



New Puppy Guide





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Preparing For Your New Puppy

Once you have decided that a puppy is the right pet for you, there's lots of things you'll need to prepare before their arrival.

The first thing you'll need to do is puppy-proof your home and make sure it's the perfect dog-friendly space, making sure that anything harmful such as cleaning products, cables and anything else they shouldn't chew, is well out of paws' reach! Don't forget that your new furry friend will grow quickly, so stairs or furniture that might be out of reach on the first day might soon become accessible to your pup.

You'll also need to make sure your new arrival has their own space set up, by creating a place for their resting area. A crate can be great, as it gives them a secure base to explore from and can help with their toilet training. Make sure it's in a quiet place where they won't be disturbed or in the way, with lots of blankets and bedding to keep them warm and comfy. If you're planning for your dog to share your room or bed, it's still important to give them a safe area where they can rest at other times, especially if you're not planning on giving them access to the bedroom at all times.

Once you've sorted out their resting space, you'll need to decide where your puppy is going to eat. This should be in a different place to their sleeping area, and remember to store their food somewhere they can't reach!

If there's any areas of your house you don't want your puppy accessing, or if you want to limit when they can access them, you might want to look at installing baby gates. They're a great way to teach your dog where they can and can't go. It'll also help keep them safe and enable your puppy to see you if you go into a room they're not allowed in – which can be very reassuring for them while you're helping them get used to time alone!

If you are going to restrict access to certain areas, make sure you set clear boundaries for your puppy from day one as it's very confusing if they're allowed to go somewhere sometimes but get told off at other times.

Making sure your garden is secure is also really important so that your puppy can play safely outside. Make sure there's nowhere they could squeeze through or dig under a fence, and check for poisonous plants and other garden hazards.



Essential Equipment

As well as puppy-proofing your home, you'll need to make sure you're prepared with all of the supplies your puppy will need. Here are some things that your list could include:

- A crate and/or bed.
- Food and water bowls.
- A complete puppy food.
- Collar and tag (a legal requirement).
- Lead (and harness).
- Car restraint.
- Puppy pads for toilet training.
- Poo bags.
- A brush or comb for grooming.
- Natural dog treats for teething and tooth cleaning (PlaqueOff Powder).
- Blankets.
- Lots of toys.
- Enrichment toys.
- Puppy Kongs.



Harnesses & Leads

Whether I'm training assistance dogs, other peoples dogs or my own dogs, I always prefer to use the dual click design harnesses. These have a clip on the back and chest of the harness, offering two options for leading your puppy. Below are examples of harnesses that I would recommend using or training with:

- Truelove Harnesses.
- Embark Harnesses.
- Ruffwear Harnesses.
- Perfect Fit Harnesses.



I would avoid the Julius-K9 harnesses. Even though these are very commercial and popular with the general public. They are not the best fitting harness, compromising movement. They are also easy for your puppy or dog to back out of making them a slip risk.

Please also be aware of extendable flexi-leads. Puppies are prone to becoming entangled in flexi-leads potentially causing nose, leg, or paw injuries or even strangulation. Extended lead lengths could potentially allow your puppy to dart out in front of cars or cyclists, causing major injuries and accidents. It is not unheard-of for mechanisms to malfunction in extendable flexi-leads resulting in owners having no control over their puppy or dog.



Bringing Your Puppy Home

Bringing your new puppy home is an exciting time, but it can also be overwhelming for both you and your pup – however, there’s lots of things you can do to help your puppy settle into their new home and the world around them:

Take your time: New places can be overwhelming for puppies, so you’ll need to make sure everything is nice and calm at home on the day they arrive. You might want to limit them to one or two rooms in the house at first so they can get used to everything slowly in their own time.

Create a routine: It’s important to get your puppy into a routine as soon as possible to help them settle. Try to keep meal, play, and bed times at the same time every day (as well as walk times once they’re able to go outside).

Calming products: Plug-in diffusers that release calming pheromones can be good for the first few weeks. They can help your puppy feel more relaxed around the home – especially during those first nights! You can also buy calming collars or supplements that might help your puppy if you’re travelling, visiting the vets or when they start venturing out into the world.

Be consistent: Make sure all of your puppy’s training and routine are consistent and that your family all stick to the same rules. If you don’t, your puppy might get confused and frustrated, as well as finding it more difficult to learn.

Set boundaries: Make sure your boundaries are clear from the beginning and stick to them. If you don’t want your puppy to go on the sofa, you need to make sure you and your family keep to this from day one. The same applies to parts of the house where your dog isn’t allowed – make sure it’s clear from the start so they don’t get into habits you don’t want.

