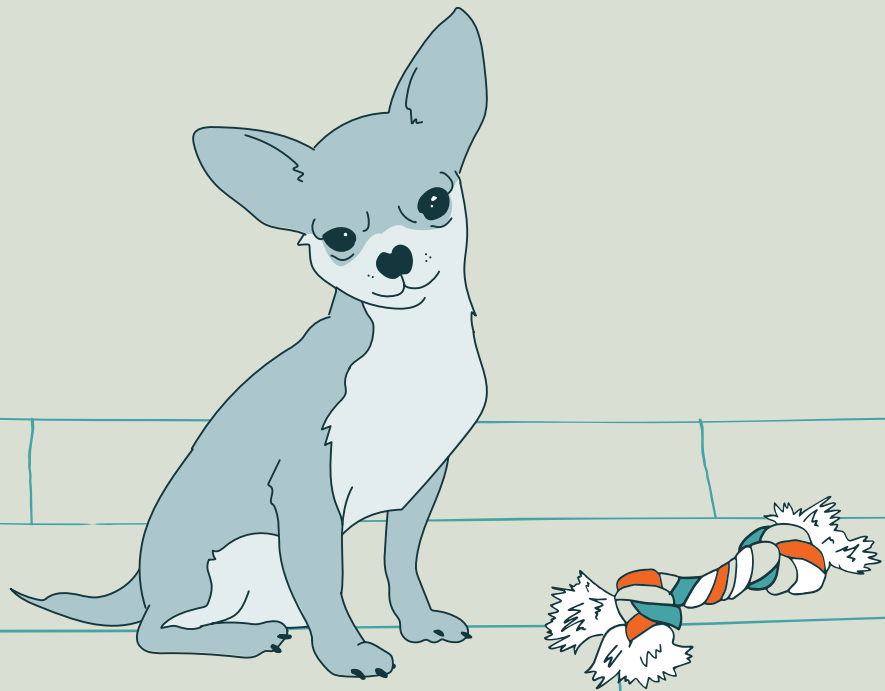




The Ultimate Guide to Preparing for Your First Puppy



Life *together.*
Designed better.

www.diggs.pet

Contents

Chapter One - Picking Your Canine Support Network /Service Providers	6
Chapter Two - The New Puppy Shopping List	16
Chapter Three - Puppy Proofing Your Home	30
Chapter Four - Picking Up Your new Puppy	38
Chapter Five - Introducing Other Pets/Family	45
Chapter Six - Why a Puppy Safe Zone is Vital	51
Chapter Seven - Your Pup's First Months	53
Chapter Eight - Understanding Your Puppy	64
Chapter Nine - Key Commands for a Joyful Household	69
Chapter Ten - Socializing Your Puppy	72
Chapter Eleven - In Summary - General Dos and Don'ts	76





Preface

Welcome to the ultimate guide to preparing for the arrival of your first puppy! What an exciting time in your life, and let me start by saying - enjoy every minute of it, they grow up so fast.

But as well as being a whole heap of fun, welcoming a living fluff ball into your family is a big responsibility, and requires a lot of work - but as long you're prepared and know what to expect, this guide can guide you to ensure that you start off on the right "paw" together.

From the simple things like signing up to a veterinarian, and choosing a doggie daycare - to the not so simple jobs of removing ticks, switching your puppy's diet, and puppy proofing your beautiful home.



For the first time dog owner, it can be difficult to know where to start, and that is one of the main reasons that we chose to put together this book utilizing years of experience with owning, training, and caring for canines - in order to help you follow along with our tried and tested steps for settling into dog ownership.

And for the more experienced dog owner that simply wants to ensure that you're doing the very best for your canine companion, allow us to guide, inspire, and put your mind at ease that you're doing a great job in your role as a pooch parent.

So, grab your cup of coffee, settle into your comfiest armchair - and let's get started on learning about one of the greatest adventures in life, becoming a pet parent!

chapter one

Picking Your Canine Support Network/ Service Providers

Before your new puppy arrives home, it's important that you have already done your homework to find the right veterinarian, dog trainer, and made arrangements for your dog when you're at work - like a doggie daycare or a dog walker.

You might be wondering why you need to do these things first, well, it's pretty simple - as soon as your puppy is handed over to you, you're fully responsible for his well-being. Meaning that if he suddenly becomes ill in the middle of the night, or you get called into work the day after he arrives home - you need to be prepared.

TOP TIP - Don't just pick the first provider - do your research to find the best professionals.



Finding, Choosing, and Signing up with a Veterinarian

FINDING

Your local veterinarian will be yours and your puppy's best friend in times of illness or emergency, as well as for routine check-ups and care.

Most veterinarians will also be more than happy to answer questions or provide advice over the phone.

TOP TIP - Talk to local dog owners and walkers about veterinarians to get recommendations.

CHOOSING

Make appointments to visit clinics to meet the professionals and get a feel for the atmosphere.

Don't just ask the veterinarian questions, take a peek at how they interact with the dogs in their care too.

SIGNING UP

Once you've decided on your veterinarian, you should ask what pa-

perwork you can complete in advance, even before you have your puppy's details - usually they only require your name, address, and telephone number in the very beginning.

This is also a great time to schedule a new puppy check-up, vaccination visits, and the start of your pups deworming program.

TOP TIP - Veterinary care can be incredibly expensive, therefore you should look into a pet insurance policy that will be able to help cover the costs should your furry friend become injured or ill.



Finding a Dog Trainer/ Obedience Classes

Anyone can call themselves a dog trainer, so it's important to make sure you're in good hands with a qualified professional.

There are two options most dog owners have to choose from when looking into training, either private lessons or group obedience classes.

The latter being more popular thanks to the lower cost, and the bonus of other dogs providing great socialization time.

What Happens at Dog Training School?

- ▶ Learning basic obedience including sit, stay, come, and down.
- ▶ Practicing for grooming and vet visits, including opening the mouth to check teeth, and looking into ears.
- ▶ Socializing with other puppies in a controlled environment.
- ▶ Learning good manners in a public place.

Many schools offer a program like “puppy kindergarten,” which meets regularly, often weekly, for a few months to teach puppies basic obedience, as well as socialization. This is a great option for first-time dog owners.

Before committing to a program, try to observe at least one class, making sure that only positive reinforcement is used. Be wary of programs that use negative reinforcement as forcing your puppy to do as he is told is not only unkind but can detrimentally affect your bond. After watching a class, go over and introduce yourself to your possible trainer and ask questions. Here are a few to try out:

Question

“Do you use treats as rewards when you train?”

Good Answer

“We sure do! We like to reward good behavior, but we use lots of different rewards, and they’re not all food based.”



Bad Answer

“NO, when they’re not hungry they won’t obey the command.”

Question

“What training aids do you use?”

Good Answer

“We use a collar and a leash and lots of positive reinforcement for obeying commands like treats, toys and lots of fussing.”

Bad Answer

“Check chains, prong collars, and firm handling.”

