

# BEACON ULTIMATE PUPPY GUIDE

*Everything you need to know to  
get started with your new puppy*



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## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on deciding to add a new puppy to your family! The first few months after a puppy joins a family are critically important for setting them up for a happy life.

If you have any questions about any of the topics in this ebook, or would like further assistance with your puppy, you are most welcome to contact us at [info@beacondogtraining.com.au](mailto:info@beacondogtraining.com.au).

This guide covers everything you need to know to help your puppy settle in, and get them started with their best paw forward.



## BITING

Puppy biting is a perfectly normal play behaviour for all puppies – but it's not so fun for us humans! Puppy teeth are needle sharp, and even a light nip can hurt a lot. It's important to teach your puppy to be gentle with their teeth, both for our sake, and so that they know how to regulate their jaw strength if they're ever in a situation as an adult where they are scared enough to bite.

### Step 1

The first step to reducing your puppy's biting is to ensure that they are getting enough sleep. Most owners grossly underestimate the amount of sleep that a young puppy needs. An 8 week old puppy can only go for around 45 minutes before they'll start becoming overtired, and just like with young kids, overtired puppies are cranky puppies.

If your puppy seems to be biting even more than usual, chances are that they're ready for a nap.

### Step 2

Step two for eliminating puppy biting is to avoid rough-housing, wrestling style play. These types of games, whilst fun for us humans, lead to an over-excited puppy who is in the habit of using teeth on human skin. With a young puppy, always ensure that there is a toy between you and the puppy's teeth, and end the game if the puppy decides that human fingers look more fun to chew on than the toy.

### Step 3

The third factor that increases puppy biting is when owners force the puppy into human-style affection gestures like hugging and kissing. Hugging and kissing is the way that humans and other primates show our love, but for dogs and other canines it's an alien or even hostile motion. Rather than ambushing your puppy and picking them up for a hug, sit or lie on the ground and let them come to you for a cuddle.

In the Beacon Puppy School course we will learn how to train your dog to say yes or no to a cuddle, and how to increase their tolerance of hugs and other restraint.

### Step 4

The last step in the process of eliminating puppy biting is to control the way you act when your puppy bites too hard.

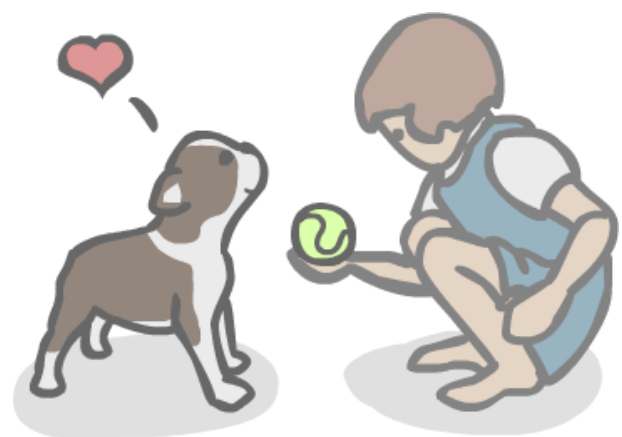


We tend to instinctively flail about, push back at the puppy and make noise when we receive a hard chomp from our puppies. This behaviour is a lot of fun from the puppy's point of view, and they're likely to try and keep the game going.

When your puppy bites too hard, you should say "ouch!" or make a yelping noise, and then completely disengage from your puppy. We want your puppy to learn that play time is over as soon as they bite too hard. This means acting as if your puppy doesn't exist; don't look at them, talk to them, or touch them for a minute or two.

### Need further assistance?

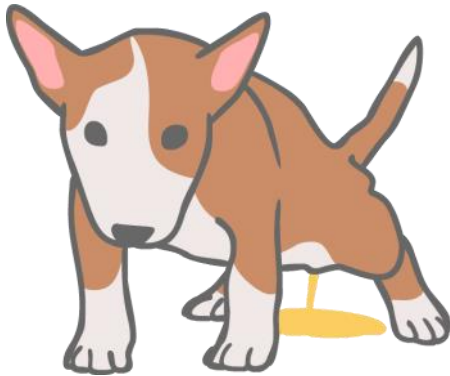
We cover puppy biting in depth in our Beacon Puppy School course, including how to help your puppy develop bite inhibition as an adult dog, and how to reduce biting when the person getting bitten won't follow instructions to ignore the puppy; like children or guests.



