



SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Meeting Your Puppy's Needs

A new family addition, especially the four-legged kind, requires a certain amount of equipment and some adjustments to your home for everyone's safety and comfort.

Supplies for a Great Start with Your New Puppy

- Food
- Water bowl
- Bed, blanket, and towels
- Crate and Puppy Play Pen
- Collar with ID tags
- Harness
- Leash
- Poop bags

Puppy Care

- Canine toothbrush and toothpaste
- Nail clippers
- Dog shampoo and conditioner
- Grooming brush
- Flea control treatment

Training and Mental Stimulation

- Food dispensing toys
- Puzzle toys
- Plush toys
- Puppy carrying pouch for socialization outings

Setting Up Your Home

Tempting as it might be to give your new puppy the run of the house, it is just too much freedom too soon. Instead, create a safe, confined Puppy Play Pen (a puppy-proofed area) to allow your puppy to make a gradual transition into their new home.



The Puppy Play Pen is where your puppy will stay when you cannot supervise, i.e., whenever you cannot keep your eyes on them the entire time. This prevents chewing accidents, potty accidents, and teaches your puppy to settle down while alone. Supervision is also crucial when giving your puppy a toy or chew. Keep an eye on them until you know what they are going to do with their treats (i.e., dissect them, digest them, etc.). Do not worry that using a Puppy Play Pen is too strict or in any way mean. Dogs are den animals who instinctively enjoy close quarters!

Where

The ideal Puppy Play Pen area is easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate. It should be mostly free of furniture. The best places for a Puppy Play Pen are the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom, or an empty spare room.

What

Furnish the Puppy Play Pen with a crate with soft bedding, a water bowl, a potty pad, and several toys, including a chew toy or a KONG stuffed with part of your puppy's meal.

For a Healthy and Well-Behaved Puppy

Vaccinations

The first step in safeguarding your puppy's physical and behavioral health is to vaccinate them. Your puppy needs a series of DA2PP/DHLPP/DHP vaccines: one every 3 to 4 weeks beginning when they have reached 6 weeks of age through the time that they reach 16 weeks.

Until your puppy has had two vaccines, do not put them on the ground or floor where other dogs may have been.

Carry your puppy for all socialization and bathroom outings and only put them down in safe areas.

After two vaccines, they can enroll in puppy classes, puppy socials, and puppy daycare. Before then, socialize with your puppy at home and on outings where you can carry them.



Training and Exercise

Training and exercise are both essential to your puppy's development, manners, and health — as well as your sanity! Tired puppies bark less, chew less, sleep more, and rest easier when left alone. In other words — a contented puppy will give you a break!

Age-Appropriate Workouts

- Carry your puppy on outings to meet new people, animals, and environments
- Burn off mental and physical energy with puppy training classes
- Take your puppy to puppy socials with other vaccinated pups
- Host puppy socialization parties at home with fully vaccinated dogs
- Have frequent puppy training and play sessions at home
- Enroll your puppy in a puppy daycare to play with other vaccinated pups
- After your puppy is fully vaccinated you can either hire a dog walker or enroll them in a doggy daycare

Mind Workouts

Puppies are a lot like kids. Unless you give them something fun to do, they will make their own fun! To puppies, that often means chewing on the furniture or attacking your shoelaces. Instead, give your puppy acceptable outlets for their playful energy by providing toys, puzzles, and other brainteasers.

Exercising Your Puppy's Mind

- Brainteaser toys (Linkables from Premier, Seek-A-Treat, Canine Genius Toys)
- Plush toys (hide-and-seek toys, squeaky toys)
- Edible chews (bully stick, pig's ear)
- Obedience training sessions/puppy training classes
- Stuffed/frozen/hidden puppy KONG toys

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CANINE DEVELOPMENT PHASES

Developmental Periods

Neonatal period (0-13 days)

No social attachment or emotional development; brainwaves are constant, and no learning takes place.

Transition period (13 days - 21 days)

Puppies begin to hear, taste, and respond to smell. Eyes and ears will start to open.

Awareness period (21 days - 23 days)

Learning begins in this phase; because of the changes in brain waves during this phase, puppies are now able to learn from experiences and retain what they learn. During this phase, humans need to avoid exposing puppies to loud noises or sudden changes because they are alert and will startle very easily. Sudden movement and sounds can scare and permanently affect them.

Canine Socialization Phase (3 weeks - 7 weeks)

This is a crucial developmental period. During this phase, the puppy starts to perform doggy behaviors such as biting, chasing, and barking, and they also begin to play. It is important that puppies get plenty of time with their littermates during this period. This will not only allow them to socialize, but also help them learn that their actions have consequences (i.e., if I bite my sister, she might bite me back!)

