PUPPY HELP

FOR WHEN YOU GET HOME

WELCOME HOME Your puppy will adjust best with a calm welcome, a predictable routine, close supervision, and plenty of sleep.

Start With a Schedule

Dogs thrive on a schedule. They like to know what is coming, and organizing your puppy's day into a routine will produce much better results. Have a family discussion about the rules and schedule. Do not allow a baby puppy to do something you would not want an adult dog to do - even when the cuteness is overwhelming!

Housebreaking

How your puppy was raised before coming home influences how quickly housebreaking progresses. A puppy raised with a clearly defined potty area already has an important head start, but consistency in the new home is still essential.

Begin With a Small Space

Giving a young puppy full run of the house is a mistake. Gate off a small area where your family spends time, ideally near the door you will use for potty trips. Keep your puppy supervised. As your puppy matures and succeeds consistently, gradually allow more space. Expect to use a boundary for at least the first 8-16 weeks.

Potty Pads

If your long-term goal is outdoor pottying, indoor potty pads can create an extra training step. Whenever practical, take your puppy directly outdoors and consistently reward pottying in the correct place.

When to Take Your Puppy Out

- Immediately after waking up and after every nap
- After every meal and active play session
- Whenever your puppy stops, sniffs the floor, or begins to circle
- At least every two hours at first

A common starting guideline is one hour between potty breaks for each month of age (for example, about two hours for a two-month-old puppy). This is only a general daytime guideline; supervision and your individual puppy's signals matter most.

Meals, Water, and Routine

Feed at set times rather than free-feeding. If your puppy does not eat, offer food again at the next scheduled meal. A consistent feeding routine makes potty timing more predictable.

Young puppies need reliable access to water during the day. For nighttime planning, ask your veterinarian what is appropriate for your puppy's age, size, health, climate, and bedtime routine.

Use the Same Potty Routine

- Go out through the same door.
- Take your puppy to the same outdoor potty area.
- Use a leash so potty time stays focused and your puppy learns to potty while leashed.
- Potty first; use the walk or playtime afterward as the reward.
- Go outside together in rain, wind, heat, or cold. Keep the leash, shoes, coat, and umbrella near the door.
- Celebrate outdoor success immediately with praise and a small treat.

When Accidents Happen

Setbacks will happen. Never yell, frighten, hit, rub your puppy's face in the accident, or otherwise punish the puppy. If you catch the puppy in the act, calmly take them outside to finish and reward success there. Clean accidents thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner. Indoor accidents usually mean the puppy needed closer supervision, a smaller space, or a more frequent schedule.

QUICK TIP Supervision indoors is the key. If you cannot supervise your puppy completely, use a properly sized crate or safe puppy pen.

Biting and Chewing

Puppies explore the world with their mouths. Keep a variety of safe toys and appropriate chews available. Puppy-proof the home and remove anything you do not want chewed. When your puppy mouths the wrong item, calmly say the puppy's name and redirect to a toy or activity.

Puppy-Proof the Family

- Close bedroom and closet doors.
- Keep children's toys, dirty clothes, shoes, eyeglasses, remotes, and cords out of reach.
- Place trash cans under sinks or otherwise secure them.
- Supervise all chews and choose products appropriate for your puppy's size and age.
- Rotate toys: put half away, then exchange them every week or two so they feel new again.

When biting becomes frantic or nonstop, your puppy may be overtired. A wild burst of running and biting often means it is time for a calm, supervised nap.

Crate Training

Crate training is one of the most useful tools for housebreaking and for keeping a puppy safe when complete supervision is not possible. A small, secure puppy pen can serve a similar purpose. Crate comfort is also valuable later during travel, veterinary care, recovery after surgery, or household events.

Make the Crate Positive

- Use the crate for naps and nighttime sleep while the puppy is learning the household routine.
- Offer treats, meals, and calm praise in or near the crate.
- Choose a properly sized crate: enough room to stand, turn, and lie down comfortably, but not a large area with a separate potty corner.
- Never use the crate as punishment.
- Remove collars or harnesses when crated if they could catch on the crate.

Bedtime Crating

Begin the first night with the puppy in a crate if that is where you want the adult dog to sleep. Start with the crate directly beside your bed so you can reassure the puppy and hear when a potty trip is needed. A breathable crate cover can make the space feel darker and calmer. Use simple, safe bedding appropriate for your puppy's chewing habits.

A heartbeat comfort toy, such as a Snuggle Puppy, may help soothe a young puppy. Treat it as a sleep aid rather than a rough-play toy, and inspect it regularly for damage.

As your puppy becomes comfortable sleeping in the crate, gradually move it toward its permanent location. Some families use one crate in the bedroom and a second in the main living area.

Sleep Training

An alarm can help teach a predictable nighttime potty routine. At first, set it shortly before your puppy usually wakes to potty and take the puppy out promptly. Once the alarm consistently wakes the puppy first, gradually move it later in

small increments. Many puppies begin sleeping through the night around 12-14 weeks, although size, age, health, and the individual puppy all make a difference.

NIGHTTIME Keep nighttime potty trips quiet and boring: leash on, potty, gentle praise, then straight back to bed.

Car Rides

Have your puppy ride safely in a secured crate or properly fitted car-safety harness. Practice at least once a week, even if you only drive around the block. Some puppies experience motion sickness and improve as they mature. Never allow a puppy to roam loose in the vehicle, and keep the puppy out of the front seat because an airbag can cause fatal injury.

Socialization and Safe Exposure

The first 16 weeks are an especially important period for helping a puppy form positive associations with people, places, sounds, surfaces, handling, and everyday life. Socialization should be thoughtful and positive - not overwhelming.

Balance Exposure With Health

Do not isolate your puppy until the vaccination series is complete, but be smart about exposure. Ask your veterinarian about local disease risk and safe outings. Until your veterinarian says otherwise, avoid high-dog-traffic areas such as dog parks, pet-store floors, communal relief areas, and rest-stop dog areas. Carry your puppy or use a clean blanket in a cart where permitted.

Ideas for Positive Outings

- Short car rides and calm visits with healthy, vaccinated dogs you know
- Watching children's ball games, outdoor markets, or neighborhood activity from a safe distance
- Pet-friendly stores while carried or riding on a clean blanket in a cart, where store policy permits
- New household sounds, surfaces, hats, umbrellas, grooming tools, and gentle handling
- Aiming for three new people and three new places each week, adjusted to your puppy's comfort

Keep sessions short. If your puppy shuts down, refuses treats, tries to hide, or cannot recover, create more distance or leave. Fear periods are normal; never force interaction beyond the puppy's comfort threshold.

Training

Enroll in a well-run puppy kindergarten class as soon as the facility and your veterinarian say it is appropriate. These classes teach the humans as much as the puppy by building communication, bonding, and good habits. Be prepared to provide vaccination records.

A quality puppy class typically introduces sit, stay, wait, handling, polite play, housebreaking support, and solutions for biting and chewing. Early training can jump-start your puppy's socialization and help your family use the same cues and expectations.

Puppy Exercise

Choose exercise that fits your puppy's age, size, breed, and physical development. Favor short, puppy-led play and exploration over forced-distance running, repetitive jumping, or strenuous activity. Stop before your puppy becomes overtired, and ask your veterinarian about an appropriate exercise plan.

THE BIG PICTURE A well-balanced puppy day includes potty breaks, short play and training sessions, safe social exposure, meals, and lots of sleep.

Exercise resource: https://madcapuniversity.com/blogs/articles-and-product-reviews/puppy-fitness-that-fits-the-puppy