Doggie Daycare

Doggy daycare is like a prolonged play-date for your pup! Stimulating, constant supervision, lots of friends and socialization, the only thing they don't have to do is learn to read and write!

So what goes on in there?

- ▶ Puppy will receive plenty of attention from staff.
- ▶ Puppy will have a chill out zone so he can enjoy nap time.
- ▶ Puppy will be socialized with other dogs. But make sure your daycare screens problem dogs to keep bullies out!
- ▶ Webcams are often installed so you can log in and check on your pup during the day.





Boarding Facility

Boarding facilities often provide private accommodation and play-time.

The reason for keeping dogs separate is because they tend to have different dogs every day, which in some cases can lead to the odd scuffle between pooches.

What to expect from a doggie hotel

- ▶ Puppy will be in his own private or semi-private accommodation.
- ▶ Around the clock supervision.
- ▶ Playtime and walks will usually take place in a private and secure dog park.
- ▶ Add-ons including grooming and training are often available.

Dog Walker

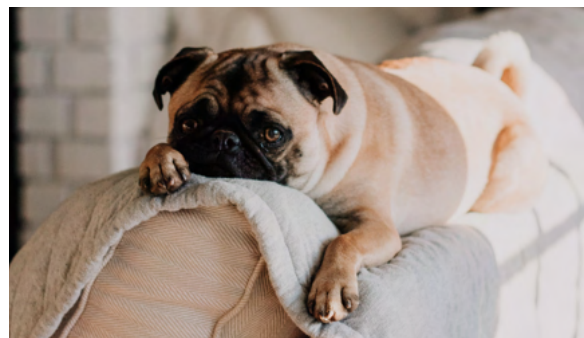
Most of us tend to work away from home, and while we may be able to cope with being sat at a desk for eight hours, our dogs, especially young puppies require exercise during the day.

We all know without stimulation our dog's energy can turn into destructive behavior - not great for our furniture! But a great way to avoid this while you're at work is by hiring a dog walker!

Usually very easy to find, many dog walkers are students, in-between classes, making it an affordable option if doggie daycare is outside of your budget.

What Does a dog Walker Usually do?

- ▶ Pick up your dog from your home.
- ▶ Take them on a private, or group walk around the neighborhood.
- ▶ Return them safely home, and feed your dog if part of your package.



chapter two

The New Puppy Shopping List

Going on a pet-themed shopping spree is almost as much fun as actually getting your puppy!

We know it's so tempting to run through the store, loading down your shopping cart, but slow down and do your research, because getting the right gear will save you time and energy in the long run!

We've jotted down a list of the must-have items that you'll need before bringing your pup home.



CRATE

Choose a crate based not on the size of your puppy now, but what size he will reach as an adult dog. This obviously depends greatly on the breed of dog you have, after all - the best dog travel carrier for Cavalier King Charles Spaniels -- likely a small folding dog crate -- isn't going to work for a Labrador, who would need a large sized dog crate.

The best dog crates for small dogs or large dogs often come with a central divider panel (also known as a puppy divider), to allow you to reduce the size of the crate while your pup is small, and then expand it as he grows.



Make sure he'll be able to stretch out and stand up. Here are some consideration when purchasing your dog crate:



Steel Wire

Collapsible steel wire crates come in a variety of sizes.

Plastic

Some are designed especially for travel. Look out for crates that combine the strength of plastic with wire panels.

Wood

A wooden crate is more like a piece of furniture, and while it can better fit with your home's decor, make sure that it isn't too dark for your dog.

Easy to Clean

some dog crates come with a removable plastic tray which makes keeping your dog's bedroom clean and free from bacteria, a breeze.

Travel and Storage

If you plan on taking your crate with you on trips, or simply want to be able to move it out to the yard on a lovely spring afternoon; you'll want to find a crate that is not only lightweight but easy to fold and with wheels to make it easy to transport.

Safety

Keeping your pet safe and sound is a top priority, so be sure to take home a crate with the highest of safety standards. Some of the best crates on the market design their products to meet baby industry standards, and as a proud pooch parent, doesn't that sound like a great sign of safety?



BENEFITS OF THE CRATE

Teaching your dog to be comfortable and content in a crate from the get-go will make canine parenting far easier.

Here are just a few of the benefits of crate training a puppy:

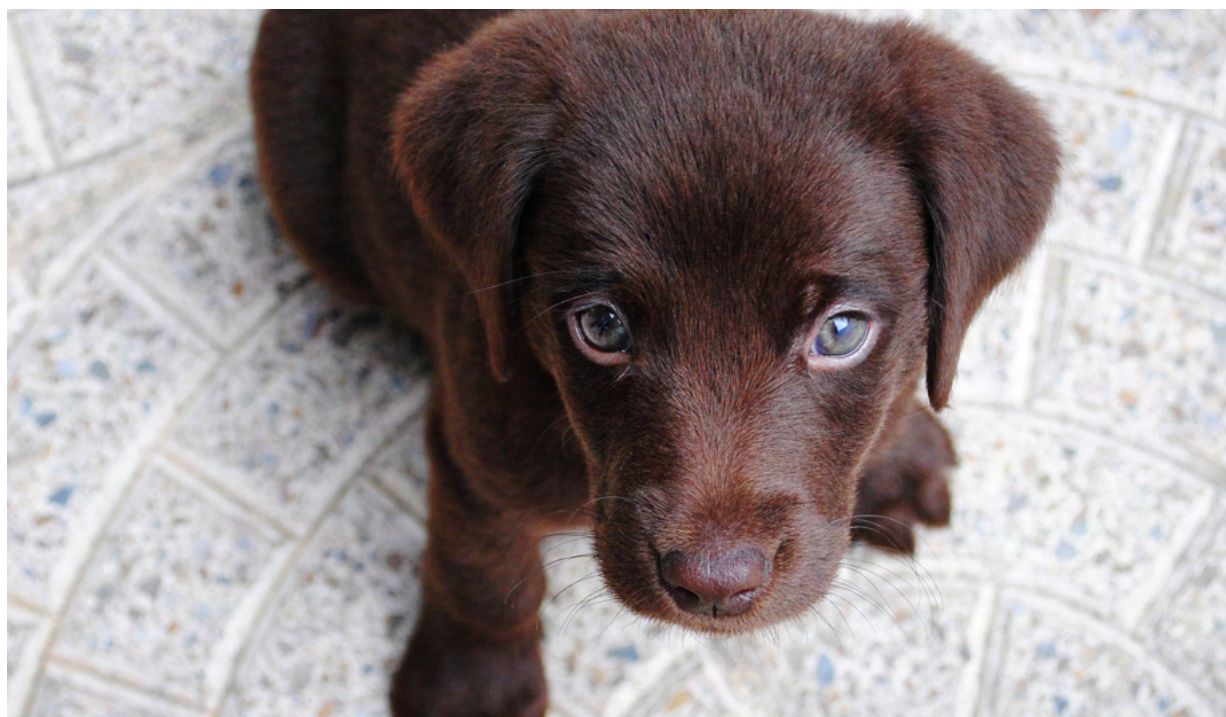
For you and your family

- ▶ Housetraining is much easier with a crate. Dogs don't want to go potty in their den.
- ▶ Allows for a more independent life for you; as you can not only leave your puppy home alone, but you can more easily travel with her.
- ▶ Busy times in your home are not problem times for your puppy, as he is safe and out of harm's way.
- ▶ Rest safe in the knowledge that when you go out your dog is in a safe place - he cannot harm himself, any of your possessions, or teach himself bad habits.

