



Rippletrix

BORDER COLLIES · SHEFFIELD



THE NEW PUPPY OWNER PACK

Top Tips for a Perfect Border Collie

By Kate Clapperton

*Kennel Club Assured Breeder · Veterinary Physiotherapist
Nearly forty years with Border Collies*

Forty years, one aim.

By **Kate Clapperton** — Rippletrix Border Collies, Sheffield. Kennel Club Assured Breeder. Veterinary Physiotherapist. Thirty years breeding dual KC and ISDS-registered working Border Collies.

A note on the format. The green boxes throughout this pack are Kate's own views written from a puppy's point of view. Everything outside them is Kate's advice to the puppy's owner. Kate wanted the two voices held side by side because most owner-and-puppy problems come from the two sides misreading each other.

I have owned, worked, competed and lived with Border Collies for nearly forty years. Each one has taught me a little bit more, and even now I am still learning from these driven, complex, highly strung and incredibly intelligent creatures.

To me there is no comparison in the dog world. I love every single thing about them. **My only aim is to give the ones I own the best possible life** — full of adventure, wonder, experiences, learning and a whole lot of love. I can only hope that the puppies I produce can have the best possible lives too.

Here are some of my tips for a well-balanced and content Border Collie. It's up to you to take what, if anything, you wish from them.

And if nothing else, remember...

“The more intelligent a dog, the faster they learn — and this includes bad behaviour as well as good.”

KATE · ON BORDER COLLIES

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Enjoy your Rippletrix puppy.

How to read this pack. Kate wrote each chapter to stand alone — you can jump straight to the section you need at three in the morning. But the chapters build on each other, and the first two (recall and the off switch) are the foundation everything else stands on. Read them first if you can.

I

CHAPTER ONE · THE FIRST SKILL

Recall training.



FREAK · RIPPLETRIX FREAK OUT AT MY LOVE BUNNY · MID-JUMP

The result of doing recall right — a dog that competes with you, not away from you.

The first few weeks of a puppy's experience of a new owner is the most critical. What you do here will stand you in good stead for the future.

PUPPY'S POINT OF VIEW

Puppies that start off on a lead will have rubbish recall.

Why should I come back to you? I don't have a choice because I'm attached to you. You pull me away from things I find more interesting. I am restricted in displaying normal behaviour.

You should allow your puppy to *want* to be with you, and to see the lead and collar as a reward. *Hey, we are going out for fun.*

With my puppies I find somewhere safe and quiet — you can use your garden in the early days. I carry them and talk to them and tell them how awesome they are. Then I put them on the floor, say nothing, and walk

away. Ninety-nine point nine per cent of the time they will follow you. I turn round, bend or drop to the floor and say “*oh my goodness, it's you, here you are, you're so amazing*” — big fuss, and maybe a treat or a short play. Then I pick them up and repeat. Several times through the day.

I don't say their name. Use “puppup” or “lil baby” or something else. You will dilute their name very easily if you say it constantly, and they will start to ignore it.

After a few days, once they are happily chasing you, turn and call their name as they run towards you. Just once. And big reward.

“Allow your puppy to want to be with you. See the lead and collar as a reward.”

RULE ONE

II

CHAPTER TWO · THE SKILL THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

The off switch.



PSYFER · KINETIC SUNSET · WITH TOXIC AT FIFTEEN

Kate's foundation dog Psyfer at fifteen, alongside his granddaughter Toxic. Being still is a skill you teach on day one. It's the skill that lets a dog reach fifteen.

Border Collies need an off switch. Imagine an F1 car that never made a pit stop. It would eventually break down, and that's not good.

PUPPY'S POINT OF VIEW

Why are you shouting at me for chewing the furniture, herding the kids, chasing cars, nipping joggers? You give me lots of exercise, so I assume you want me to be on the go twenty-four seven.

My dogs are very high drive, yet while I'm working for four or five hours at a time, they sleep in the next room. They can see and hear me working with lots of other dogs, but they sleep and rest and recover until it's time to be active again.

I teach my dogs from day one that being still and quiet is a *good* thing. It is good mentally and physically.

So many collies end up in rescue at seven months of age being accused of the above traits. All because they have never been taught to chill.

My pups are cage or pen reared and spend time alone in a room where they can't see me. I don't make a fuss or make a big goodbye — I just put them in their cage with some toys and walk away. An hour later I'll go back. I walk into the room without saying anything, ignore them, and after thirty seconds I turn to them and say “*oh there you are, you're so clever, shall we go and have a wee, some fun, some dinner?*”

This teaches independence, as well as preventing separation anxiety and a lot of other issues.

I use the same procedure overnight — except for toilet training, which I'll cover next. My pups spend their first month sleeping alone.

While we are on the subject: **Border Collies bond with one human** — occasionally two, but mainly one person, despite however many people are in the household. They will bond with dogs easily, and especially with like-minded working breeds. This means they will pay attention to whatever they feel bonded to, and follow that being more than they perhaps should be following.

Be the last thing your puppy sees before sleep and the first thing they see when they wake up. This helps the bonding a great deal.

“Being still and quiet is a good thing. It is good mentally, and physically.”

RULE TWO

III

CHAPTER THREE · A THREE-A-M SKILL

Toilet training.