Start socialisation: Your puppy’s socialisation period is a key time for them to learn what to expect from life. During this time, it’s really important to start socialising them to the sights, sounds and smells they’re likely to come across later in life. You can begin by socialising your puppy at home and by carrying them out and about with you. They’ll need to be fully covered by their vaccination before they start going for walks or meeting unvaccinated dogs – check with your vet to find out what’s best for your pup.

Give them space: Although it can be tempting to spend every minute with your new pup, they'll need to have time to themselves too. If they need to sleep and rest, give them the space to do so and encourage them to play on their own sometimes to help prevent separation problems later in life.

Consider training classes: It can be a good idea to go along to training classes with your puppy, so you can let them have positive experiences with vaccinated dogs and people in a safe environment. They'll start also learning their basic commands which will be really important later in life! Make sure you choose classes run by trainers who are certified or accredited and use positive reinforcement training methods.

As soon as your puppy has had their vaccinations, they're ready to start training classes. It's best to start training when your dog is still young. Choose a class that uses reward-based training. Avoid any class which use water pistols, rattle cans or similar training gadgets.

Below is a list of puppy and dog trainers in the local area.

- Puppy Training College - www.puppytrainingcollege.com
- TPL Dog Training - www.tpldogtraining.co.uk
- Roma & Friends - www.romaandfriends.co.uk
- Dog Training & Behaviour - www.dogtrainingbehaviour.co.uk

Once you've started to help your puppy settle in, you'll also need to register with your local vet. Take them for a check-up and to book any remaining vaccinations and other treatments they are due. Remember to pop a reminder in your diary for any future vaccinations and worming/flea treatments and don't forget to keep their microchip details up-to-date throughout their lives. Always take the puppies vaccination record card with you to vet appointments.

Remember all puppies must be carried if outside until they have completed their full course of vaccinations.

It's also a good idea to get your new puppy insured as soon as possible. This will help make sure they have all the cover they need in future if they fall ill or become injured. Make sure you shop around and research different policies.

If you have purchased a registered pedigree puppy, make sure you have remembered to register the puppy in your name using the form provided in your puppy pack that should have been provided by the breeder or previous owner. To register the puppy in your name with the Kennel Club, there is a small fee required (currently £17.00).

You will also be required to change the microchip details. In most cases this can be done online using the microchip number registered to your puppy.



Training Your Puppy

Your new puppy will likely need to learn all of their skills from scratch, which means lots of basic training! Start the basics at home, such as teaching your dog recall and sit. This will prepare your puppy for when you start heading out for their first walks, and you can continue their training when you're out and about with more distractions.

Regardless of your puppy's age, you should always use positive, reward-based training when teaching your dog new things. It can help the two of you bond, and your pup will see training as a fun thing to do.

One thing that most people think about when bringing their puppy home, is toilet training! Toilet training is an important part of training your puppy, so it's a good idea get started straight away. Always use positive, reward-based training and never punish your puppy for toileting in the wrong place. Toilet training might take time – some pups can learn toilet training in a few months, while others might take a lot longer. It's important to stick with it and be consistent.

Training is a great way to keep your dog's mind active. It also helps you bond and understand each other.

Without training, the world can be a pretty confusing place for your dog. We all expect dogs to behave in set ways and follow certain rules. Your dog needs to understand those rules before they can stick to them!

It's easier to learn when it's fun. The kindest and most effective method is called "reward-based training" – also called "positive reinforcement".

By rewarding your dog with a treat when they do what you want, they will want to behave that way again.

Repeat this several times. So if you want them to sit, give the cue and give the treat either during the good behaviour or immediately afterwards. Your dog will eventually respond to your command without needing the reward.

Novel objects should be introduced from a distance at first and the pup rewarded for calm behaviour. The pup should be allowed to spend time looking at things. Puppies should not be forced toward objects or into situations. The goal is to teach the puppy to walk on new or different surfaces in a relaxed and confident manner, maintaining a normal or slower pace. “Rushing” over surfaces generally indicates anxiety in the puppy. Surfaces that the puppy should experience include stairs, slick floors, grates, manhole covers etc. The puppy should be allowed to look at, sniff, and investigate the new surface. Puppies should be rewarded for approaching towards and stepping onto new surfaces. A mentor dog may help give confidence to a pup that is timid of new surfaces

When introducing the Puppy to Stairs, when going up, the puppy should be started at the top of the stairs with its front feet on the landing and its back feet on the first step below the landing. The pup may need to be carried up to the top step to start this procedure. When going down, the puppy should be placed at the bottom with its front feet on the ground and its back feet on the first step above the ground. It may need to be carried down to the bottom step to start this procedure. The puppy should be encouraged to take the one step onto the landing or onto the ground. The puppy should be moved further up or down the steps as it becomes more confident. Puppies should be rewarded for stepping up and down stairs. The reward should be given on the stairs. The frequency of rewards will decrease as the puppy becomes familiar with the surface. Puppies that tend to rush stairs should be paused and rewarded frequently for being on the stairs. Puppies need to develop a calm, steady pace on stairs.