For your dog

- ▶ Learns to be housetrained with much less stress than old-fashioned methods
- ▶ Can travel with you and even join you on family vacations.
- ▶ Is able to escape from the noise of family life and just relax in his den.
- ▶ A properly crated dog will not develop bad habits such as chewing on furniture.
- ▶ When you have family or friends over, he is not banished to the yard or garage.

To learn about how to crate train your new four-legged friend, you can head on over to our “Ultimate Crate Training Guide” and follow along step by step as we take your puppy from crate zero to hero!



BED

Your puppy is going to need a comfy and cozy bed, and by golly, there are lots of choices. Let's take a look at some of the most frequently desired traits.

Easy To Wash

Specific dog cushions, which are generally flat on one side, and made of easy wash material are a great choice. Your puppy can pick up all sorts of bacteria, so frequently washing his bed is a must.

Chew Resistant

Another consideration is whether the material is chew-resistant. No dog bed will be 100% chew-proof, but choosing one that is resistant to Fido's teeth will hopefully be a deterrent.

Materials

A very popular choice in dog bedding is one that is CertriPur-US® approved; this certification guarantees that the materials don't contain many harmful chemicals, and are tested for durability.

Anti-Slip

A bed with non-slip backing really comes in handy and helps to keep their doggie bedroom in one place!

WATER AND FOOD BOWLS

Most pets don't care what their food is served on, as long as it's the right size for them - with each breed having their own unique snout size and shape, you do need to take into consideration the depth, and width of the bowl.

As an owner, it's your responsibility to ensure that their bowls are safe, easy to clean, and preferably have non-slip bases so that your dog won't have to chase his bowl all over the house.

Stainless steel is a popular choice because it is easy to clean and looks pretty stylish, too. Plastic is popular due to the fact that it is lightweight, but it can accumulate bacteria easily, isn't quite as easy to clean and can crack or break easily.



PUPPY FOOD

You've heard the phrase, 'You are what you eat.' Well, for a developing puppy, this is especially true.

High-quality nutrition is vital during a puppy's important developmental phase, and whether you choose a complete food or canned food and kibble combo, it's important that you ensure your puppy gets what he needs.

If you notice that your puppy isn't thriving on his food, alternative diets can be discussed with your veterinarian to ensure your puppy receives all the nutrients he needs.

Some popular alternative diets include:

- ▶ Grain-free
- ▶ Human Grade
- ▶ Homemade
- ▶ High Protein

If you do switch your puppy's diet, it's very important to know that this should be done gradually, as otherwise, it can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and dehydration.

Most experts recommend that you switch to a new food in 4-8 days, using the 75% regular, 25% new ratio, or the 87.5% regular to 12.5% new ratio for those with more sensitive stomachs.

TOP TIP - If you notice that your dog is exhibiting any of the symptoms we mentioned above, take it back a couple of steps, and re-introduce the new food even more slowly.



COLLAR AND LEASH

Before you rush out and buy the prettiest collar in the store, remember that your little puppy has a lot of growing to do. You will probably buy three or four different sizes before he stops growing.

Collar

Cushioned collars tend to be more comfortable, other options are harnesses (which we don't recommend for untrained dogs), and dog training halters which work well for dogs that pull.

ID tags

Engraved with your phone number and your puppy's name. Depending on where you live, some areas will require that your dog has a medical tag confirming his up to date vaccinations.

Microchip

We also recommend always chipping your dog, as if he should get lost without his collar, when found and scanned by a veterinarian; you're very likely to welcome him home.

Leash

Lightweight to start with, just don't let him chew it. Some people prefer retractable leashes. A heavier, extendable leash can be perfect for training sessions.

POOP BAGS

We know...yuck! But someone has to do it. Don't worry; it gets easier with time and practice.

Why not choose biodegradable poop bags to be kind to the environment? Some come with little dispensers that you can clip to your dog's leash, that way you know you'll always have one with you.

Handy hint: If your puppy starts to poop in an inconvenient spot, you're best to wait it out and pick up when he finishes. If you try quickly pulling him to a more convenient spot, chances are you'll have a long trail of poop to pick up instead of one easy mound.

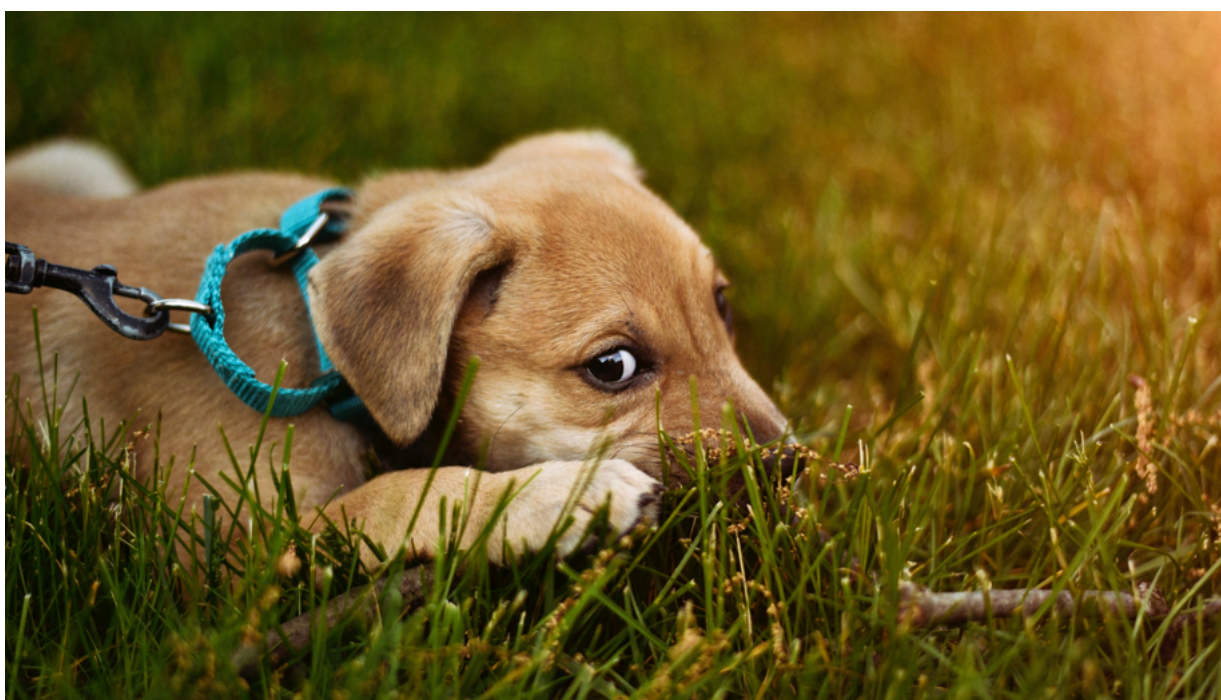


SAFETY GATE

These have been in use in homes for years, blocking doorways, restricting access to stairs, and keeping babies out of certain areas of the home.

