



The Puppy's Rule of 12

By the time a puppy is 12 weeks old, it should have:

Experienced 12 different surfaces: wood, woodchips, carpet tile, cement, linoleum, grass, wet grass, dirt, mud, puddles, grates, uneven surfaces, on a table, on a chair, etc...

Played with 12 different objects: fuzzy toys, big & small balls, hard toys, funny sounding toys, wooden items, paper or cardboard items, milk jugs, (all under supervision) etc...

Experienced 12 different locations: front yard, other people's homes, school yard, lake, pond, river, basement, elevator, car, moving car, garage, laundry room, hardware store, pet store, stairs, etc...

Met and played with 12 new people: (outside of family) include children, adults (male and female) elderly adults, people in wheelchairs, walkers, people with canes and umbrellas, crutches, hats, sunglasses, men with deep voices, people with dark colored skin, etc...

Exposed to 12 different noises: (ALWAYS keep positive and watch puppy's comfort level-we don't want the puppy scared) garage door opening, doorbell, children playing, babies screaming, big trucks, Harley motorcycles, skateboards, washing machine, shopping carts, clapping, pan dropping, vacuums, lawnmowers, etc...

Exposed to 12 fast moving objects: (Don't allow to chase) skateboards, roller-blades, bikes, motorcycles, cars, people running, cats running, scooters, children running, squirrels, etc...

And, if your puppy is over 12 weeks old, continue with the above until you have given him experience with all the above!

A young puppy has so much potential and starting off from scratch means you have the opportunity to make impressions on her that will last for the rest of her life. Your dog's early experiences will shape her personality, how she sees the world around her and how she deals with stress. A well thought out socialization plan can help you raise a dog that you can take anywhere with anyone with a happy wag of her tail. Poor socialization can leave you with a fearful, reactive dog that can't cope with being outside of her home environment. Give your puppy the best possible start by making sure she has early, safe and POSITIVE experiences with a variety of people, places, surfaces, sounds and temperatures.

Never force your pup to approach anyone or anything, let her explore on her terms, quietly praising and encouraging her when she boldly approaches by herself. When your puppy seems uncertain, allow her to proceed on her own pace or to move away from that which worries her. Then encourage her to approach at her own rate again, such as having a 'scary' person kneel down to the side and not look at the puppy while holding out a treat for her. Keep in mind that you're not trying to overwhelm your puppy with new experiences - quantity is not better than quality! Make sure your puppy is confident, well rested and having a good time whenever you introduce her to something new. Don't overdo it either! Puppies get tired very quickly, and most importantly give your dog lots of downtime after a new experience to recuperate and rest in a safe, quiet place.

Nipping and Mouthing

All puppies normally use their mouths to explore their environment, to initiate play, and during play, to indicate displeasure, and to defend themselves from frightening things. Puppies need to learn bite inhibition. That is, they need to learn to control the strength of their jaws, and learn not to use their mouth on people (but if they ever do, they should do it softly).

If they nip to invite you to play, accidentally during play, or when they are just exploring their world...

- Say 'ouch' and take your attention away the second that your pup nips. Either calmly put him in a nearby crate, have him tethered to the chair leg and walk away, or just walk away and ignore him.

- After a minute or when he calms down, come back and interact again.
- Offer him a toy to use with his mouth.
- Repeat as needed. Many repetitions are required at first.
- Reward non-mouthy behavior by continuing to interact and play with him using toys for his mouth.

- DO NOT respond to mouthiness by pushing, hitting, shoving, yelling, pinching muzzles, etc. That will make him hand shy and will often make nipping worse.

EXPOSURE TO OTHER ANIMALS

Puppies don't have their full immune system prepared till later in life, so for now, avoid dog parks and all unknown dogs. However, it is good for puppies to meet a socially appropriate, healthy adult dog. Always supervise this interaction and if the puppy is not enjoying it, or the adult dog is not patient and tolerant, separate the dogs immediately.

Puppies can benefit from living with, or being exposed to cats/kittens, at a very young age, as well.

PROVIDE TOYS! A variety of toys that are rotated for something new each day: ball, hard plastic toys, soft toys, squeaky toys. Be sure the toys are hardy and do not present a choking hazard with any loose pieces that can be bitten off.

Housetraining Basics

In order to housetrain a puppy, follow these guidelines:

Take your dog/puppy outside *on leash* immediately after eating, upon waking, and any time that it appears he needs to go out (circling, whining, sniffing the ground).

- Praise your puppy quietly with 'good dog' as he eliminates.
- Supervise, supervise, and supervise. A dog/puppy that is being housetrained must never be out of your sight unless he is in his crate. Accidents out of sight *are your responsibility*. Just clean them up and watch your dog/pup more closely next time. Use baby-gates or tie your dog's leash to your waist during the house-training process to keep him well supervised.
- If you catch your puppy *in the middle of an accident* in the house, simply interrupt him by clapping your hands and saying 'ahh, outside' and then, attaching a leash and taking him directly outside. Praise him if he finishes outside. This will only work if you catch him in the act. Once he has finished, the opportunity to teach him is gone.
- Never punish or scold a dog/puppy for a housetraining accident! Doing so will slow down progress and make your dog/puppy more likely to sneak off to eliminate out of your presence. Simply interrupt wrong behaviors and redirect your dog to the appropriate behavior.
- Always clean accidents with an enzymatic cleaner such as Nature's Miracle or Simple Solution. Clean up whatever fluid or fecal material you can with paper towels, and then saturate the area with the enzyme solution, let it set, and then wipe up with terry towels. Regular carpet cleaners alone on pet accidents won't adequately remove the urine/fecal material and that may encourage the dog to eliminate again on that same spot.
- In general, beginning at around 3 months, puppies can hold their bladders for one hour equal to their age in months during the day and a bit longer at night time. So, a 3-month old pup may be able to hold it for three hours at a stretch during the day.

For foster parents with a litter of puppies or others raising more than one puppy, it is important to feed the puppies' meals in more than one bowl, even if they share out of one. In order to prevent food guarding in the future, the puppy needs to understand that food is plentiful and he will always get enough. If his littermates push him out of one bowl, we want him to see that another food bowl is available for him.