When teaching the puppy to be confident around traffic, the puppy should be exposed at a distance far enough from the traffic to maintain confidence. First exposures should be to a low-traffic street in a residential area. Only after the puppy is totally comfortable at the first level should the puppy be exposed to streets with higher traffic levels. When first introducing walking, place yourself between the traffic and your puppy.

Puppies should be acclimated to travelling in vehicles. If the puppy seems stressed or becomes car sick it is even more important that future introductions are careful and a positive experience happens. To lessen the chance of the puppy becoming motion sick in its first experiences of car riding, it is helped by keeping the vehicle quite cool helps. Also, not allowing the puppy to see out of the vehicle may help prevent carsickness. Sometimes it takes experimenting with the puppy riding in different areas in the vehicle e.g. front vs rear, in a crate or out, to find the best spot for a nauseous puppy. The puppy should not be fed a meal right before a car trip. The puppy’s first introduction to the car should be with the engine turned off. The puppy may be lifted into the car, placed where it will be expected to ride and rewarded with food for calm behaviour. Several such exposures before turning the engine on will create a positive association for the puppy. If the vehicle is low enough, the pup can be gently assisted to climb into the vehicle and rewarded inside the vehicle. Once the pup is comfortable in the vehicle, the engine may be turned on and the puppy rewarded for calm behaviour. As the puppy grows, it should be exposed to riding in different vehicles and in different locations.

As your puppy grows, you will want to introduce lead walking. It is essential that you and your puppy learn how to loose lead walk. Puppy classes are perfect for teaching you and your puppy how to start loose lead walking. Getting this wrong during puppy months can result in a dog pulling on their lead in adulthood. If this happens it is harder to correct.

Top Tip: go to puppy classes to learn basic and essential life skills for puppies.



Crate Training

A crate is a terrific training and management tool. It is useful for house-training, brief alone-time, settling, and any form of travel. Most importantly, a crate teaches your dog to hold it when he has to go to the bathroom. A crate helps your dogs in many ways, and saves your carpets.

Using a crate is not cruel. A crate can be your dog's favourite place in the world. Use treats, praise, and toys to make your dog love his crate.

Just remember never to use the crate for more than 3-4 hours at a time, except for bed-time.

Getting your dog used to the crate:

- Step 1. Begin crate training right away, preferably the first day your dog is in your home.
- Step 2. Throw small tasty treats into the crate one at a time. Praise your dog when he goes in to get the treat.
- Step 3. When your dog is comfortable going into the crate, practice closing the door for 1-2 seconds, then treat him through the door. Let him back out. Repeat this step many times, gradually building to 10 seconds.
- Step 4. Stuff a Kong with something very yummy or use a special bone that will take a lot of time to chew. Put the treats in the crate. Shut the door. Move about the house normally. Let your dog back out after 5 minutes or when he finishes his treat. Don't make a fuss over him. Repeat this step several times, varying the length of your absences from 1 to 20 minutes.
- Step 5. Next, leave your dog in the crate with something delicious while you leave the house for short errands, like getting the mail or watering the garden. Gradually build your absences.



Toilet Training Your Puppy

House training is one of the first things you'll need to teach your puppy. The key is for you and your puppy to get into a good, daily routine and stick to the training. All puppies learn at different paces. Some will pick up toilet training within a few days but others might take much longer. Even if your pup is a quick learner, they're bound to have accidents at first.

Take your puppy out first thing in the morning for a toilet break and encourage them to poo and wee outside. It can help to have your puppy on a lead at first to avoid any chance of them running around exploring and not focusing on the fact that a toilet break is due. It's also helpful to use a word that your puppy can associate with going to the loo, like 'hurry up' or 'toilet'.

Take your puppy out every 2-3 hours during the day. Remember that your puppy only has a little bladder and they're not used to having to hold it in. They'll be able to hold it better as they get older and will need fewer toilet breaks.

Give your puppy a toilet break shortly after each meal, as they'll need a poo not long after eating. It's a good idea to take them outside when they've just woken up, too. Puppy play can also make them need the loo, especially if they get really excited. Take them outside straight afterwards or give them a break halfway through a play session.

