



A New Puppy

Puppies are incredibly fun and wonderful. However, they require a lot of time, patience, and responsibility.



Here are some tips to make the transition to your home easier and start your new puppy off right.

Family Discussion

Unless you live alone, the first thing to do is have a discussion with everyone who lives in the house. Decide the type and size of dog you want. Learn the needs of different breeds so you can determine the best fit for your household.

You don't want a working breed if your schedule allows little time for exercise. You may not want a large dog if you live in a small apartment.

Unlike cats, dogs come in many sizes and types. For the best success, match the dog to your lifestyle. In addition, consider the fact that large dogs cost more to feed and most medicines are more expensive.

The next thing to discuss is who is going to do the different chores. Who will feed the pup, who will walk it, and who will get up in the middle of the night? Having this discussion ahead of time will make things easier once that cute, adorable puppy joins you.

You also need to discuss what words you want to teach your pup. This sounds silly, but it's important and many people don't think about it. The pup ends up being confused.

Dad says "down" when he wants the puppy to stop jumping up and Mom says lie "down" when she wants the pup to lay flat. See the problem. Decide ahead of time what words you want to use for what situations and everybody sticks to those. Consistency is essential.

You also need to decide what rules you want the puppy to learn. Are you going to allow the pup up on your bed or on your furniture? Do you want him to do it when he's full-grown? Decide now what the rules will be and make sure everyone in the house agrees with them and will follow through. Otherwise, the puppy will quickly learn to get away with things with certain people.



If you have children, explain to them that the puppy may be scared the first few days. They need to speak quietly and move slowly around the pup. They can hold him, but have to be gentle.

It's best if they don't invite all their friends over the first day to see the new puppy. Ideally, your children are at least 5 or 6 years old before getting a puppy.

Supplies

Here's your shopping list for that new puppy:

- Food and water dishes (not plastic)
- Puppy food – get the same brand that he's been used to eating
- Chew toys – including something to stuff with food
- Crate
- Collar and leash
- You may need a gate if you have to block off a room
- Toothbrush and paste - yes, puppies need to learn to have their teeth brushed
- Brush and nail trimmers
- Odor neutralizer to clean up messes (just in case)

Final Prep

Before heading out to pick up the puppy, you need to puppy-proof your house. Pick up anything your pup might reach. Be assured, he will chew on EVERYTHING!

Make sure any plants in the house are safe for dogs. Cover electrical cords or tape them down. Put any chemicals on high shelves or in locked cabinets. Look at everything from floor level – a puppy's eye-view.



Decide where you want your puppy's potty area to be and learn the proper technique for housebreaking. Learn how to train puppies and how to prevent common problems with them. The more you know, the better your chance of doing it properly right from the start. We have other articles to help you.

Schedule your puppy's first check-up to make sure he's as healthy as he looks. Be sure to take a stool sample along with you to check for parasites.

Your pup will need medicine for roundworms ASAP as well as vaccinations. Pups also need to start on heartworm preventive medicine.

First Days



The first thing you should do when you bring your adorable puppy home is head to his potty area. After the car ride and his excitement, most pups will need to use it. This

allows you to start on the right foot. Tell him he's the best dog that ever lived for using his potty area.

Take it easy the first day. He will be anxious to explore his new home and you want to play with him, but puppies can be easily overwhelmed. There are many changes happening quickly. Keep him on the same feeding schedule he had before but take all food and water away about 3 hours before bedtime unless he is tiny and needs to eat more often. This will make it easier for him to sleep longer before needing a potty break.

In the evening, play with him and keep him awake as much as possible. The idea is to have him do his sleeping when you are sleeping. Just before putting him into his crate for the night, take him to his potty area. Even if he's sleeping, wake him up so he has a chance to go before bed. Read our article on crate training if you haven't used one before.

Newspaper is usually the best option for the crate. You don't want your puppy chewing up a bed or blanket as he may swallow the fibers and make a mess. If he has an accident in the crate, it will be easier to clean up. When he's older, you can put a bed in it.

It's often better to keep him in your room with you (in the crate) so you can monitor what he's doing. It's OK to leave a chew toy in with him. You can run a fan or low music to try to soothe him. If he cries or whines, it's important that you not comfort him. Otherwise, what you have just done is teach him that crying brings someone to him.

You always want to reward quiet behavior such as chewing on a toy. Wait until he stops crying to go to him if he needs to go potty.

All young pups will need to go potty sometime during the night until they are several months old. Be prepared for this and have things ready to take him out so you don't waste time finding your shoes or a leash.

When your puppy does his business during the night, you don't make a big deal of it or give him treats. Calmly say "good dog" and that's it. You don't want him getting excited or wanting to play.

It's all business during the night – go to your spot, do your thing, back in the crate. If you play with him or do anything else, he will wake more and make more of a fuss the next time. You want him to learn that nothing fun happens during the night so he might as well go back to sleep.



Another approach is to set your alarm and get up, ideally before the puppy wakes up. Wake him up, take him to his potty area, and don't leave until he's done something. Unless your timing is way off, he'll need to use the facilities. This prevents him from crying to wake you up and teaches him that nighttime is for sleeping.

Summary

Puppies are fun and bring so much joy to us. However, they require a big commitment on your part to train them well and take care of them. The most important thing you need is patience. Remember you have a baby and it will take him a while to learn everything.

Being consistent and always doing the same thing every single time will help him learn what you want him to do. In addition, you need to pay close attention. Watch him like a hawk or keep him confined so he can't get into trouble or have accidents in the house. All of this takes time and effort on your part. Read our articles on training to help you get started.