This was called baby-proofing. Hello! Welcome to the new world of “puppy”-proofing.

Choose between plastic or metal; both are easy to fit and easy to keep clean. Some leave a large gap near the wall that a curious puppy can get his head stuck in, so be sure to measure properly before making your decision.





Take into consideration the height of your pooch; if you have a small breed you can get away with a shorter gate -- provided that they're not a keen jumper! --, and if you have a home with larger dogs and cats - you might be pleased to hear that some pet gates offer a hatch door to allow your cat to have free roam of the house!

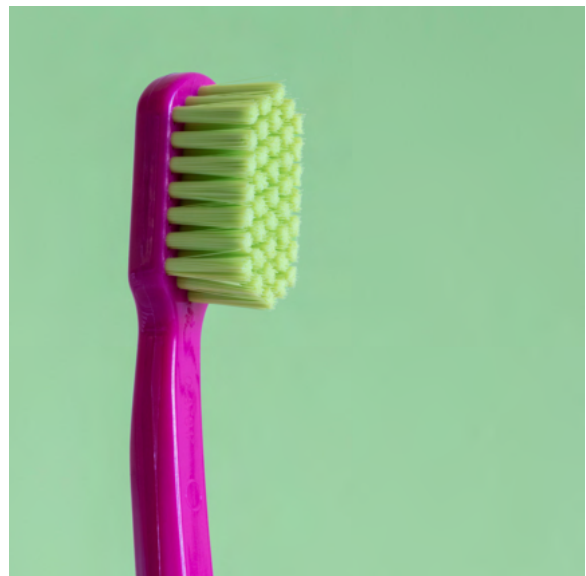
A swinging gate is a better long-term solution for high-traffic areas, versus a more basic gate that you will need to move or step over.

GROOMING EQUIPMENT

Grooming your puppy is not only a great excuse to give him a little fussing, but it's also a great bonding opportunity and the best way to keep him looking his best.

Grooming isn't just for long-haired breeds. To keep the skin and coat healthy of all pups, regular brushing will stop tangles forming, which can cause skin irritation and infections. It also removes surface dirt and dead hair.

The handling that your puppy receives from frequent grooming also acclimatizes him to the handling that he will experience when he goes to the vet or the groomer.



chapter three

Puppy Proofing Your Home

At last, you have picked out the right puppy for your family, and he's just about to be welcomed into your home. By this stage, you should already have your service providers decided, and your puppy necessities bought!

But that doesn't mean that all the hard work is done, being a great pet owner means making sure that you provide your new puppy with a safe environment to live in. After all, he's going to want to inspect (and chew on!) every tree, toy, shoe, and electrical item that you own.





At first, he won't be able to tell the difference between a family heirloom and his squeaky toy, so you need to make sure this furry troublemaker plays with only the right things, and puppy proof your home as well as you can!

Your puppy definitely has the ability and propensity to destroy your apartment, but much like toddlers, you can manage and redirect this propensity to minimize damage. Don't leave shoes out. Ditto with purses, pillows and, in our case, remote controls. Much like parents quickly develop an ability to spot and remove choking hazards from babies, you'll learn to do the same with your dog.



Making Them Feel at Home

As well as puppy proofing your home, it's important to have a welcoming space for your puppy to come home to, for that - you'll need to set up their own little "safe zone." This usually consists of a crate, bed, food and water bowls, and perhaps a crate safe toy or two.

By providing your pooch with their own doggie bedroom, this will help them to settle in quicker, and thus learn that the home is not something that should be chewed to pieces.

For more information on setting up a doggie safe zone, head over to chapter six! Or read our Ultimate Crate Training Guide which takes you step-by-step through training exercises for a calm to crate pooch!



What to Think About - Room by Room:

Kitchen

The garbage can in your kitchen is full of the most wonderful smells to your curious pup's little nose, but it is potentially dangerous.

Puppies explore with their mouths and, left to fend for themselves, it's easy for them to eat something that is toxic or could cause an internal obstruction.

And did you know, that common edibles such as garlic - are toxic to our canine pals?! Secure all cleaning supplies, food items, trash cans, and electrical gadgets within your pup's reach. High shelves and latching cabinets are your best friends!

Living Room

The living room is where we all like to kick back and relax, but the very things that make this room so cozy are just the sort of thing puppies like to chew on.

Cushions, magazines, remote controls, and anything left at his level are all vulnerable to his tiny, yet incredibly sharp teeth. Secure these items out of reach. Don't worry; you'll get them back once your pup is a bit older and more in control of his chewing instincts!

Bathroom

Medicines, designed for human consumption, are one of the major sources of poisoning for pets every single year.

Make sure that all of your medicines are safely stored in your locked bathroom cabinet, and if your puppy is especially adventurous - consider child-proofing cabinets and cupboards.





Hallway Puppy Zone

The hallway is where many of us like to keep houseplants. If you're planning on setting up your pup's crate here, it would be wise to move the plants somewhere safer - such as the covered front porch, or a room that is out of bounds for your fluffy friend.

Puppies eating houseplants can cause anything from mild illnesses to organ failure and even death. It's a good idea to check out the ASPCA Animal Poison Control list of poisonous plants, and consider ridding your home of any that are dangerous. A small price to pay for peace of mind!



Office

More and more of us have home offices containing a bunch of expensive electrical gadgets that puppies just love to gnaw on. There is something about cords that pups absolutely adore! We recommend that the home office is out of bounds for your pooch - as this can not only save you from a yapping puppy running in while you're on an important call but can also save him from the risk of chewing on cables and electrocuting himself!

Backyard

The yard and garden are where people store some of their more dangerous items: old paint, gasoline, antifreeze, poison, weed killers. Make sure you store all toxic chemicals inside of a locked cabinet.

Take a good look around, as there could be dangers for your puppy that you haven't even noticed - such as paving tiles leaning against a fence - if these fall on your young puppy, the weight of it could do some serious damage.



Cheeky Puppies

You should try as hard as you can to puppy proof before bringing your pup home, but the truth is, you won't spot all potential dangers in advance. You will need to closely supervise your puppy once he's home to spot and remove dangers or disasters before they happen.

These tiny adorable creatures really do explore the world with their mouths, so while you might want to splash the cash on Louis Vuitton dog carriers or other designer dog crate accessories, it is probably a much better choice to opt for high-end dog crates known for their durability and chew-proof materials!

chapter four

Picking up Your New Puppy

Right up there with buying your first home and getting engaged, picking up your new puppy family member is one of the most exciting days you'll ever have!

