

# PUPPY CARE 101: A Guide for the 1<sup>st</sup> time puppy owner

You've found a pup and fallen in love. Prepare for the puppy's arrival beforehand so you can concentrate on having fun together after they move in.

## 1. Puppy Proof the Home

To a puppy, your home is an adventure playground. Protect the new puppy and save your belongings by puppy-proofing your pad.

Stow away all chewable objects that can be swallowed. Make electrical cabling safe behind furniture or cover the cables. Block access to rooms where puppy pee or poop can cause damage.

When you think the job's done, get down to the floor level yourself. Check from a puppy's eye view under the sofa and in all of the places you don't usually see. This might sound a bit silly, but it's a great way to make sure you didn't miss anything.

## 2. Register with a Vet

Ask around to find a local vet you feel comfortable with. Seek a vet with a good reputation that likes animals and has modern facilities. Also check the location of the nearest emergency clinic so you know where it is in case you need it

A good clinic will talk you through a puppy shots schedule, deworming, parasite control, and desexing. This is a good test of how helpful they are, and whether you can trust your pup into their care.

## 3. New Puppy Supplies

Like a new baby, a new puppy comes with a shopping list. Instead of a crib, you need a crate and/or things such as a dog bed (or two), food and water bowls, and a collar and leash. Things you need for a puppy include:

- **Dog bed:** Get two, one to use and one as a fill-in when the first needs to get washed
- **Bowls:** Stainless steel or ceramic, food, and water bowls
- **Toys:** Choose items the puppy can't swallow
- **Cleaning supplies:** Disposable paper, disinfectant, and household gloves

- **Crate:** To help with potty training
- **Treats:** A vital part of training
- **Food:** Puppy food right for your dog's size and age
- **Collar and leash:** Get the puppy used to these early
- **Brush and comb:** Start grooming so the puppy accepts it

## 4. Learn about Puppy Care

You need to understand how a puppy things and learns to truly be caring for a puppy. Seek out reputable sources to read up on raising a puppy, such as the Kennel Club, ASPCA, or local animal hospitals. The more you know, the happier your pup will be.

### Puppy Training

Good doggy manners don't come naturally. You must teach your new pup how to behave. Use reward-based training methods. The idea is to give your puppy a treat when they behave well, so they repeat that behavior.

#### Crate Training a Puppy

A crate, like a den, is a safe place for your new puppy. Choose a crate just big enough for the puppy to lie down with their legs outstretched. If you choose one bigger than this, they may toilet in a corner. Place a welcoming bed and a blanket inside, if possible that smells like the dog's mother.

Never shut a puppy in a crate against their will. Instead, make it a happy place by hiding treats inside. When your puppy sniffs out the goodies, praise them. Feed your puppy inside the crate, so they link it to good things.

Once the puppy is happy to go inside, close the door. Praise the puppy for being calm and open the door again. Slowly extend how long the door is shut and heap praise on the puppy's head.

If your puppy cries, don't let them out of the puppy crate as this rewards their noise. Instead, only open the door only when they're quiet, showing them that calmness is good.

Never use a puppy crate to punish your dog or leave your puppy inside for longer than four hours at a stretch.

## Potty Training a Puppy

It's important your puppy learns the right place to go to the toilet.

To do this you:

- Prevent indoor accidents
- Offer lots of toilet breaks
- Praise your puppy when they go in the correct place

Watch your puppy like a hawk and limit their chances to pee indoors. If your puppy squats, whisk them straight outside. When you can't watch your puppy, pop them in the crate.

Offer your puppy a toilet break:

- Every 20-30 minutes
- During walks
- 15 minutes after a meal
- Before playing
- At bedtime

When your puppy squats on the toilet spot, repeat the cue word "toilet" and give your puppy a treat. Repeat this each time your puppy toilets. They'll quickly link peeing in the right place to getting a reward. Simple!

## How to Stop a Puppy from Barking

In an apartment, a puppy barking will disturb your neighbors and make you unpopular. Avoid this by teaching your puppy good habits from the start.

Be careful never to reward your puppy for barking. Unfortunately, shouting at your puppy to be quiet, does this. When your puppy tries those first, exploratory barks, ignore them. If they learn barking isn't rewarded, it becomes less attractive.

Some breeds are born barkers. Know this and wait for a gap in the barking to distract the dog with a squeaky toy. Then call the dog over and train them to pick up the toy.

With a toy in their mouth, they're less likely to bark. Now, reward them for carrying the toy. Pretty soon, your puppy will learn to pick up a toy instead of woofing.

## **Not Chewing Your Stuff**

Puppies need to chew. The trick is to get them to chew their stuff, not yours.