## TOILET TRAINING

Potty training can be a frustrating part of bringing home a new puppy. We have created an easy to follow video that covers all the basics of toilet training a puppy; you can view it here:

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/  
toilet-training-video](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/toilet-training-video)



### Step 1

Try to limit the opportunities your puppy has to toilet in undesirable locations. This is best done with crate training, as young puppies will not toilet in an appropriately sized crate. When your puppy isn't in their crate, you should be watching them actively for signs that they are about to toilet, like sniffing and circling. If you're unable to watch your puppy you should have an indoor toilet set up in a puppy proof area.

### Step 2

Reward your dog with praise, treats and play when they go in your goal area. You should take them to the goal area regularly, to give them plenty of opportunities to go in the right place. The amount of time your puppy can go between toilet breaks will vary depending on their age and breed; it's usually best to start with one hour, and then increase or decrease the frequency of the toilet breaks as needed.



If your puppy will be unsupervised for longer than an hour, they should either be in their crate for a nap, or in a puppy proof area with access to an indoor toilet. Your puppy should be able to hold their bladder for longer while they're asleep at night than then can in the day, but it's likely that they'll need at least one toilet break in the middle of the night for the first few weeks after you bring them home.

### Step 3

You should never punish your puppy when they go to the toilet in the house, regardless of whether you catch them in the act or not. Puppies who have a history of being punished become afraid of toileting in front of humans. They think that they are in trouble because you saw them go, not that they're in trouble because they went in the house.



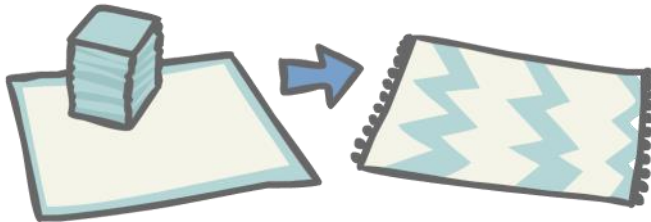
This leads to a pattern where a human takes their dog out to toilet, and the dog refuses to go in front of the scary human. The human assumes that their pup doesn't need to go and lets them back inside. As soon as the human's back is turned, the dog sneaks off to toilet in peace.



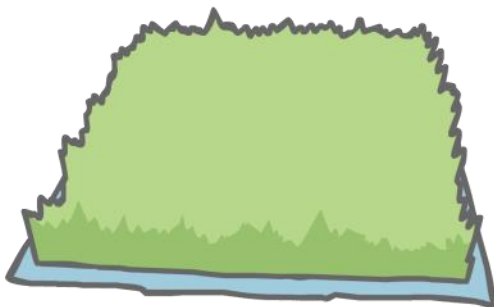
If your puppy does have an accident, assess the situation and see if you can rework your strategy to avoid it happening in the future. Do you need more frequent toilet breaks? Were you distracted with another task, not supervising the puppy enough, and so should place them in a puppy proof area with an indoor toilet next time?

**Step 4**

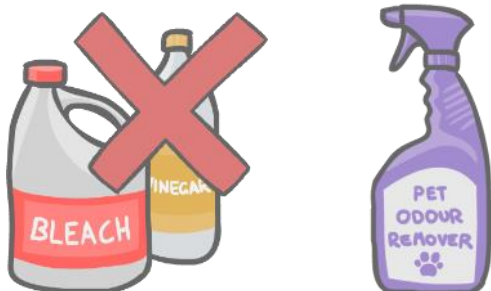
As much as possible, you should try to ensure that your puppy only toilets on the type of surface that you would like them to be toilet trained too. Puppies grow accustomed to a certain texture under their paws when they toilet. This is why puppy pee pads can cause issues – they teach puppies to look for soft cloth like surfaces like carpet, rugs, bedding and clothing.



Placing fake grass tiles over the top of puppy pee pads is a great way to get around this problem. Alternatively, there are plenty of indoor dog toilets commercially available, in both fake and real grass varieties.

**Step 5**

Any accidents that slip through your toilet training schedule should be cleaned thoroughly, with an enzymatic cleaner. Your puppy's nose is very sensitive, and cleaning with vinegar or bleach will not be sufficient.