But for your little puppy, it's not quite the same experience. Sure, he's excited, but joining your family means he has to leave his litter-mates and dog mom behind, something he might not realize until he gets in your car!

Make sure you have all of your supplies on hand for the journey and don't have to stop anywhere on the way home. Planning in advance will make this a trip to remember and one to look back on fondly, you'll want to ask yourself what crate is best for a puppy? Do I have food and water available? Am I prepared for little accidents?

WHEN TO BRING THEM HOME

Most puppies will head to their new home at eight weeks old. Although it is perfectly fine to take home an older puppy, puppies should never leave their mother before the age of seven weeks.

However, when taking home your puppy from a dog rescue or animal shelter - the pups may have unfortunately already left their mother, at this stage - you'll still want to wait until they're at least seven weeks if possible, as this helps their immune system to develop. But if the rescue really needs that space for other animals in need, you can bring them home as soon as they deem it acceptable.

Puppies removed from the litter too young can miss out on important developmental steps which cannot be taught at a later age.



WHAT TO BRING

- ▶ **Food** - Check to see what brand he is currently eating to make the transition easier.
- ▶ **Collar and leash** - make sure you buy the right size, consider a soft slip collar so he can't wiggle out.
- ▶ **Little treats** - Bring a variety to make sure you have something he likes!
- ▶ **Towel or Blanket** - To give him somewhere comfy to sleep.
- ▶ **Paper towels** - and plastic bags in case of accidents.



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU PICK HIM UP

- ▶ Does he have a set amount of food, and is he fed at specific times?
- ▶ What treatments has he already received from the vet?
- ▶ Do you have a short-term insurance plan in place for him?
- ▶ Has he been socialized at all with other dogs, animals, children, etc?
- ▶ Is there anything he really loves?
- ▶ How do you call him to his food?
- ▶ Have you started housebreaking him?
- ▶ And finally, make sure to get all of his paperwork!



THE JOURNEY HOME

After saying your goodbyes, it's time to pop the little guy in his crate (if you're using one) or otherwise securely in the car or carrier (if public transportation is your way to go). Make sure there is a towel or blanket in there with him. If you're driving, secure the crate with a crate-specific seatbelt or bungee cord.

If you have a helper holding puppy on their knee, make sure you protect their legs with a towel first...sometimes even the best jobs have drawbacks!



FIRST NIGHT SURVIVAL TIPS

After you have had an exciting and jam-packed day picking up your new pup and bringing him home, now you're all exhausted and ready for bed! Here are a few tips for making your first night restful for everyone.

- ▶ No food or water just before bed
- ▶ Let puppy out to potty right before bedtime
- ▶ Puppy should sleep in a secure crate with soft bedding
- ▶ Place crate in a comfortable spot, maybe in your bedroom
- ▶ Quiet music may be soothing, as may be a ticking alarm clock (to remind your pup of his mom's heartbeat!).
- ▶ Set an alarm for every four hours to let him out to go potty (this sounds brutal but remember, it's not for long!)

TOP TIP - For more information on how to keep your puppy calm in his crate at bedtime, check out our [Ultimate Guide to Crate Training](#).

chapter five

Introducing Other Pets/Family

You've finally brought the puppy home; now it's time to introduce him to everyone else in the family. You'll want to first start by letting puppy have a wander around the house to give him a little confidence before everyone starts crowding around to ooh and aah over him.

Just a little quiet look around with you guiding is the best way to do it, keeping the whole experience as calm and relaxed as can be.



INTRODUCING YOUR PUP TO OTHER PETS

Although dogs can be territorial and not want a new animal to suddenly intrude on their area, when introduced correctly, older dogs can be kind and considerate leaders for a new puppy to follow.

Introductions are a very important first step.

Dogs instinctively associate themselves with a territory, and your older dog already 'owns' your home as his. It is important that first introductions are made outside of the home on neutral territory.

- ▶ Have a helper take the puppy to the neutral zone such as a little way down the street, and meet them there after your dog has had a long walk.
- ▶ Walk the two dogs past each other, without letting them say hello. This is to get them used to being calm and focused on you.
- ▶ After you have walked past each other, you can now begin to walk together, albeit at a little distance to avoid any possible altercations.
- ▶ Now that they're behaving in each other's company, you can stop and let the two meet properly and have a good sniff.



- ▶ Once they can proceed without incident, let them get closer together. Make sure your puppy remembers his manners and doesn't jump up on the older dog.
- ▶ All of you should now make your way back to your home.
- ▶ Once home, let the two meet briefly outside of the home then let the older dog enter first. Only then can the puppy enter the home, having received an 'invitation' of sorts.
- ▶ Both dogs should be supervised at all times when together for at least the first week or two.
- ▶ If you do notice any growling or territorial behavior, a good option can be putting the dogs in adjoining rooms with a baby gate separating them. This allows them to get used to each other without any risk.

FAMILY

Introducing Adults

Introducing your puppy to adult members of your family can be one of the least challenging introductions, but it all depends on the adults.

Maintaining an aura of calm is important in those first introductory hours. Your puppy has had a lot of new experiences today, try to make this a time where he is not frightened by loud noises or sudden movements.

Some people expect a puppy to come fully trained and can make quite a fuss if the puppy jumps up or has an accident.



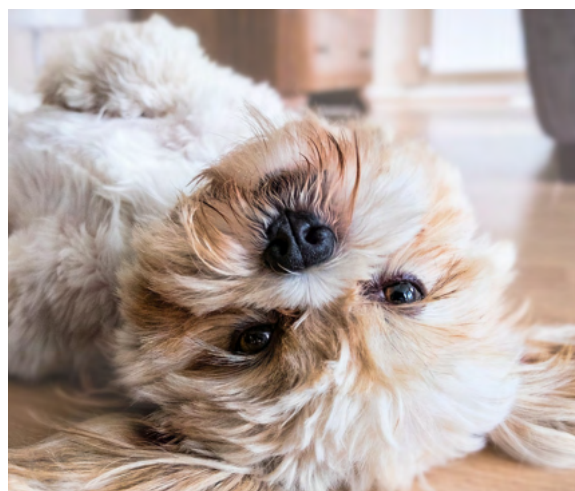
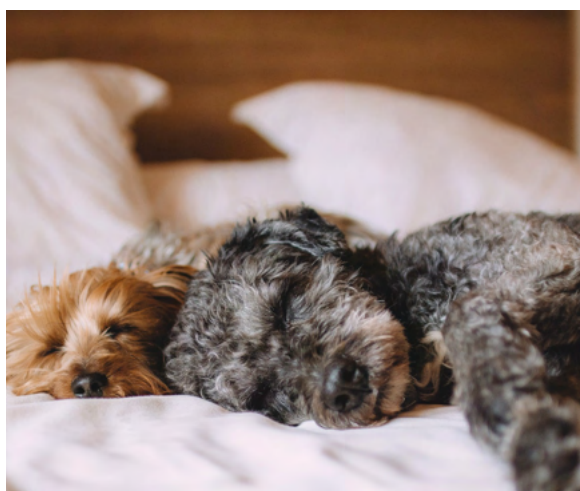
Explain to everyone that the puppy is just a baby and he will make mistakes, but if everyone is patient, he will grow up to be a great addition to the family.

