

North Paws

Beyond 8 Weeks ...

Socialisation Stage (5 weeks-16 weeks) within this stage there are five periods:

The more exposure to smells, textures, surfaces, sounds, vibrations, tastes, sights, animals and people a puppy experiences in this stage the more prepared they will be for the life of an adult dog.

- Curiosity Period (5-7 weeks):

Puppies have the lowest fear and highest acceptance now therefore they should experience as much as possible for the first time.

- Behaviour Refinement Period (7-9 weeks):

Puppies brains are fully functioning now and are capable of learning anything.

- Fear Imprint Period (8-11 weeks):

If frightened during this period it will have a detrimental impact on the puppy. All new experiences should be carefully planned to ensure, they are positive.

- Environment Awareness Period (9-12 weeks):

Puppies have short attention spans at this time but are able to learn the right behaviours, they will make big improvements with motor skills, pay more attention to their humans and are very busy learning their new world.

- Seniority Classification Period (13-16 weeks):

The 'Age of Independence' ... puppy will begin to test their dominance and leadership. 'Temper Tantrums' are common as they begin to have their own opinion!

Flight Instinct Stage (4-8 months):

Puppy will begin to 'turn a deaf ear', use a long line at this time to give them the opportunity to explore further but help avoid accidents, this will help shorten this stage.

Second Fear Stage (6-14 months):

Puppy will increase chewing at this time as adult teeth are coming through, moving from 28 puppy teeth to 42 adult teeth. Hormone changes will be taking place. Lots of reinforcement, increased exercise and praise will be needed during this time.

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Maturity Stage (1-4 years):

Puppy is making the transition between puppyhood and adulthood and putting everything into practice.

Things to remember:

Puppies are not the finished article when born, research has shown that 35% of a dogs ultimate behaviour traits are genetic and the remaining 65% are attributed to the training, socialisation, nutrition and health care of the puppy. This brings about debate regarding nature and nurture. NorthPaws aim to maximise the potential of our puppies by stimulating learning abilities, interests and natural instincts.

Remember raising a puppy is about building a partnership and good communication which paves the way for a lifetime of good, safe behaviour. By using subtle, calm and assertive communication you are aiming for a dog who understands, anticipates and responds to you rather than a dog who does as its told!

Ultimately, have courage, don't underestimate the power of 'puppy-dog' eyes, they are a force of nature and be prepared for the ups and downs. This is a journey and one that is the most rewarding you will ever go on.

There are several stages in a puppies life where learning and socialisation can be maximised. Although there are many debates on the exact age of these stages, different breeds will develop at different stages and puppies within a litter will vary, there is however an importance to know and understand these stages and to utilise the critical periods to raise the best puppies possible.

At NorthPaws we try to maximise all possible opportunities before puppy comes home. Ultimately, the development of a great dog is the responsibility of breeder and new owner. A mature dogs personality, physical appearance and working ability are a combination of breed characteristics, individual genetics, socialisation and the training it receives.