When your puppy does go to the toilet outside give them lots of praise and a high-value reward, like a healthy snack. This will let your puppy know that you're really happy with them for going to the loo outside. They'll be more likely to want to do it again, so they can get more fuss and treats.

Never punish your puppy for having an accident inside the house. It's not their fault: they simply haven't been given enough opportunity to go to the toilet outside. Clean the area thoroughly and use it as a valuable learning experience!

It's a good idea to learn the signs your puppy may show before going to the toilet e.g. circling and sniffing the floor. This is your cue to take them outside and praise them for going to the toilet where you want them to. Try to use the same spot outside and immediately reward the act.

Always take your puppy out after meals, after drinking, after waking up, after playing, after being in crate, after training, after becoming excited and before bed.



Exercising Your Puppy

Your puppy will have very different exercise needs to an adult dog, and it's important to take their exercise easy at first. As a general rule, it's good to aim for five minutes of exercise per month of your puppy's age, twice a day – just remember that every puppy is different, so you may need to cut this down if your puppy is struggling. You can still keep your puppy happy and entertained in lots of other ways, for example playing games or trying a puzzle feeder.

Before you start exercising your puppy in the big wide world, you must make sure that their vaccinations are fully up to date, in order to keep them safe and healthy.

Exercising your puppy is crucial, but it's also important not to over-exercise them while they are growing. This is because their joints need time to mature, and their growth plates need to fuse before they are ready for high intensity exercise/high impact activities. Too much exercise while your pup is young could result in permanent damage to their joints and bones, which has the potential to cause conditions such as arthritis and hip dysplasia. On the other hand, restricting their exercise too much can lead to boredom and frustration, so it's important to do what feels right for your pup based on their age, size and breed:

The older your puppy gets, the more exercise they can do. Just remember to always keep an eye on them and encourage them to rest if they show signs of getting tired.

It's important to know roughly how long your dog will be growing for, because until they are fully grown, their joints and growth plates will be at risk of damage if they do too much exercise. Most dogs are fully grown by one year of age, however larger breeds such as Labradors can take as long as 18 months to 2 years to reach full size.

Feeding your puppy a healthy diet is just as important as exercise when it comes to their growing bones, because carrying additional weight on their body can put pressure on their joints.

You may have heard about the 5 minute rule (**5 minutes of exercise per month of age**) – it's important to know that there's no scientific evidence behind this rule, and although it might work for some, it's not appropriate for most puppies.

Play, short walks and training are all great activities to build your puppy's fitness, strength, confidence and social skills. Here are some top tips for exercising your pup:

Play, play, play: Playing with your pup at home and in the garden is a great way to keep them physically and mentally active. Just keep in mind that they also need lots of sleep, so allow them to rest when they get tired. Take a look at our PDSA pet store for suitable toys for your puppy.

Walking: Walks are a lovely way to exercise your pup, but it's crucial that they're fully vaccinated before they start going out. Puppy walks are mostly about exploring the world and experiencing new sights, sounds and smells in a positive way. Always build your pup's walking stamina gradually and if they get tired, stop to let them rest until they're ready to walk again – and don't forget to leave them with enough energy to get home!

Running around: It's fine to let your puppy run around freely at their own pace at home and in your garden, but it's not appropriate to take them out for a run because it's too intense for their growing bones. If you are keen to take your dog running once they are fully grown, check out our blog on how to get running with your dog.

Training: Teaching your pup some basic commands is a great way to keep their mind stimulated, and can be just as tiring as playing/going for a walk. Remember to keep sessions short and enjoyable and let your pup rest once they've had enough. For more information, take a look at our advice on basic training for puppies.

Thinking activities: Keeping your puppy's mind active is just as important as physical exercise. You can do this by making them puzzle feeders and snuffle mats – it's a great way to keep them out of trouble!

Just like a human child, your puppy's bones and joints need time to mature. If you over-exercise your puppy while they are growing, they might damage their growth plates and joints, which can lead to conditions such as early onset arthritis and hip dysplasia.

Your puppy is unlikely to show any obvious signs of being over-exercised until damage has been done to their joints, which is why it's important to regulate them. Watch them on walks and get them to rest when they show any signs of being tired. If, like most puppies, they are highly excitable and don't show signs of being tired, you'll need to make sure they rest every now and again by putting them on the lead.