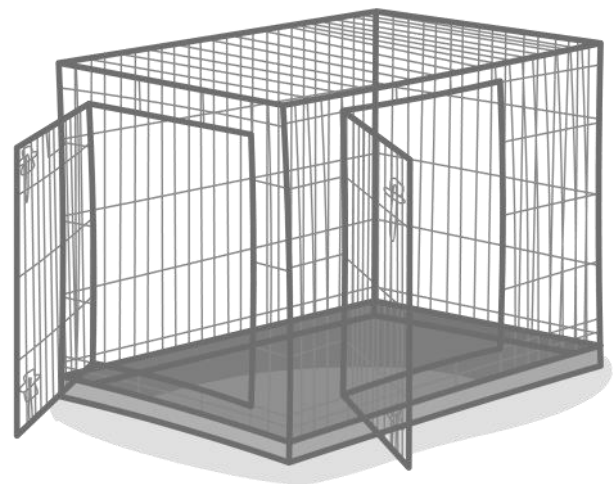
**CRATE & CONFINEMENT TRAINING**

Crate and confinement training is a fantastic tool for setting your puppy up for success. It will assist you with toilet training, ensure your puppy is getting sufficient sleep and rest, help to prevent separation anxiety and help you avoid chewing and destructive behaviours. Crate training is also crucial for any dog that ends up in a vet, groomer or kennel.

**How Big Should the Crate Be?**

Your crate should be tall enough for your puppy to stand in comfortably without bumping their head. They should be able to easily turn in a circle and lie down and stretch out a bit, but the crate should not be big enough for them to toilet at one end and then lie down at the other.

Many crates come with dividers, so that you can buy a crate sized for when your puppy grows up, and then use the divider to reduce the available space when they're young. Alternatively you can use something like an esky to reduce the size of



your crate.

**What Kind of Crate?**

While the fabric crates are appealing due to their light weight and low cost, they are generally not suitable for crate training, as even young puppies can easily chew or claw their way out through the fabric. Instead, we recommend collapsible wire crates, or the hard plastic pet carrier style.

### Introducing the Crate

It's important to introduce the crate slowly, creating positive associations so that your puppy thinks of it as a good place. You should feed your puppy in the crate, leave their favourite toys in the crate, leave tasty treats for them to find etc.

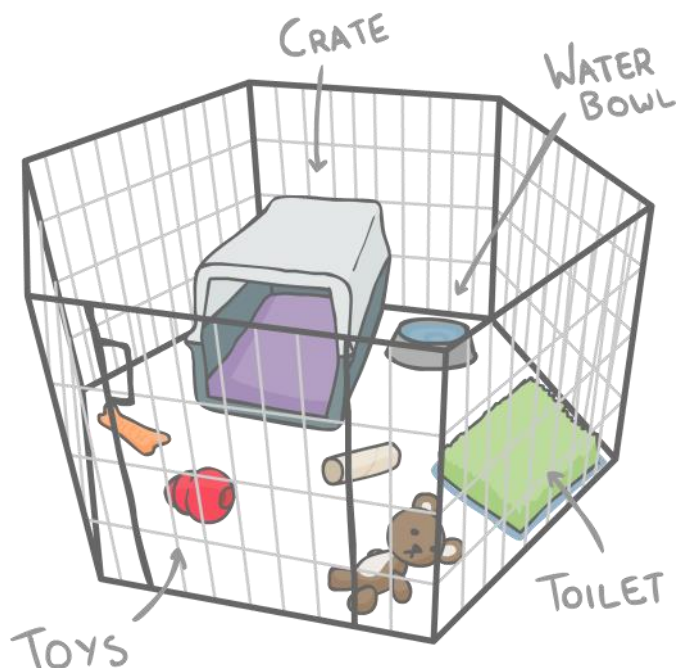
Once they're happy going in and out of the crate, you can start closing the door for a few minutes at a time. Slowly build up the amount of time your puppy spends in the closed crate, always ensuring that they have an activity like a chew toy or a meal to keep them occupied.

### How Long In the Crate?

Once you've successfully introduced your puppy to the crate and built up the amount of time they can spend in it comfortably, the number of hours your puppy can sleep in the crate is equal to their age in months, plus one. A four month puppy can go five hours before they'll need a toilet break, a six month old can go for seven hours etc.

Your puppy should sleep in the crate with the door closed overnight. For young puppies, you will need to set your alarm to take them out to toilet when they have reached the limit for their age. If your puppy is going to be home alone for longer than four hours, they should not be in the crate with the door closed; instead you should set up a puppy proof area where they have access to their crate with the door open.

