

The First Night Home

The first few days can be a very stressful time for your puppy. Be prepared for it to cry, whine, or howl when it is left alone. Let the puppy be with you, it misses its littermates and you are its only comfort. If you are going to crate train your puppy (which I suggest you do, see crate section) place the crate next to your bed for the next several weeks, later you can move the crate to the room or area you want your puppy to sleep. The puppy will settle down much faster in your room than it will in the opposite end of the house.

Take the puppy outside on a leash to go potty and poo right before you put him in his crate for the night (more in depth potty training section later). When your puppy begins to cry, drop your arm down and stick your fingers inside the crate door's wire mesh wiggling them so the pup knows you're there. Your puppy will snuggle up against your fingers and eventually fall asleep.

When your puppy wakes up in the middle of the night and begins to cry, it needs either 1) reassurance that it is not alone or 2) it needs to go to the bathroom. Try once again to put your fingers in the door of the crate to get the pups attention and settle him back to sleep. If this fails and the puppy continues to whine or bark, then it needs to go to the bathroom. Take it outside on a leash (be sure to carry the pup so there isn't an accident on the way) and make sure it goes potty (verbally praising when it goes potty) before putting it back in the crate.

Try to always take the puppy to the same area to go to the bathroom. Having it on a leash will cut down on puppy play, and ensure the pup gets right down to the business at hand. Assign a word to going potty (always use the same command "go potty!!" and praise saying "good potty!!"). Eventually the pup will go on command.

Once back in the crate, the pup may begin to fuss again. However, just go through the same routine listed above (fingers in the door for comfort) and the puppy will go back to sleep. You will find that by 10-11 weeks of age your puppy should sleep through most nights (6-7 hours).

One common mistake many people do is every time the puppy fusses in the crate at night they tend to quickly take the puppy outside for a potty break. If you are not careful you could be doing this several times a night for several months. Be careful that you do not teach your puppy that every time it cries it gets to go outside. Personally I treasure a good night's sleep and don't like to stand outside in the cold night air while my puppy is having a grand time playing.