There are a few things you can do to keep your puppy safe while they're exercising:

- Make sure they are fully vaccinated before exercising them in public spaces.
- Limit high impact exercise such as jumping, twisting and skidding.
- Keep exercise sessions short and allow them to rest as much as they need.
- If you notice them getting tired but not stopping to rest, pop them on their lead and take them out of the situation to recover for a few minutes.
- Cover any slippery floors in your home to protect their joints.
- Avoid long walks, hikes and activities such as running and cycling until they are fully grown, and always build their fitness up slowly.



Feeding Your Puppy

With so much choice available, it can be tricky to know what to feed your new puppy. Diet is really important when keeping their weight healthy, so we'd always recommend a complete, commercial puppy food, which is labelled for puppies rather than adults. Puppies need a particular level of nutrients compared to adults to help them grow, so finding an appropriate puppy food is essential.

You would have been advised on what food your pup was already eating and how much. It's a good idea to continue with the same food initially. If in doubt, speak to your vet for advice on the best puppy food for your dog to make sure you pick one that will suit their needs as they grow. If you need to change your puppy's food at any point, make sure you do it slowly to avoid tummy upsets. Don't forget to weigh your puppy regularly to check how quickly they're growing and that you're feeding them the correct amount.

It is wise to gradually build up the puppies food quantity up over time:

- 1-3 months - 0.5 cups daily.
- 4-5 months - 0.75 cups daily.
- 6-7 months - 1 cup daily.
- 8-9 months - 1.25 cups daily.
- 10-11 months - 1.5 cups daily.
- 12-17 months - 1.75 cups daily.
- 18 months plus - 2 cups daily.

The above is just a rough guide, food quantities may have to be adjusted dependent on your puppies weight.

Create a feeding routine that suits both you and your puppy. Some owners feed their puppy three times a day, others only feed twice.

Any concerns over food portions or your puppies weight, its is recommended you speak to your vet.



Barking

Barking generally falls into five categories. To cut down on any kind of barking, give your dog plenty of exercise and arrange for mental stimulation when he is left alone. Feed him using puzzle toys or stuffed Kongs.

Boredom barking happens when a dog is left alone often and doesn't get enough exercise or mental stimulation. Dogs are like kids. If you don't give them something fun to do, they entertain themselves — often in ways we don't appreciate. So, step up the doggie workouts and get out the puzzles.

Separation anxiety barking is characterized by constant home-alone barking usually coupled with other behaviours such as house soiling, visible anxiety upon departure and arrival, and destruction around doors and windows. In this case, barking is a symptom of the underlying anxiety, which is what needs to be addressed. Call us right away if you think your dog suffers from separation anxiety.

Barrier frustration barking often comes with posturing such as snarling or baring of teeth. The three most common occurrences are: Dogs left in a backyard too long, dogs in cars, or dogs on leash that would be perfectly comfortable with whatever they are barking at (most often other dogs) if they were off leash.

Demand barking occurs in dogs that have learned that barking gets them what they want — balls thrown, doors opened, dinner, or attention. To curb demand barking, immediately stop rewarding the barking: Ignore your dog or walk away when he barks. Pick times when he is quiet, tell him “Nice quiet,” and pet or treat him. If your dog barks when you work at the computer or talk on the phone, pre-empt his behaviour. Settle him in his crate or on his bed with a toy or stuffed Kong before you sit down to work.

Watchdog barking is triggered by sights and sounds such as passers-by, slamming car doors, or a cat on the lawn. Watchdog barkers were sentries in a previous life. Teach your dog to respond to noises by getting a toy or barking once, then coming to find you. Keep blinds closed and don't put your dog's bed or his confinement area anywhere near a window or bay door. Crating your dog can be a great way to signal to him that he can take time off from his patrol duties.



Play Biting

Puppies are little biting machines. They bite things that move, things that don't move, each other, your hands, anything. Not only is this normal, it is an important part of their development.

Since puppies are born without hands, the only way they have to explore the world is with their mouths. And you may have noticed that your puppy is quite the explorer. Everything goes into those little mouths, including your fingers, and those baby teeth are like little needles. Ouch! It's completely normal for puppies in their litters to bite each other in play. When they engage in this "bitey-face" game, they learn a little about how to inhibit the strength of their biting. If one puppy bites another too hard, that puppy probably will yelp and stop playing. If that happens enough times, the biter learns to apply less pressure. But puppies are covered with fur and we're not. The same level of bite pressure that is appropriate during puppy play can hurt us and even break the skin. The inhibition they learn in the litter helps, but it's usually not enough to teach young puppies how to properly interact with humans.