### The Perfect Puppy Proof Area



Your puppy's long term confinement area should be a small area with an easy to clean surface like tiles or concrete. Puppy play pens are a fantastic way to achieve this, but small bathrooms and laundries work well too.

Your puppy proof area should have the following:

- Your puppy's crate, with comfortable bedding inside and the door open
- An indoor toilet such as fake grass over puppy pee pads
- A collection of three or four toys, that are rotated every few days. These should include toys for snuggling, toys for chewing, and toys for ripping up, like an empty toilet paper roll or a cardboard egg carton
- A water bowl that your puppy can't knock over



### What To Do If Your Puppy Cries in the Crate or Confinement Area

Your puppy may be crying because they need to go to the toilet. If you think this may be the case, put your puppy on a leash and take them directly to their toileting spot. Do not talk to your puppy or otherwise engage with them until after they have toileted. Praise and reward your puppy as usual, and then pop them back in the crate again.

If your puppy has been to the toilet recently and is crying in the crate for your attention, it's very important that you don't go to them or talk to them. Giving your dog attention for whining or barking will teach them that making noise is a successful strategy for getting your attention, and will cause the behaviour to get worse.

If the crying behaviour is particularly bad, you may have to go through the steps for introducing your puppy to the crate again – you may have tried to increase the time spent in the crate too soon.








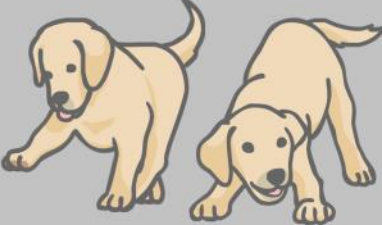

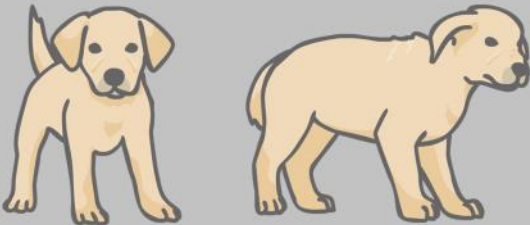
## BODY LANGUAGE

Dogs communicate through their body language. Learning what your puppy's body language signals mean will help develop your relationship, avoid misunderstandings and make obedience training easier. The graphic below shows some of the basic dog language signals.

Remember that you should always look at the bigger picture when reading a dog's body language. Signals can have very different meanings in different contexts, and this graphic is meant as a basic introductory guide only.

For example, when it comes to "please rub my tummy" vs "go away" the rest of the body language is the key. A dog happily sprawled out with loose floppy legs and a big smile probably wants a belly rub. A dog like the one in the drawing, with tight muscles, head arched up to keep an eye on the human and a back leg raised in the air is asking for space.

If you'd like extra assistance interpreting what your dog is saying, your Beacon trainer can help you out. If it's a behaviour that only happens in a certain place, try to get some video to show us.

<p><b>"That's making me a bit stressed; I'd like things to calm down"</b></p>  <p>YAWN      LIP LICK      SCRATCHING</p>	<p><b>"Phew, that was stressful, but I feel better now"</b></p>  <p>SHAKE OFF</p>	<p><b>"Please don't lean over me or pat me on the head"</b></p>  <p>SHRINK AWAY</p>	<p><b>"This is so much fun!"</b></p>  <p>ZOOMIES</p>	
<p><b>"I love you!" or "I missed you!"</b></p>  <p>GREETING BOW</p>	<p><b>"I have peaceful intentions, and I want you to be peaceful too"</b></p>  <p>SNIFFING      HEAD TURN      SLOW MOVEMENTS</p>		<p><b>"Can I have some of that?"</b></p>  <p>PAW LIFT, PUPPY DOG EYES</p>	
<p><b>"Let's play!"</b></p>  <p>BOUNCY, SIDWAYS MOVEMENTS      PLAY BOW</p>		<p><b>"I am nervous, please go away and don't touch me"</b></p>  <p>SHOW BELLY, PAW LIFT, HEAD ARCHED UP</p>	<p><b>"I am scared, back off or I'll defend myself!"</b></p>  <p>HARD STARE, NO BLINKING, RIDGES UNDER EYES      STIFF POSTURE, WEIGHT BRACED, WHITES OF EYES SHOWING</p>	

## SOCIALISATION

Many people have heard that they need to socialise their puppies, but are uncertain exactly what this entails, or how important it is.