Positive reinforcement has not always been the accepted way of training dogs and some people, especially if they had dogs when they were young, could still believe in harsh training methods.

You need to defend your puppy against misguided people and be vocal about your views on training methodology.

Make sure only one person is in charge of the puppy, and that will be the person who will look for signs that the puppy needs to relieve himself. This would be a great job for a mature teenager.

Once everyone has been introduced, let puppy have a nap, it's been a long day for him!





Introducing Kids

If you have young children at home, teaching them the best way to treat him, even before he comes home, will make the experience more pleasant. Explain that he will need kindness and quiet voices for his first few days as he'll be nervous and missing his dog mom and littermates.

There's just something about puppies that make children want to hold them, maybe it's because they look a bit like teddy bears, but children must be taught that puppies are definitely not toys.

Picking up a wiggly little puppy is a skilled job. Your child should sit down nicely; then you should place the puppy in their lap.

Puppies have sharp little teeth, and up until now, they have been using them, as they should, while playing with their littermates. It will take a little while for a puppy to learn that the rules are different here and he's not allowed to nip. If a nip does occur, try to explain calmly to your kid why it happened, and make sure they know it's just an attempt to play, or due to fear and uncertainty. If your pup has felt the need to nip, it's important to redirect their energy, perhaps using a toy - and remember to never shout at your puppy for making a mistake.

When introducing babies and young toddlers who don't quite understand the need for quiet behavior, it's best to introduce from a distance. Many dog owners make the mistake of assuming that a dog must sniff from up close to learn a new scent and be introduced to a new person, alas, a dog's sense of smell is so keen that you should introduce and allow them to sniff from a safe distance.



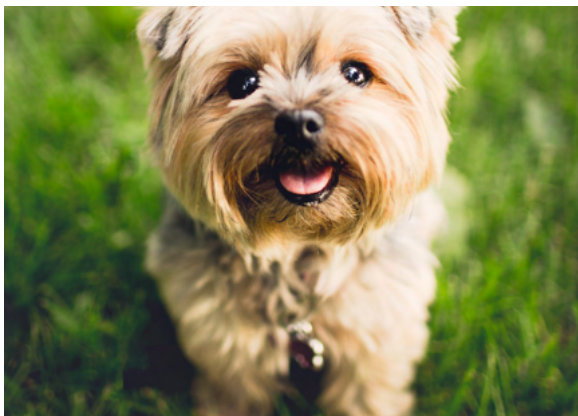
chapter six

Why a Puppy Safe Zone is Vital

We all like a place we can call our own - whether it's our own nook, kitchen, bed, or cozy corner, we all need a comfortable place to retreat from our day-to-day pressures.

In the olden days, dogs had dens (like wolves, a dog's predecessors, still do). A den is a low-lying, fairly enclosed area that serves as a shelter, home for young, and place to eat.

To this day, dogs and puppies still have the instinct to have a den. If you look at a modern dog, some of his favorite places to chill out are under tables, under chairs, or in a tight-fitting snug space. This is an area where the dog feels safe, and we can make this instinct work to our advantage.



WHAT YOU NEED

A perfect modern-day den is a modern dog crate! Crates are designed to be practical, low maintenance, and secure.

You should make sure that you place the crate close to where you spend your time, in a room with some activity so that your pup doesn't get lonely. A corner in the kitchen can be a good idea, especially as it's far easier to clean up an accident on a tiled floor than it is on a carpet!

Checklist for Puppy Safe Zone

- ▶ Crate
- ▶ Dog Bed
- ▶ Water and food bowls
- ▶ Toys

If your safe zone is a little chilly, place a blanket or crate cover over a maximum of three sides of the crate, ensuring that your pup can still see what's going on around him - after all, a crate isn't used to confine, it's used to comfort!

chapter seven

Your Pup's First Months

Your puppy's first months are incredibly important. Not only does he require ample nutrition to support his growing body, but he also needs correct medical care, socialization, and training to grow up to become a great member of doggie society.

Welcoming your little ball of fluff home is a big responsibility, but with proper planning, your pup's needs can easily fit into your busy schedule.



FIRST VET CHECK AND VACCINATION SCHEDULE

As your pup likely won't have had his first shots yet, you should book a veterinarian appointment as soon as you get home, ideally first thing in the morning when the waiting room won't be packed with sick animals.

Your veterinarian will conduct a new puppy check, which will involve weighing him, examining his teeth, gums, ears, coat, and eyes and listening to his heart.

Timeline for vaccines:

6 to 8 weeks	Distemper, measles, and parainfluenza
10 to 12 weeks	DHPP (distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza, and parvovirus)
12 to 24 weeks	Rabies
14 to 16 week	DHPP
1 year to 16 months	Rabies, DHPP
Annually	DHPP
Every 1 to 3 years	Rabies

TOP TIP - As a rule, it's not recommended that you allow your puppy to be around other dogs until they have had their second vaccination (10-12 weeks), this is due to the parvovirus being so incredibly dangerous to small puppies.

However, many experts believe that so long as your puppy is interacting with fully-vaccinated dogs, there is little risk.



DE-WORMING PROGRAM

It's very common for dogs to get worms at some point in their lives - in fact, many puppies are either born with parasites or develop them from nursing. Worms are easy to treat if you catch them early, but if left untreated, they can cause serious illness for both puppies and older dogs.

Your puppy will need to be dewormed every few weeks up until twelve weeks of age, and then receive regular checks and deworming medication (likely monthly, under the guidance of a veterinarian) for their rest of his life.



FLEA/TICK PREVENTION

It is incredibly easy for your dog to pick up fleas, and you might be surprised to find out that most dog flea infestations actually come from the fleas from cats - jumping ship and making their way onto your pooch.

This doesn't mean that if you have a cat-free home, your dog is safe, and they can easily pick this up from walking outdoors where cats have also roamed.