So how do you stop the nipping? Some trainers will recommend that you hold your puppy's mouth closed, yell "No," or even push their cheeks into their teeth so that they hurt themselves. If you look at it from your puppy's point of view, this may teach them not to nip, but it also teaches them not to trust. They're not being malicious when they nip you, they are simply doing what they are instinctively programmed to do. There are much better ways to deal with it that don't involve hurting your puppy and making her fearful of your hands coming near her face. When puppies are biting us in play, it's because they are trying to interact with us in the only way they know how. What they want out of the behaviour is for us to interact back. If you're saying, "No, don't, stop, cut it out!" and moving your hands all around to stay out of their reach, to the puppy you're simply playing back and encouraging them to go after those flying hands. They don't understand your words and moving targets are for chasing.

The message you want to give your puppy instead is, "When you nip me, I will immediately STOP interacting with you." Try a sharp yelp, a sound that unmistakably means, "Ow, that HURT!" Many puppies will stop and draw back when they hear that sound. It may only be a second before they come right back at you, but if you get even a momentary hesitation, the message is being understood. Some puppies respond to a yelp by biting harder because these pups interpret it as a "squeaky toy" game. If you do not get that momentary hesitation or your pup seems delighted by the sound, don't use the yelp. Stop playing immediately. Don't wave your hands around, but do remove them from your puppy's reach. When your pup is calm, you can slowly offer one hand to her mouth. At this point many puppies will lick the hand. This, or any behaviour that is NOT biting, should be rewarded with continued attention. But if you get another nip, yelp (if that works for your pup) and this time move away from your puppy altogether. Let her know "that behaviour doesn't get my attention, it makes me go away." This is not something that your puppy is going to learn right away. She is biting because it is something she was programmed to do. At birth it's as unconscious a behaviour to her as breathing. She has to learn first to connect to it as a voluntary behaviour that she can control. That's why the initial pull-away after the yelp is often followed by another nip (if your hands are within nipping distance). It will take a lot of consistent repetition before your puppy is able to get to the stage where she lunges to nip, but inhibits herself before making contact.

When dealing with children and ankle-biting, it's hard for young children not to squeal, dance, wave their hands around and run when puppy is nipping at them. This, of course, delights the puppy and encourages her to continue her "playing." In this case, or if your puppy is persistent and continues to nip at your ankles when you walk away from her, let her drag a leash in the house (when supervised). After a nipping incident, you can tether the leash to a doorknob and walk out of her reach, or bring your children out of her reach. When she has calmed down, slowly and calmly approach and offer a hand for a lick. Licks (or non-biting behaviour) get praise and continued attention. Nips make the people go away again. Make sure to supervise children so that they don't turn this into a rousing "tag" game, winding the puppy up and frustrating her! Movements away from her must be immediate and smooth, and movements towards her must be calm and purposeful. No Rough-Housing With Hands! The most important thing you can do when your puppy is a little land-shark is to make sure that nobody in her world is rough-housing or wrestling with her with their hands. If this is happening, then no matter what else you do you are confusing her with a game that in essence tells her, "Go for my hands!" Most puppies love to rough-house, and you can still do it. Just substitute a toy for your hands. While she's going after the toy if clumsy puppy misses and nips your skin or clothing, you can yelp (if that works for your puppy), drop the toy and stop playing. That will also help teach her to be more careful with her mouthing. The Bottom Line If you do absolutely nothing, chances are your puppy will outgrow this stage on her own. But if you are consistent, persistent and patient, reinforcing calm behaviour and withdrawing attention for mouthy behaviour, you may survive your dog's puppyhood with less tooth marks!

WHAT NOT TO DO

These can cause fear of people or fear-aggression.

Never hit Puppy.



Never yell at Puppy.



Never hold Puppy's mouth closed.



Never push Puppy.

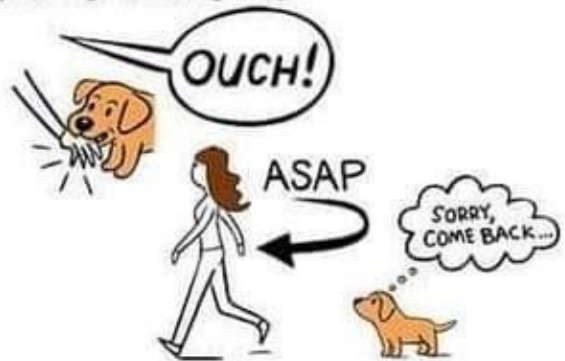


Never use shake cans, spray bottles or noise makers to stop unwanted behaviors.



WHAT TO DO

When Puppy nips, let out a high-pitched "ouch," cry or yelp, then immediately remove your attention by turning or walking away.