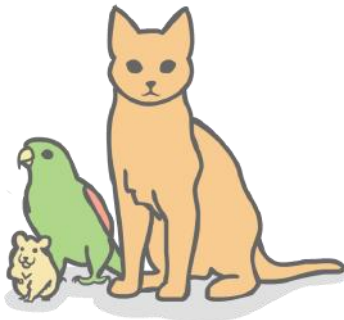
Socialisation is the single most important thing that you can do for a young puppy, and should take precedence over all other aspects of their upbringing. Beacon Dog Training has created an in-depth video and article on socialisation, you can view them here:

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/  
puppy-socialisation-video](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/puppy-socialisation-video)

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/  
puppy-socialisation](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/puppy-socialisation)

The critical window for socialising a puppy closes somewhere around 3 or 4 months of age, depending on the individual puppy. Before this deadline, your puppy should be socialised to as much of the following as possible:

- 50+ dogs at a distance
- 50+ dogs in supervised off leash play



- Other animals, like cats, birds, rodents and livestock
- People of all ages, ethnicities and sizes
- Anything that changes a person's silhouette, like facial hair, sunglasses, bulky clothes, hats and helmets, walking aids, or people carrying bulky items



- Anything that changes the way that people move, like walking sticks, crutches, wheelchairs, skateboards, bicycles and prams
- Human handling, like brushing, clipping, nail trimming, baths and checking ears, eyes and teeth
- Noises like thunder, construction noises, traffic noises, music, lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners and sirens



- Experiences like sporting events, picnics, cafes, camping trips, the beach, markets, the vet and groomer and social gatherings
- Walking on different surfaces like grass, wet grass, sand, pebbles and metal grates
- Balancing on surfaces that aren't flat or shift under-paw





There are three rules for socialising your puppy:

- 1) The experience must be a good one for your puppy
- 2) You must let your puppy go at their own pace
- 3) If you're not sure if your puppy is coping, add some distance from the thing you're socialising to

While it is possible to help dogs who have missed out on their critical socialisation period, it is a much difficult and time consuming process. Lack of sufficient socialisation can result in a number of behaviour problems, including difficulty focusing around distractions, an over excited play style, anxiety or aggression.

### What About Contagious Diseases?

As your puppy will not have completed all of their vaccinations before their critical socialisation window ends, it is crucial to find a safe balance between socialisation and disease prevention.

As the research into puppies' critical socialisation window is only relatively recent in the history of veterinary science, many vets and breeders are still advising new puppy parents to lock their puppies away until they have finished their vaccinations.

Unfortunately, by the time a puppy is completely vaccinated, their critical socialisation window has usually closed. While it is important to be careful in regards to contagious diseases like Parvovirus, avoiding socialisation completely is actually a greater risk.

This is an excerpt from an article by the internationally renowned organisation AVSAB (American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior):

*“Behavioral issues, not infectious diseases, are the number one cause of death for dogs under three years of age.*

*While puppies' immune systems are still developing during these early months, the combination of maternal immunity, primary vaccination, and appropriate care makes the risk of infection relatively small compared to the chance of death from a behavior problem.”*

Here are some tips for balancing socialisation with disease prevention:

- Don't let your dog meet any dogs that may not be vaccinated
- Avoid pet stores, dog parks and dog beaches until your puppy is fully vaccinated
- Carry your puppy in and out of the vet, or check with the staff if it is safe for them to touch the floor
- Do a lot of your socialisation at home, like grooming, noises, wading pools etc.
- Take picnic rug out with you for your puppy to sit on
- Take your puppy places in the car and let them watch out of the windows
- Carry your dog in your arms on outings
- Use a stroller or pet carrier so that you can take your puppy everywhere
- Take advantages of group training classes and socialisation services like Beacon's Free Puppy Play Group



## MENTAL & PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Providing for your puppy's mental and physical exercise needs will help ensure they grow up into a well-adjusted adult. Bored, under stimulated puppies will create their own fun – usually in a way that's undesirable to humans!

### Physical Exercise

Most owners have considered the exercise needs of their puppy before the brought them home. The amount of physical exercise your dog will need as an adult is largely dependent on breed. Some breeds, like Border Collies, Jack Russell Terriers and Siberian Huskies, have very high exercise requirements, whereas other breeds, like Pugs, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, and Great Danes can get away with less.

