped show dog. Not a decade ago, showing a natural eared boxer was unheard of, not to mention obtaining a win. Fortunately natural eared boxers have started to really be shown and are now close to being on the same footing as their cropped boxer counterparts. A nice natural ear should lie flat against the head and enhance the boxer's overall expression. Below are two head studies with lovely natural ears. This is what a natural ear should do – frame the face and accent the boxer head.



If you are one of the fortunate few who have a natural eared puppy that requires no ear taping then count yourself lucky indeed! Massaging and taping a natural ear is extremely painless and in most cases it is actually enjoyed by your boxer. When natural ears are left to their own devices, nine times out of ten they will 'fly away' and perch away from the head at odd angles like the pictures below.



Ear Massaging

This procedure can be done on either puppy or adult ears. Most owners of show prospects use this massage technique as a precautionary measure to encourage the natural ear to remain in the correct position. I also encourage pet owners to try it, as the correct fold is very attractive.

Massaging can be done as a form of petting when the dog is relaxed. Have the dog sit next to you or on the floor in front of your chair. Using both hands, place your thumbs at the top of the ear and your forefingers into the front crease. Apply light pressure and use a forward and downwards movement, as if you were rolling a ball of dough between your fingers. Roll your thumbs up the crease from behind, and rotate your wrists slightly forward and over, at the same time moving your forefingers downwards creating a definite crease at the top and in the middle of the ear.

Keep massaging for a few minutes, the longer the better. Massage the ears whenever the opportunity arises. You cannot 'over-massage' and your boxer will find it very relaxing and enjoyable. Below are some photos outlining the massaging technique.

1.



2.



Natural Ear Taping

This procedure is not always necessary, but occasionally a pup will fly its ears when it is teething, so this can be done as a precautionary measure. It is particularly useful if you work full time or do not have the time to do the massage method.

First cut 2 pieces of electrical tape, masking tape, or first aid tape about 6" long. These tapes are not very sticky so will not hurt the dog at all when the tape is removed. Shape the ear in the correct crease by folding it in half with both the edges touching about 1" from the top fold. Apply the tape securely and check to see if the ear remains in the correct position (remove and start again, if the tape is too low). Trim tape to 1" above fold. It's that easy!

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