During this time, they will also learn to take corrections from their mother and use submissive postures to put her at ease. They will start to learn how to use body language.

This is when you want to start exposing your puppy to everything. Puppies should be introduced to as much as possible, including children, new people, noises, textures, etc. since this is the prime time to socialize!

During this time, a puppy's brain waves look the same as an adult dog, so we know learning is taking place — but it all depends on what you are teaching them!



Fear Imprint Sub-period (8 weeks - 10 weeks)

During this phase, it is extremely important that the puppy only has positive experiences. If anything happens during this phase where the puppy feels scared, it might impact them for their entire life.

Human Socialization Period (7 weeks - 12 weeks)

This is when we, as humans, have the biggest effect on our dogs. This phase can help determine their personality, and a lack of correct socialization during this period can lead to a fearful, shy, or aggressive dog later in life.

Once again, exposing your puppy to as much as possible is critical; the more the puppy sees and feels, the more they will be able to deal with everything in their world as they grow older.

This is also the period of fastest learning — and is a wonderful time to start training! Training during this time will increase the dogs' brain cells in the correct brain regions. Do not wait, start teaching your puppy manners now! This is also when the puppy is becoming socially aware and can bond outside of the litter.

Seniority Classification Period (3 months - 4 months)

The window of socialization is closing rapidly! By 16 weeks old, the puppy's brain will reach 80% of its full development. Its emotional makeup is fully developed, and you will no longer be able to affect change. Do not delay!

Flight Instinct Period (4 months - 8 months)

This is where we often see owners seeking professional help for their dog. The dog will start to act more independently and willfully, and the once-obedient dog will start to be disobedient. Behaviors that were going well before, such as potty training, are suddenly not going so well anymore. The Pups will also be uncomfortable because their adult teeth are coming in. Also, it will be harder to correct behavior during this period.



Second Fear Imprint Period (6 months - 14 months)

The teenage years are in full swing! We see a lot of owners seeking professional help during this phase as well. The dog you once knew is changing. A confident dog may now be showing signs of fear, and some dogs may start to become reactive or even aggressive — all despite having been properly socialized.

It is important during this phase that dogs are sheltered from traumatic, stressful, or frightening experiences. Any negative experience during this phase can remain with the dog for the rest of its life.

Young Adulthood (18 months - 24 months)

If you missed the opportunity to socialize your dog correctly, issues stemming from that can really start to surface during this period. Dogs can also show an increase in aggression levels and protective or territorial instincts.

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BRINGING HOME A NEW PUPPY

The First Hour

Tempting as it may be, it is important not to give your puppy the run of the house or always make them the center of attention. Instead, prepare them for a normal routine from the beginning by introducing them to your home this way:

Step 1

When you arrive home, take your puppy out for a walk or bathroom break. Pick a spot not used by any other dogs (until your puppy is fully vaccinated).

Step 2

Introduce them to their new home on a leash, including the Puppy Plan Pen.

Step 3

Give them a chew bone or stuffed KONG and leave them alone in the Puppy Plan Pen for about five minutes.

Tip

If your puppy begins to howl, whine or bark, wait for them to be quiet for at least 10 seconds before you respond. Otherwise, they learn that whining summons you, and they will cry for longer periods of time.

The First Day

Routine

Leave your puppy in their crate or Puppy Play Pen while you spend time in another part of the house.

Vary the length of your absences, from 30 seconds to 20 minutes, and repeat them throughout the day. Put your puppy in their crate or Puppy Play Pen while you pay bills, talk on the phone, eat dinner, etc.



Have a 10-minute play or cuddle session with your puppy, and then take them out to go to the bathroom (in a safe spot). Return them to their Puppy Play Pen afterwards.

The Bedtime Routine

After a trip to your puppy's bathroom area, put your puppy in their crate or Puppy Plan Pen with a chew toy. They may have trouble settling in at first but should eventually relax and go to sleep. This can be especially difficult during the puppy's first night at home. Because puppies are used to sleeping with their littermates and mother, the transition to sleeping alone takes a little getting used to. It is completely normal behavior for a puppy to whine and cry before bedtime, and they will eventually grow out of it. Harsh as it seems, do not respond if your puppy cries or barks. If they get attention by barking, they will keep it up longer next time.

The first week with a new puppy is exciting, but it can also be challenging at times. Follow these tips to ensure that the first week with your puppy is as fun and productive as possible.

Week-1 Workout

When you bring home a new puppy, there inevitably needs to be some time for adjustment. But during this first week, you can lay the foundation for a long and happy life together and to make the transition as easy as possible for everyone.