SWITCH x ZOMBIE · FEBRUARY 2026 · PEN-REARED

Pen-rearing from day one is the reason toilet training works later. Puppies naturally try not to soil where they sleep.

Oh my god, do I hate puppy pads. Yes, I use them with litters, but never with a puppy over eight weeks.

PUPPY'S POINT OF VIEW

Over to our little friend...

Why are you shouting at me? Last week you ignored me when I weed on that pad by the back door. Yesterday you told me I was good for weeing on the pad by the back door. Then today you've shouted at me for weeing by the back door? Stupid human. I'll just wait till you've gone and then I'll wee behind the settee.

This one is so easy. A puppy has the bladder the size of a walnut — it can't hold it all night. **Get up and let your puppy out for a wee.** It takes a few minutes in the night to get up and let them outside. Praise for

having a wee. Go back to bed.

Lots of lessons in one:

- Toilet training
- Cage or pen training (they won't want to wee on their own bed)
- Recall training in the garden
- And a chance for a reward for having a wee or a poo outside

This is also why I like a cage or pen. Puppies naturally try not to toilet where they sleep.

“A puppy has the bladder the size of a walnut — it can't hold it all night.”

RULE THREE

IV

CHAPTER FOUR · THE PUPPY-CLOCK IDEA

Puppies are from Jupiter.



FREAK × HILLTOP ZAK · MARCH 2026 · NEWBORN

The Jupiter clock, in real time. Feed, sleep, feed, sleep — every few hours, not every eight.

In short — try to think like a puppy, not like a human.

If it helps, another way to think about it: **Border Collie puppies are from Jupiter.** (This is the title of the book I will one day write, when I have time.)

A day on Earth is twenty-four hours. Made up of one main period of sleep, three or four periods of eating, two or so periods of work or play, and one period of chilling out. Humans are from Earth.

A day on Jupiter is ten hours. So a Jupiterian's day is broken into shorter cycles — more sleeps, more meals, more play, more rests, all compressed.

Puppies are from Jupiter. They live here on Earth, so their day-length is closer to Jupiter's than to yours. Their world runs about twice as fast as ours.

Help them fulfil their needs by breaking their day down into shorter periods.

Toilet → food → play → sleep → toilet → food → play → sleep — and so on.

Don't expect them to be able to manage being on the go all day with no sleeps. Don't expect them to sleep for eight hours through the night. They're not designed for it yet.

“Puppies are from Jupiter. Their world runs about twice as fast as yours.”

RULE FOUR

The hard-wired behaviour.



TOXIC · NIOBE · SHEFFIELD · SUMMER 2026

The environment every Border Collie needs — open country, long grass, room to breathe. Not the same park twice a day.

An easy one to forget.

Yes, my dogs are first and foremost my **pets**. They have full access to the house and my bedroom. They are with me twenty-four seven, and I spend lots of time cuddling and kissing them.

But.

They are hard-wired herding machines, and this instinct cannot be ignored.

When I worked as a dog behaviourist I remember so many Border Collies coming to see me with the same issue: “*he/she is a lovely dog, but — they are now six to nine months old and chasing the kids, or the cars, or the trains, and nipping at ankles.*”

PUPPY'S POINT OF VIEW

You have walked me around this park twice a day for weeks. I keep watching those kids running around playing while you are on your phone, or talking to another human. I'm bored, and not being able to express my collie needs. Therefore, when you are not looking, I am going to go and herd those kids and control their movement.

It's a hard-wired instinct. The Border Collie needs to express this instinct in order to satisfy the brain and the body.

It doesn't have to be herding sheep necessarily. But allowing the puppy or dog to experience the great outdoors, to be able to run free, and to see things that stimulate the brain — that is the answer.

So avoid the same park walk every day. Get out into the countryside. Let them experience life to the full.

“Avoid the same park walk every day. Get out into the countryside. Let them experience life to the full.”

RULE FIVE

VI

CHAPTER SIX · A FINAL NOTE

In closing.



RIPPLETRIX HELL RAISER · BORN 18 FEBRUARY 2026 · THE NEXT GENERATION

Switch × Zombie. Rippletrix's next stud dog, from the litter the toilet-training chapter began with.

I have followed these tips for many years, and yet I'm still learning from every Border Collie I own. They are, in my opinion, the most amazing, intelligent and incredible dogs in the world.

I want the puppies I have bred to have the best possible lives. I want to think of them as living their best life and being loved just as I would love them if they had stayed with me.

I don't take puppies back once they have left me. I only let them go to exceptional homes.

“Enjoy your Rippletrix puppy.”

KATE · SHEFFIELD · 2026



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Clapperton is the founder of Rippletrix Border Collies in Sheffield. Kate is a Kennel Club Assured Breeder and Veterinary Physiotherapist producing dual KC and ISDS-registered working Border Collies alongside show-line KC-registered Border Collies. Rippletrix is built on three foundation lines Kate spent years researching and combining. Every pup is fully health tested to the recognised breed panel, BVA eye tested and BAER tested before leaving the yard. Every bitch is spayed after a single litter as breeder policy. Rippletrix's four proven stud dogs — Switch, Rewind, Dallas and Ghost — are listed on GenoVaq, with Rippletrix Hell Raiser joining the roster when he matures.

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Sent home with every Rippletrix puppy. Published on the GenoVaq Welfare Hub · genovaq.co.uk