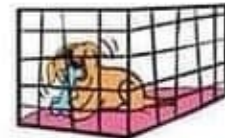
Count to ten, then re-engage calmly and praise Puppy for keeping Puppy's teeth away from you and for being sweet. Repeat if Puppy nips again.



OR...Replace your hand with a chew item.



MANAGEMENT is key in preventing puppy nipping.



Puppies play and explore the world through the use of those tiny sharp teeth. They are teething, so their mouths are on fire. The act of chewing and nipping can ease their pain and discomfort.

It's our job to teach our puppies that teeth on humans is not okay, but we must do it positively. Scaring them can cause normal puppy nipping to turn into fear of us and the world, and in many cases, lead to aggression.

Top Tip: Freeze items such as carrots, bananas and twisted wet flannels (one that you don't want to use again). The puppy will quite happily chew on these. The cold sensation will soothe their gums while they are teething. By freezing treats they will also last longer.



Puppy Development & Socialisation

Socialisation is really important for your puppy as it helps them to become a happy, friendly and confident adult. Your puppy will have their ‘socialisation period’ in their first few months of life and it’s really important that during this time they have lots of positive new experiences to help them understand what to expect, and how to react, in a variety of situations later on in life.

Between the ages of 4 weeks and 12 weeks, your puppy will have a ‘socialisation period’ – this is the time when your pup’s brain learns about new things, and is developing to be resilient and flexible. This time has a big influence on your puppy, as it teaches them about the world they live in and how to adapt, cope with and enjoy normal, everyday events. A well-socialised puppy knows how to react and respond to a range of different situations and is more likely to be happy and confident as an adult.

Your puppy’s socialisation period is really important, as their ability to learn about new things doesn’t last forever. Sadly, dogs that haven’t been socialised at a young age tend to be more anxious and unsure about how to react, resulting in behaviour problems and fears and phobias. This can have a big impact on your dog’s quality of life.

Fortunately, these problems can be avoided in many cases by helping your dog with the right socialisation early on – as well as continuing with consistent positive reward-based training and ensuring that all of their welfare needs are being met throughout their lives.

Your puppy’s socialisation period is key to their development, and there’s lots of things you can do to help them learn about the world around them in a positive way – including sights, sounds, smells, places, new people and new dogs.

Before you socialise your puppy with other dogs, always ask your vet when your puppy will be protected by their vaccinations. Your puppy shouldn’t go to certain places or mix with unvaccinated dogs until they’re fully covered by their vaccines. Sadly, diseases covered by the vaccines, such as Parvovirus and Distemper, can be fatal for puppies if they catch them. It is, however, important that your puppy still gets to experience new situations as soon as possible, so you can start socialising your puppy in gardens (as long as they’re not used by unvaccinated dogs), you can carry them when you’re out and about so they can meet new people and experience new places, and you can allow them to meet fully vaccinated older dogs. Your vet can give you further advice on what’s safe to do with your puppy before their vaccine course is complete.

Puppies' brains develop fast, so it's crucial that your puppy learns about everyday experiences during their first months of life. Your puppy will grow and change a huge amount during this time, and their socialisation period will play a big part in their development.

To help you understand how they develop within those first few crucial months, we've put together a few key development milestones that your puppy will go through:

- **0 - 4 weeks.**

When your puppy was born, they were kept in a special, warm place at their breeders with their mother and littermates. They can smell, but not see or hear when they are born, so at this stage they are completely reliant on their mother.

Puppies start to crawl from around 1-2 weeks old. Their eyes open from around 10-12 days and their vision will continue to develop over the next few days to weeks. Their hearing develops when their ear canals open at around 14-16 days.

By 4 weeks old, puppies are usually able to walk and start exploring their environment.

The puppies are subjected to early neurological stimulation handling to help produce resilient well balanced dogs.

- **4 - 8 weeks.**

Your puppy's socialisation period starts at 4 weeks old. At this age your puppy can move, see and hear, and will start investigating the world around them.

Your puppy would have already started to learn about the world around them in a positive way before they come home with you. This includes meeting people – both in the household and new people – and making sure your puppy learns about daily routines.

Many puppies will also have their first trip to the vet while with their breeder. This will often include a health check, first vaccination and implanting a microchip.

- **8 - 12 weeks.**

Your puppy will often come home with you around 8 weeks old. During this time, your puppy will be in their socialisation period, so you'll need to make sure they have positive new experiences and get used to things they might come across later in life.

- **12 weeks onwards.**

The benefits of good socialisation will stay with your puppy, but it's important to make sure you continue to teach your dog about new experiences in a positive way, and keep up with their training throughout their lives.