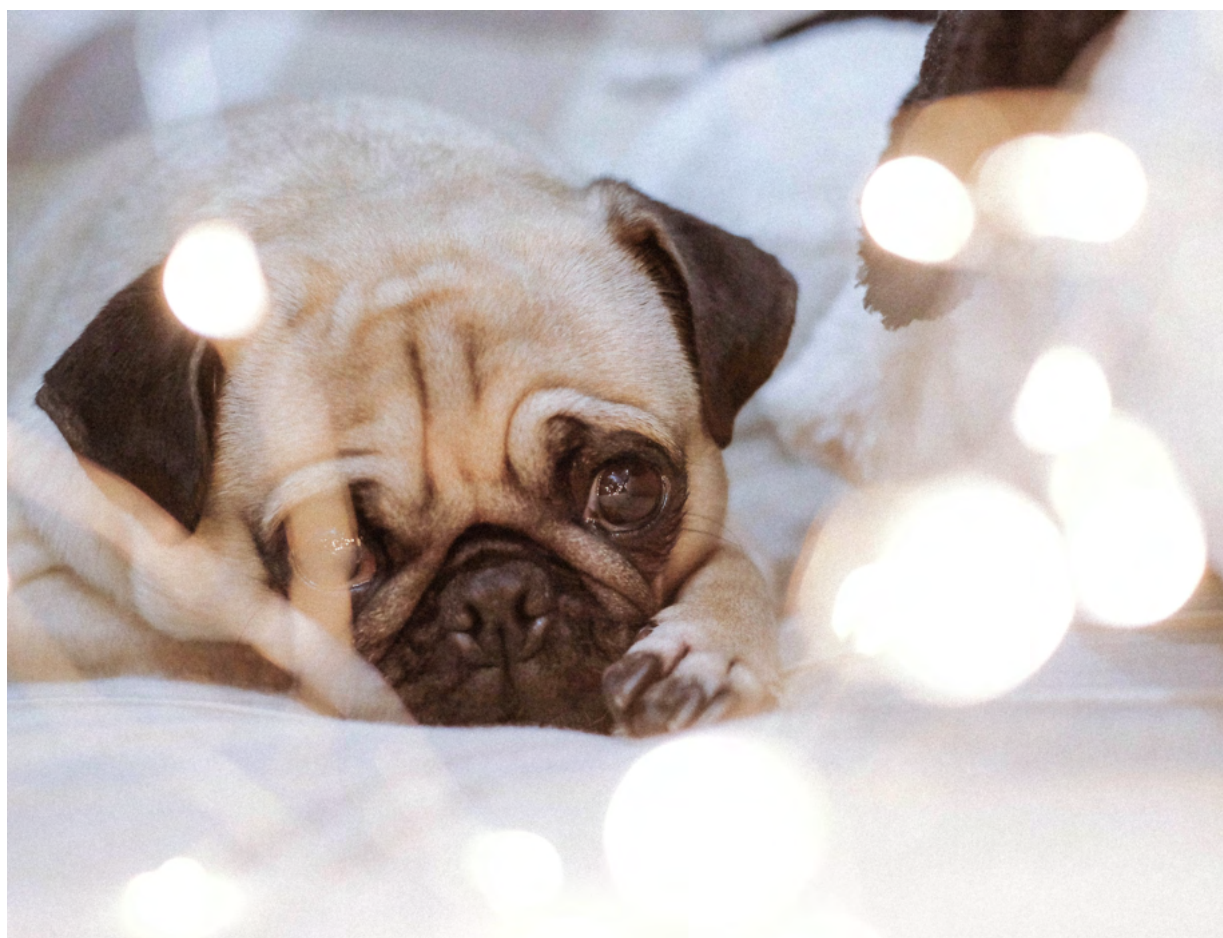
Most veterinarians recommend washing your dog with an anti-flea shampoo once per month as a precaution, and as needed when you see an infestation. You can also feed your dog chewable anti-flea medication, the most common of which NexGard is available worldwide.

When it comes to ticks, those living in or around wooded areas are most at risk, and conducting a quick check after a walk will help your dog to stay healthy - after all, it's not just humans that can contract Lyme disease from ticks, our canine pals are at risk too.

To properly check your dog, you first need to gather up your tick removal gadgets - after all, they're so small you'll want to remove them right away.

Here's What You'll Need

- ▶ A large light colored towel
- ▶ Tweezers
- ▶ Soap and warm water
- ▶ Cotton balls
- ▶ Rubbing alcohol
- ▶ A sealable container or bag





Have your dog lay down on the towel, and begin to inspect each area of his body. Most commonly, you'll find ticks inside of the ears, around the eyes, on the chest, armpits, stomach, paws (don't forget to check between the toes), and the tail.

If you do find a tick, take your tweezers and grasp as close to your dog's skin as you can without pinching them. Pull the tick away swiftly, and place in a sealable bag or jar.

Don't worry if the head of the tick remains; this will fall away in time. After removing a tick - you'll want to take a cotton ball with some rubbing alcohol and rub over the area where the tick was.

After checking your dog, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly in warm soapy water.



OBEDIENCE TRAINING AT HOME

Start training your puppy from the moment you bring him home, as it has been shown that puppies learn from birth. If you're lucky, the breeder will have already done lots of handling and early socialization from day 1.

House training is the first major training exercise, and this, as well as basic obedience, can be started around seven or eight weeks of age.



CRATE TRAINING A PUPPY

Start crate training as soon as you bring your puppy home. No puppy should be left alone in his crate for more than three hours at a time, but the exception to this rule is having him in his crate overnight from his first night. Having the crate in your bedroom makes it easier for you both!

STARTING OBEDIENCE SCHOOL

Puppies of all breeds benefit from the early socialization that they experience at a puppy obedience class and considering that the primary socialization period ends by the time they reach three months, this is a valuable tool in your training toolkit.

For tips on choosing the right trainer, head back to chapter one!

Only puppies who have started their vaccination schedule should be admitted, so the health risks are minimal. Check with the particular school to understand both the requirements for your puppy as well as to ensure he is socializing safely!



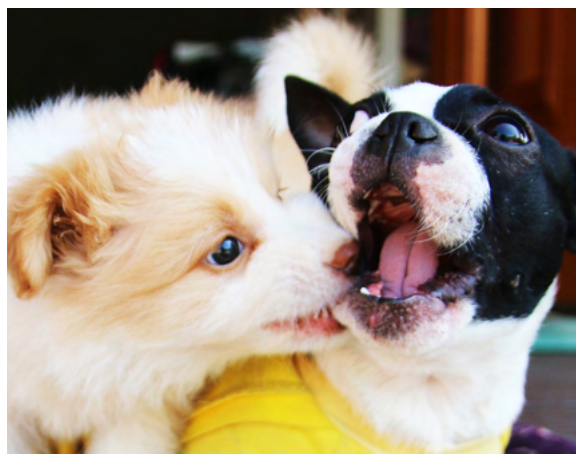
SOCIALIZATION

Puppies go through a major socialization period between the ages of seven and sixteen weeks, the primary period of which ends at twelve weeks.

This is a pivotal stage, and neglect during this short window of opportunity will have far-reaching, permanent consequences. Expose your puppy to the widest possible variety of situations, people, and places for the maximum benefit.

But don't make the mistake of thinking that once your dog has been socialized, he no longer needs socialization. This is something that you'll need to keep up, after all, practice makes perfect!

We'll walk you through all of the steps of socialization in chapter ten, so stay tuned!



chapter eight

Understanding Your Puppy

Dogs might not be able to speak our language, but they can certainly communicate with us. They use body language to tell us and others around them how they're feeling, what they want, and even what they're going to do next. All you have to do is unlock the puzzle into doggy communication!