You should plan and have all the supplies, food, and toys you need for your new arrival. Do not bring your new puppy to the pet store with you. It is a big, scary environment and you do not know the people and dogs there.

Your house should be completely puppy-proof. Do not underestimate the power of your puppy! The less "bad" things they never experience, the better. For example, if they never have the opportunity to chew a shoe, they do not know what they are missing!

Be Available for Your Puppy

The best time to bring your new puppy home is at the beginning of the weekend. If possible, take a few days off as well to really give yourself time to acquaint your puppy with its new environment and begin puppy training.



Name Your Puppy

Agree on a name ahead of time and make sure everyone uses it all the time when talking to your puppy. This will help them recognize their name and avoid confusion. You can teach name recognition by simply saying your puppy's new name and immediately following it with a small, tasty treat. Do this several times a day during the first week, and your puppy will soon know its own name!

Take Your Puppy to the Vet

Take your new puppy to your vet as soon as you can. Be sure to bring their immunization record with you.

Make Sure Others Understand Your Puppy's Needs

Once in their new home, your puppy will take time to adjust to strange new surroundings and people. Children can become especially excited, so explain to them that their new friend needs time out for naps and show them how to care for your puppy and play nicely. When you are crate training, the crate should be in the same room as you, and children should never, ever be allowed in the crate — because it is the puppy's very own safe space!

Puppy Feeding Tips

It is a good idea to bring home the pet food that your new puppy is used to eating to make the transition as easy as possible. If you do plan to switch foods or brands, you can minimize digestive upsets by having enough of the old food available to make the change a gradual one. Always put the food in the same spot to establish a routine. If your puppy does not seem to be eating, try moistening the food with water to make it easier to eat. Young puppies need to eat three small meals a day.

Be Fair

Never hit your puppy, and never scold them for something they did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think you are angry for no reason and come to fear you.



Instead, encouraging the behavior you want and discouraging the behavior you do not want is a far more productive approach. This can all be done with positive reinforcement training for puppies.

Get Out with Your Puppy

Begin socializing your puppy as soon as you can. The healthy window for dog and human socialization closes by the age of 20 weeks. Take them out and gradually introduce them to new people of all shapes and sizes. Be sure they have time with other puppies in a controlled and safe setting. Remember, you only want positive outcomes from these engagements; so only introduce your puppy to people and dogs you know to be friendly and can trust to follow your instructions regarding how to interact with your new puppy. It is one of the most important things you can do for them and teaches them to be a good dog and have confidence and social skills.

Make Introductions to Your Other Pets

If you already have pets, be sure to introduce them to your new puppy in controlled situations. Let them get to know each other on neutral ground where neither will feel the need to defend territory. Give each pet its own food dish and give all pets attention to avoid competition.

Dos and Do Not's

Do not bring home a new pet during crazy busy times. The noise and confusion may frighten the animal, and family members will be too busy to devote adequate time to help the puppy become comfortable in their new home.

Make sure your entire family knows how to act and agrees on commands and rules. Full cooperation from all family members is needed, because when a puppy receives mixed signals, they can become confused and not know how to react. Just remember to have fun — puppies of all ages love a good time! And when a puppy is having fun, it is a fair bet their owner is as well.

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PUPPY TRAINING AND HOW TO TRAIN

Why Puppy Training?

Much like socialization, training is essential for your puppy — and the earlier you begin, the better!

Puppy Training

- Instills good manners in your puppy before they learn bad habits
- Takes advantage of the critical socialization period to get your puppy used to unfamiliar people and dogs
- Creates a “learning to learn” effect, stimulating your puppy’s brain and paving the way for later training
- Allows you to troubleshoot common puppy problems like play biting, house training, and alone-time training
- Just as importantly, puppy training is fun and can be done by all family members, including children

Practice Positive Reinforcement

Training your puppy through positive reinforcement means using their natural motivators to teach them which behaviors you like and which behaviors you do not like. You can use anything your puppy wants: praise, toys, treats, a belly rub, a leash walk, or a thrown ball.

This type of training is based on the fundamental truth that all animals are more likely to repeat a behavior that is reinforced — and less likely to repeat one that is not. Just like we humans are much more likely to show up for work if we get a steady paycheck, dogs will do exactly what we want them to do if we provide similar motivation!

Why It Works So Well

Tapping into your puppy’s innate motivations makes training fun for them — and you their favorite person on the planet!



Making training a game means your puppy relaxes and learns faster, whereas fear and caution blocks learning.