To help you get started with socialising your puppy, here are our top socialising tips:

Make sure that their experiences are good: Socialisation needs to be positive, so you'll need to find ways to make sure your puppy enjoys the new things they come across. You could do this by using treats, toys and praise. If your puppy has negative experiences during their socialisation period, this can make them nervous when they come across the same thing later in their life, or it can even result in more generalised fears. If your puppy seems anxious or afraid at any point, remove them from the situation and take them to a place where they seem calm and happy. Try again with the experience later or another day, staying positive and keeping your puppy further away until they are comfortable.

- **Aim for a variety of experiences:** Allow your puppy to experience and meet a wide variety of people, sounds, smells and places to make sure they get used to all of the things they might come across during their life with you.

- **Build up gradually:** Everything will be new to your puppy when they're young, so it's easy for them to get overwhelmed. Make sure you introduce new things gradually – start off with a trip to a local row of shops before you go to a busy town centre, take them on a quiet road before a busy road and so on. When your puppy is calm and relaxed, give them praise and treats so that they enjoy the experience.

- **Don't introduce too many new experiences in one day:** Instead, spread them out over several days if needed, aiming for short, positive experiences which you can repeat until your puppy is happy with them. You may find that your puppy becomes tired, stressed or very over-excited when you're out with them. At these times, it's best to take them home for a rest then head back out once they're refreshed.

- **Time alone:** It's important that your puppy gets used to being without you. Leave your puppy for a few minutes at first, such as while you're making yourself a cup of tea. Gradually build up the time until they're happy to be left in the house on their own for longer periods.

- **Keep a close eye on your puppy when playing with other dogs:** Don't let their play get too boisterous or over-excited. Try to stick with friendly dogs that you know to start with and watch the body language of both dogs – take your puppy away if it's starting to get a bit too much for either of them. Remember, it's important for your puppy to only meet fully vaccinated dogs until they've completed their own vaccination course.

- **Don't forget about routine:** Although it's really important to help your puppy experience lots of different things, it's also essential they get used to your usual rhythm and routine. While it can be tempting to play with your new pup all day, they also need to get used to their own time, as well as their regular bedtimes and meal times. Even if you've taken some 'pup-ernity' leave to help your new arrival settle in, set aside a couple of days each week for you and your puppy to stick to your regular daily schedule, so they know what to expect and can learn how to be happy on their own.

- **Consider puppy classes or puppy socialisation groups:** This will give them a great chance to meet other puppies and get used to a range of other dogs. Ask whether your vet practice runs puppy socialisation groups and, if not, ask where the nearest one is. Don't forget to check which vaccines your puppy needs before they go to their first class to make sure they stay safe!

Get your puppy used to being in the car: Travel training and socialising your dog with the car is really important, as it can help your dog to stay relaxed on car journeys. Remember to always make sure they're safe and secure when in the car.

Socialisation CDs and playlists: These are a great way to get your puppy used to noises they will hear during their lifetime – especially if your puppy is unlikely to hear them in real life during that all important socialisation period. Lots of dogs are scared of fireworks because they didn't have the chance to hear them when young. Using a CD or playlist you can help your puppy get used to noises like this so that they don't find them scary later on. Many puppies and dogs find fireworks stressful. It's good to start helping them now to prepare for it. Go onto sources such as YouTube and play the sound of fireworks. Play them very quietly to begin with in the background when your puppy is playing or training. Gradually, over a few sessions, start to increase the volume. Eventually, the sound of fireworks will become non-scary white noise for the puppy.

Make sure your puppy gets used to their collar: Your puppy will need to wear a collar and tag when they're out for their walks, as it's a legal requirement, so it's best introduced early in life to help them get used to wearing one. If you're thinking of using a harness for your dog, it's a good idea to help your puppy get used to the fit and feel of it by letting them wear one around the house for a few hours. That way they'll be ready to take their first steps into the big wide world as soon as their vaccine coverage is complete!

As well as socialisation, your puppy will also benefit from starting their training as soon as possible when they come home with you. When training, make sure you use reward-based methods, and stay consistent with the words and actions you use and the behaviours you're asking for. Key skills to focus on include toilet training and coming when called (recall). You might also want to consider crate training.

Further Reading

If you would like read more information about raising and training your puppy, there are two books which we would recommend:

- Easy Peasy Puppy Squeezy by Steve Mann.
- Life Skills for Puppies by Helen Zulch.



You & Your Puppy

We hope that you and your puppy grow happily together experiencing fun times and happiness. Yes puppies can be hard work but putting in the time and effort now will result in a better relationship between you and your puppy. Hopefully creating a bond, great affection, and fun times that all puppy owners wish for when purchasing a puppy.

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