Puppy proofing is very important, so your puppy doesn't get their teeth into your shoes, books, or clothes. Next, you'll need to provide an outlet for your puppy's need to chew.

Give your puppy chew toys or make your own.

Bored puppies are great chewers, so prevent boredom with exercise and play.

## **Basic Commands**

A puppy needs to learn basic commands such as "Sit", "Stay", "Come", and "Look".

**Sit**-Teach "sit" using a treat as a lure. Hold the treat in front of your puppy's nose. Raise the treat in an arc over the puppy's head. As they follow the treat, their butt sinks to the floor. As this happens, say "sit" and reward the puppy.

Repeat this often. The puppy will learn what "sit" means and may even do it on their own in anticipation of a reward.

**Stay**-When teaching "stay", have the dog sit, then wait a few seconds before giving the reward. Stretch out the time your puppy waits to get a treat.

Label this pause with the cue word "stay". Once the puppy is able to sit still for one minute, take one step away then return to the puppy's side.

Add to the distance between you and your pet, gradually stepping further and further away, while your dog stays put.

**Come**-Teach a young puppy to "come" by running away from them! This triggers their natural instinct to stick with their loved ones, like their mother.

As your puppy runs to catch up, say "come" in an excited voice. Praise your puppy and give a treat when they get to you.

**Look**-Get your puppy's attention with a treat. Move the treat in a straight line from the puppy's eyeline up to the bridge of your nose. As your puppy watches the treat say "look". Count to ten, praise your puppy and give them the treat. Extend the time your puppy stares before giving them the reward.

## **Walking on Leash**

Start leash training when you have plenty of time! Walk forward with your puppy on a leash. When your puppy runs ahead, change direction and call to your puppy to come. Walk forward, only for as long as the leash stays slack. As soon as puppy pulls, change direction and call to them. This teaches the puppy that pulling halts progress and gets them nowhere fast. They'll learn it is quicker to get to an exciting place such as the park, by walking to heel.

## Puppy Feeding

Read the label and choose a food that lists named meats as the first four ingredients. What to feed and how much should a puppy eat can be confusing. Always offer puppy food (rather than adult or senior) to a growing pup. The choice of puppy food wet or dry is a personal preference, as both are balanced diets. Use the feeding guide on the pack as a starting point for the amount to feed. Next, you're probably asking yourself **how often to feed a puppy**. As a rule, divide the daily food allowance into four portions spaced out over the day. Once the puppy reaches three months of age, cut them down to three meals per day. At six months, go to twice daily feeding.

## Introducing your Puppy to Other Pets

Introduce a new puppy to existing pets by keeping the puppy under control. Do not ever let your puppy chase other pets.

### How to Introduce Your Puppy to Friends

Have your puppy and dog meet on neutral ground. Praise the adult dog when they react calmly. Make sure both dogs have separate beds, bowls, and toys; and don't leave the two unsupervised. With a cat, pop your puppy in their crate and let the cat sniff around them. Then, when both the cat and puppy are free, keep the pup under control on a collar and leash. Praise your puppy when they ignore the cat. If your dog tries to chase the cat, have them sit and distract them with the "look" command. Never leave a cat and puppy alone unsupervised.

## Common New Owner Puppy Mistakes

When an owner doesn't apply rules consistently it can confuse a puppy. For example, if you decide your puppy isn't allowed on the sofa, apply this rule all the time. If your pup is allowed to come up for cuddles on the weekend, it will confuse them.

A common potty training mistake is to leave your puppy unattended outdoors. They're more likely to play than concentrate on the job at hand. Focus your puppy's mind and praise them for peeing in the right place, strengthening the training.

## **Raising a Puppy While Working**

A puppy needs regular toilet breaks and play. Leaving a puppy for more than four hours at a time isn't fair. If necessary, ask a friend or dog walker to come by to give your puppy a play and toilet break.

To give your puppy more freedom when you're at work, consider using a pen. Put your pup's bed in one corner and puppy pads in another. Then your puppy can relieve themselves in the toilet corner and not soil their bed.

## **FAQ**

### **How long does it take to potty train a puppy?**

If you start at 8 weeks, many pups pick up potty training by 12 -16 weeks. But remember some pups learn faster than others.

### **At what age can I start training a puppy?**

Start with simple commands from 8 weeks old, but as a game. At around 12 weeks, your pup's concentration will be better.

### **Should I Vaccinate My Puppy?**

Yes. Vaccinations are an important protection against deadly diseases. Vaccinations start from around 6 weeks, with repeated doses every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks of age.

### **Is Worming Important?**

Yes. Most puppies are born with worms that can theoretically cause illness in human children. Regular deworming is essential as is protection against other parasites such as heartworm.

### **How Long Can a Puppy Be Left Alone?**

Around four hours is considered the longest.