Caveat

The knowledge acquisition centers in your puppy's brain slow down or shut off completely when they are afraid — and risk-avoidance takes the place of problem-solving! So, if your puppy is scared or uncomfortable, they simply cannot learn. Always find a way to make them comfortable first, and then try again.

A Word on Punishment

Never use physical punishment. It comes with serious side effects like aggression, fear, and erosion of the trust between you and your puppy.

Unwanted Behaviors

Using positive reinforcement methods does not mean you cannot set boundaries or say “no” to your puppy. It just means saying it in a way they understand and that makes sense to them.

In Response to Bad Behavior, You Can:

- Ignore it so as not to reinforce or reward unwanted behavior
- Avoid the situation by restricting your puppy's access to a place, person, or object
- Redirect them to an alternative behavior, for example, sitting instead of jumping up

Dog Training Principles

These simple principles create a win-win partnership between you and your puppy. You get a polite dog for life, and your dog gets to play with other dogs, chase Frisbees, and eat their favorite treats.

Reward behaviors you **like**. This will make them reoccur **more** often

Ignore behaviors you **do not like**. This will make them reoccur **less** often



Ask your dog to “say please” when they want something (basically being a good dog!). Ask your dog to sit for doors to be opened, balls to be thrown, leashes to come off at the park, etc. This makes asking politely your dog’s main strategy for getting what they want, instead of using pushy behavior.

Lure-Reward Training

Lure-reward training means showing your dog what you want and then rewarding that. The method is most commonly used by putting a piece of food right in front of the dog’s nose (close enough that they can lick it) and moving the food in the direction you want the dog to go. Where the nose goes, the rest of the dog follows!

If, for example, you put a treat right by your dog’s nose and lift your hand up and toward the back of the dog very slowly, your dog’s nose will go up and their bottom will go down. Reward that by releasing the treat — and you have your first rewarded sit!

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COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

There Are Myths, and Then There Is Reality

Myth

Rubbing my puppy's nose in their urine or feces will stop them from soiling the house...

Reality

Absolutely not true! The only thing your puppy will learn from this experience is to expect irrational and unpleasant behavior from their humans. Just like newspaper swatting and scolding, it may even teach your puppy not to go to the bathroom in front of you — which makes it harder to house-train them!

Myth

Using food to train my puppy is bribery...

Reality

Not exactly. All animals, including humans, work for reinforcement. A reward to us might be a promotion at work or a dinner out with friends. Dogs too will work only for reinforcement, because why else would anyone do anything? Much as they enjoy our company, their purpose in life is to fulfill their own needs—food, shelter, security, social needs, etc.—not to please us. You can use food, play, praise, the prospect of a leash walk, or a belly rub to reward your puppy. As long as you manage to motivate them sufficiently, they will happily do things your way!

Myth

Stubborn dogs need assertive training and punishment...

Reality

It is true that some dogs learn faster than others, but no dog is willfully stubborn. If your puppy does not respond to your training efforts, odds are you have not provided enough (or the proper) motivation. Let us put it another way — if chickens and elephants can be trained with positive reinforcement methods, so can your puppy!



Myth

When my puppy pulls on leash, jumps on me or barks, they are showing dominance...

Reality

The label of “dominance” has been used to explain every type of behavior in dogs, from not coming when called, to protectiveness of food and toys. But dogs do not constantly plot how to overthrow humans and gain sole custody of the fridge. If your dog jumps on you, they are probably excited to see you. If they pull on a leash, it is because they are in a hurry to go places. The idea of dominance unnecessarily puts your dog’s loyalty into question and is not really helpful. It is better to focus on the good behavior you would like to instill in your dog instead of the bad behavior they are exhibiting, and then teach them by rewarding it with positive reinforcement.

Myth

My puppy destroys things in my home or urinates on the floor out of spite. I can tell because they look so guilty...

Reality

When you return home to find shredded bed linens or a puddle in the living room, it is easy to think your puppy did those things because they are angry with you for some reason. But guilt is a wholly human concept. The “guilty look” on your puppy’s face does not mean they feel bad for what they did (they have actually forgotten all about it by now!), it means they are reading subtle cues in your body language telling them that something is wrong. Their behavior might spring from boredom, loneliness, a surplus of energy, anxiety, or simply having to hold it in too long. By focusing on proper training methods, these incidents can be eliminated from your puppy’s behavior — or prevented altogether!



Myth

If I start training with food, I will always have to use it...

Reality

Not necessarily. To maintain an already established behavior, you should use any reward your dog cares about at the given time and only break out the food intermittently — like a jackpot prize that keeps them playing the game! But when you want to introduce a new behavior into your dog's repertoire, food is a superior tool: portable, easy to deliver, and high on a dog's priority list!

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