What many dog owners do not know is that puppies under twelve months of age are severely limited in the amount of exercise that they can safely do. Many well-meaning puppy owners accidentally do irreversible damage to their puppy's joints by over exercising them. Here is a basic guideline for safe puppy exercise:



### 8-12 Weeks

- Up to 2 minutes sustained walking on leash
- Up to 15 minutes informal sniffing and slowly strolling around on leash
- No running on leash
- No jumping on or off furniture
- No stairs
- 10-15 minutes supervised off leash play with other dogs

### 12-16 Weeks

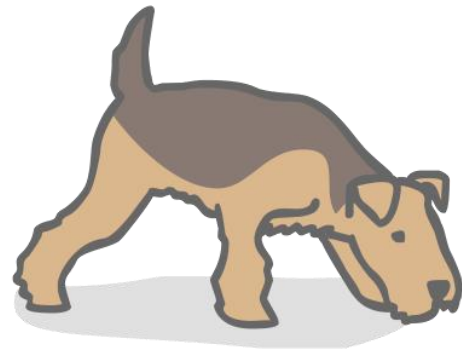
- Up to 5 minutes sustained walking on leash
- Up to 20 minutes informal sniffing and slowly strolling around on leash
- No running on leash
- No jumping on or off furniture
- No stairs
- 15-20 minutes supervised off leash play with other dogs

### 4-6 Months

- Up to 10 minutes sustained walking on leash
- Up to 45 minutes informal sniffing and slowly strolling around on leash
- No running on leash
- No jumping on or off furniture
- No more than one or two stairs
- 20-25 minutes supervised off leash play with other dogs

### 6-12 Months

- Up to 20 minutes sustained walking on leash
- Up to 60 minutes informal sniffing and slowly strolling around on leash
- No running on leash
- Puppy can jump up onto platforms that are halfway to elbow height
- Try to reduce jumping on and off furniture – most common age for fractures from this
- Stairs with good traction are okay, so long as your puppy is not running up or down
- 25-30 minutes supervised off leash play with other dogs

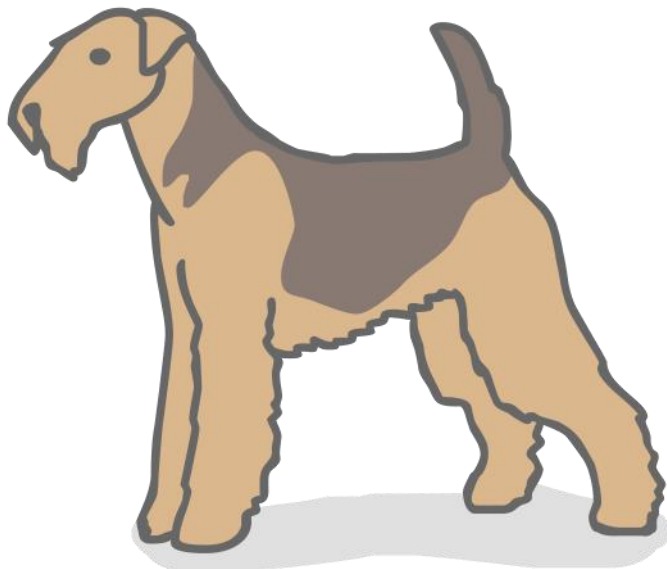


### 12-18 Months

- Up to 30 minutes sustained walking on leash
- Up to 60 minutes informal sniffing and slowly strolling around on leash
- No running on leash
- Puppy can jump up onto platforms that are at elbow height
- Try to reduce jumping on and off furniture – most common age for fractures from this
- Stairs with good traction are okay, so long as your puppy is not running up or down
- 25-30 minutes supervised off leash play with other dogs

### 18 Months – 2 Years

- No limit on sustained leash walking, but should be built up gradually
- Unlimited informal sniffing and slowly strolling around on leash
- Running on leash can be gradually introduced at this age
- No height limit for jumping, but should still be monitored, especially for smaller breeds jumping off furniture
- Unlimited stairs
- Off leash play should always be supervised, with regular breaks, especially if play is getting rough



There is no limit on running that your puppy chooses to do themselves, like running around in the back yard.

This information is intended as a basic guide only - please consult with your veterinarian for accurate recommendations for your dog's breed and individual circumstances.

We also highly recommend checking out internationally renowned experts on puppy raising and breeding, Puppy Culture - the exercise guidelines in this ebook are based on their expertise. Their website is [www.puppyculture.com](http://www.puppyculture.com).

### Mental Exercise

While many people think through the responsibility of filling their new puppy's exercise needs, we often forget that a dog also requires mental exercise.

