

Your New Puppy: The Ultimate Puppy Sleeping Guide

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By Katherine Tolford

It's no secret that sleeping through the night with a new puppy can be almost as difficult as it is with a newborn baby.

Teena Patel, a dog trainer and the owner of the training facility University of Doglando, says puppies wake up so often because they're lonely for their mothers.

"Puppies are stripped from the natural weaning process and deprived of the bonding that occurs with their mom and littermates. Most rescue organizations [and breeders] don't have the capacity or resources to keep puppies a long time. They're usually taken from their mothers at only eight weeks," she says.

The good news is it's easier than you think to get your new puppy sleeping through the night. With a little foresight, planning and a commitment to training, you can have your puppy sleeping through the night in just a few days.

Prepping Your Puppy for Bed

Just as you may have rituals such as brushing your teeth or reading to your child before bed, having set routines with your puppy can help prepare him for sleep and give him something positive to associate with bedtime.

If your puppy is wired at night, it could be that he isn't getting enough stimulation during the day.

Patel recommends exercising your dog early in the evening, a few hours before bedtime.

“It helps get him aroused and tired and ready to go to bed by stimulating him mentally and physically,” she says. “He’ll be more content and it will help him crash and want to rest.”

She suggests throwing a toy, playing a game of hide-and-seek or experimenting with name recognition where family members form a circle and take turns calling your dog. When he comes to you, reward him with [dog treats](#) or his favorite toy.

Try Soothing Sounds

Playing classical music before and during bedtime can help alleviate whining and anxiety as well as drown out other noise or unfamiliar sounds that may upset or rouse your puppy.

Dr. Carolyn Lincoln, a vet, dog trainer and owner of Play to Behave, recommends “Through a Dog’s Ear,” a musical CD, which is based on the research of the effect of tempo and octave levels on dogs.

Surround Your Puppy With Familiar Objects

If possible, put an article of clothing like a t-shirt, with the scent of the home or environment your puppy came from next to him while he sleeps, says Lincoln. It will help give him something familiar to identify with and help him ease into the transition of his new home. You can also send a toy to your puppy in advance of his transition to his new home. Over a few days, the smell will gradually dissipate, which allows him to gradually get used to the smells associated with your home.

Lincoln also recommends using a *pheromone*-based [dog calming collar](#) or spray for the first four weeks. These products mimic pheromones produced by a mother dog. “It’s easy to plug in the diffuser version near your puppy’s sleeping area to help soothe and reassure him,” she says.

Crate Your Puppy Overnight

Lincoln says the easiest and nearly full-proof way for training a puppy to sleep through the night is to use a dog crate. Place the crate near your bed in an area close to you. Start by putting your puppy in the crate for a bit before it’s time to go to sleep. Darken the room. Then go quietly to sleep and don’t make a fuss over going to bed.

“Your puppy will fall asleep when you fall asleep because he’s right there next to you. He can smell you. If he starts crying you can put your hand next to him.”

Sleeping with your puppy in close proximity helps him bond with you and feel less lonely for his mother and littermates.

After your puppy gets used to the crate by your bed, you can gradually move him out of your bedroom if you don’t plan to have him sleep near you every night.

Lincoln encourages owners who may be resistant to the idea of [dog crates](#) not to think of it as a punishment. “It gives them their own sense of space which can be a comforting place for them to seek solitude or shelter when they’re scared or tired.” She says. “Don’t consider it to be jail but more like a bedroom to them.”

You can introduce your puppy to his crate by putting him in it throughout the day and rewarding him with treats and [dog toys](#), so he gets used to the space and doesn’t associate it with a negative experience.

Middle of the Night Potty Breaks

Until your puppy is potty trained he will likely wake you up because he needs to go outside. Lincoln says lining your puppy’s crate with a pee pad is a good idea. “Although dogs usually don’t like to soil the area they sit or sleep in. If he’s in a crate next to you he’ll probably wake you up first and let you know before he goes,” she says. If you or your puppy is an especially sound sleeper you might even want to set an alarm to avoid accidents in the crate.

Remain as neutral as possible when you get up to take him out. “Don’t let him think it’s playtime,” says Lincoln. “Talk to him in gentle tones. Don’t make it fun. Be as boring as you can be. Stand in one spot and wait for him to go and then say, ‘good dog.’”

When you take him back inside Lincoln says you should do so calmly, without making a big fuss. “You just put him back in his crate and close it like you’re closing the cupboard door. Then you just walk away and get back into bed.” Giving your puppy too much attention in the middle of the night can lead to him waking you up just to get that attention, even if he doesn’t have to pee.

Gradually, your puppy will build bladder control and should be able to sleep through the night without needing to go to the bathroom as frequently. A good rule of thumb is that puppies can usually hold their urine for their age in months plus one, converted to hours. In other words, a 3-month-old puppy can generally go four hours without urinating. So, if you sleep for eight hours, you’ll need to get up once during the night to let your 3-month-old puppy out to pee.

If you find that your puppy doesn’t hold to this type of schedule or suddenly increases the frequency of his bathroom trips it could be a sign that he has a bladder infection or other health problem and you should consult with your vet.

Learn to Be a Morning Person

Lincoln says one of the hardest adjustments for owners to make is that most puppies are early risers. “People think 5:30 am is the middle of the night. But puppies and children tend to naturally wake up around 5:30. You may have to just adapt to that,” she says. “Get up. Let him out, feed him or play with him a bit and then he may want to go right back to sleep.”

Surviving the first night with your puppy is the most challenging. [Learn a few essential tips for getting it right.](#)