This is particularly important for puppies, who cannot safely go for long walks to use up their energy.

Here are some ways that you can help exercise your puppy mentally:

- Obedience training
- Feeding their meals in one of the following ways, rather than in a food bowl:
  - In a treat dispensing toy
  - Stuffed in a kong and frozen
  - Wrapped up in layers of paper like a puppy pass the parcel
  - Scattered out in the yard like chicken feed (supervise at first to check your puppy doesn't dig up the lawn)
  - Left hidden around their area as a treasure hunt
  - Hanging from a rope in a milk bottle with holes in it, or tearable paper container like a puppy piñata (low to the ground so the puppy doesn't jump to get at it)
- Rotating your puppy's toys every three days or so to keep them interesting, with only a few out at a time
- Providing a variety of toys - some for chewing, some for chasing, some for destroying, with interesting textures, noises, etc.
- Providing a new activity for your puppy every so often, like a kiddie pool filled with water or sand, or some new object to smell, like bird feathers or a blanket that's been used by a friend's cat

You will find that encouraging your puppy to use their brain will tire them out just as much as physical exercise, and it will also develop their thinking and problem solving skills, making obedience training easier.



## NEXT STEPS

We hope that you have found Beacon's Ultimate Puppy Guide useful for getting started with your puppy. If you would like further assistance, Beacon offers the following services for young puppies:

### Free Puppy Pre-School

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/free-puppy-pre-school](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/free-puppy-pre-school)

For puppies under 12 weeks, or owners yet to bring home their puppy. This two week group class is totally free; bring your puppy along and learn about useful topics like biting, toilet training, home alone training, handling, socialisation and body language.

### Puppy "Set Up For Success" Private Consultation

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/puppy-set-up-for-success](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/puppy-set-up-for-success)

Beacon Dog Trainers offers private consultations for new puppy parents, where we'll meet you and your puppy in the comfort of your own home. During this 1.5 hour session we will help you plan how best to set up your house for your puppy, as well as get you started with some training exercises to start building your puppy's confidence and lay a foundation for their obedience training.

### FREE Weekly Puppy Play & Socialisation Sessions

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/puppy-play-group](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/puppy-play-group)

For puppies under 6 months. Beacon Dog Training runs weekly off leash socialisation sessions, to help your puppy build their confidence and social skills. Beacon Socialisation Sessions are separated by age and size and monitored carefully to ensure every puppy has a safe and enjoyable experience.

### Beacon Puppy School

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/beacon-puppy-school](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/beacon-puppy-school)

For puppies under 16 weeks. Get your puppy's training off to the best start with this five week group class. Beacon Puppy School Part 1 covers beginner's obedience exercises including walking nicely on lead without pulling, coming when called, attention and focus, and more. This course also addresses dealing with common problems like biting, barking, jumping up and chewing.

Even more importantly, Beacon Puppy School covers setting your puppy up for behavioural wellness; you'll learn how to avoid problems like aggression, fears and phobias, separation anxiety and more.

### Beacon Puppy School Part 2

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/beacon-puppy-school-part2](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/beacon-puppy-school-part2)

Designed as a direct follow on for Part 1, this four week course will take your puppy's training to the next level. Topics covered include working around distractions, impulse control in exciting environments and thinking and problem solving skills. You will learn how to train your dog so that they listen when you need it most – not just in your home!

### Beacon Training Club

[www.beacondogtraining.com.au/beacon-dog-training-club](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/beacon-dog-training-club)

For dogs who have completed Beacon Puppy School Parts 1 & 2. If you're enjoying training with your dog and would like to continue on after your puppy classes, Beacon runs a regular training club. Club members pay a small fee to bring their dog along and continue working on whatever aspect of your dog's training is most important to you. Fantastic for those wishing take up dog sports, therapy or service dog work, or just to spend some enjoyable time with your dog.

If you'd like to set your puppy up for success by taking them through multiple services, Beacon offers Premium Packages for puppies. Perks include discounted courses, priority enrolment, additional resources and lifetime support. Featuring three different levels, our premium puppy packages are a fantastic way to get your puppy started with their best paw forward.

You can find more information on our packages here: [www.beacondogtraining.com.au/premium-puppy-packages](http://www.beacondogtraining.com.au/premium-puppy-packages)

Best of luck with your puppy; we hope to see you soon!



**BEACON**  
DOG TRAINING