READING YOUR PUP'S BODY LANGUAGE

We all recognize that cute little doggy bow, where a dog lowers his front legs and keeps his back-end high with his tail wagging (a “downward-facing dog,” to you yogis!), ready to bound off for some fun and frolics. You’ll be surprised to recognize other things your dog is trying to say.

TIRED

We’ve all marveled at the little puppy who can fall asleep mid-meal with his face in his bowl.

Just as human babies can get overtired, so too can puppies. Being so young, they ignore signs that they are becoming overtired and need help taking themselves to bed.

Learn to recognize when your puppy is overtired, and you can guide him to have a nap. Common signs are yawning, irritability, and yapping.



ANXIOUS

If you see a dog with tension in their forehead, perhaps showing as slight wrinkling, and their eyes becoming either narrowed or wide and staring, you've probably witnessed an anxious dog.



If their ears were held back or appear to be more stiff than normal, they are probably listening for sounds indicating a possible threat.

AGGRESSIVE

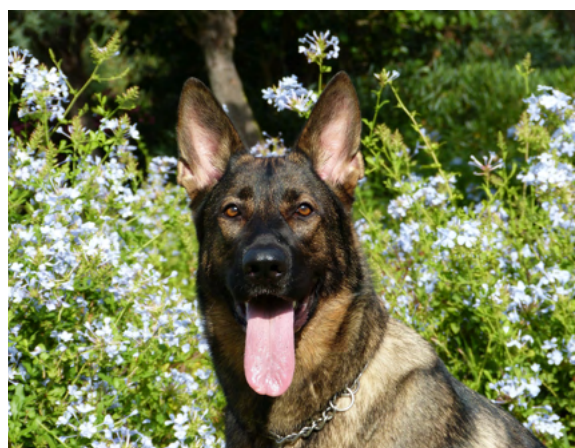
An aggressive dog frequently, but not always, will display threatening behavior. The signs of this are staring and not looking away, snarling and growling, standing tall with a high, stiff tail carriage.



A dog in this heightened state can be difficult to bring back down to a normal energy level, but rather than shouting at, or yanking on your dog's lead, try to re-focus your puppy's energy on you.

HAPPY

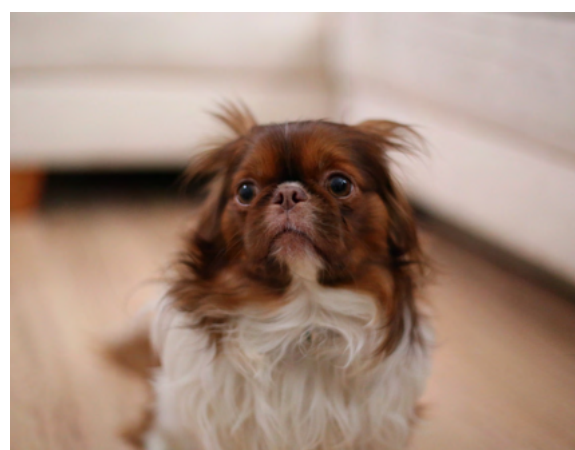
As you get to know your puppy more and more, you will recognize when he is happy by his body language. A happy dog is a relaxed dog, with a loose mouth, a wagging tail, soft eyes, and relaxed ears. Some dogs are naturally more happy than others, it all depends on their breed, age, health, and general disposition.



Generally speaking, a well-balanced and well-cared for puppy will be one of the happiest creatures you ever interact with.

SCARED

A scared dog is a potentially dangerous dog, as not all dogs move away from perceived danger. You will notice hackles along the back of the dog rise and the dog may move in a very stiff fashion; these movements are designed to discourage whatever is threatening the dog.



chapter nine

Key Commands for a Joyful Household

Having an obedient dog doesn't just make your life easier, it can also help to avoid or get out of potentially dangerous situations like fights at the dog park or having a visitor in your yard. Obedience school or dog training sessions are a great starting point for all of these commands, but they can also be taught at home.

Learning is a lifelong endeavor, and learning something new or practicing skills every day helps to keep your dog not only well stimulated but well behaved too. If you start setting aside just ten to fifteen minutes every day means that you'll have a more obedient pup, and you'll build an incredible bond too!

Teaching your dog any new command can be great fun if you go into it with the right mindset! It's important not to have preconceived ideas on how long training each command will take, and most importantly you have to be patient.

Do your research on your favorite trainers, and check on their websites for resources for step-by-step training exercises. With so many

useful commands to choose to train your dog, it can be overwhelming deciding where to start. Here are a few of our favorite commands for a joyful home!



STAY

Training your dog to stay or wait on command can come in handy in a multitude of situations. From teaching them to wait for their dinner, to teaching them to stay put when you're out on a hike and encounter a wild animal, this command is essential.



SIT

Teaching your dog to sit down is a great exercise for calming them down or getting their focus back on you. Not to mention that dogs tend to find the “sit” command pretty easy, so when we're planning on introducing a new command, we can use the “sit” command a few times to warm them up for a training session!



FOCUS

Dogs can be scatterbrained, and if your dog would rather look for squirrels or leaves or cars, or anything else but have a nice walk with you, the focus exercise can get them on track. Similarly, a dog-aggressive canine or anxious dog can benefit from having something else to think about other than what is making him nervous or upset.



HEEL

Being able to keep your dog walking right at your side, i.e. heeling without resorting to using a leash is awesome for two reasons - 1. It looks cool, and 2. It means that you can keep your dog by your side while going for a run through the forest, without having to hold that annoying leash.

COME

The most important command of all! If you cannot recall your dog in any situation, both you and your dog could be at risk.



LEAVE IT

You may have noticed that dogs don't have hands! Well, this leaves them to explore the world with their mouths, and as your puppy is growing up and figuring out the world, you will encounter countless situations where he'll pick something up that he shouldn't. Whether it's your favorite pair of slippers or a poisonous plant, you need to teach your pup to "leave it" alone on command.



LAY DOWN

Have you ever lay down on your bed "just for a sec" and ended up accidentally falling asleep? This is because you're putting yourself into a state that your brain recognizes as being the ultimate relaxation mode.

Training a dog to lie down can be especially helpful to counteract hyperactivity and anxious tendencies.

chapter ten

Socializing Your Puppy

Socialization isn't just a training exercise for your new pup: it's a way of life. Use these early weeks to see the world from a different perspective and challenge yourself to find a new experience for your puppy every single day!

It's important to expose your puppy to as many external stimuli as possible in his first weeks. He will remember all of these experiences as he grows up and will learn to accept that new experiences with you don't signify danger, they signify fun!

A well-socialized pup grows into a well-socialized dog, one you can take anywhere because he has seen it all before.



IDEAS FOR EASY SOCIALIZATION

Introducing your canine companion to the wonders of the world is one of the best experiences a new dog owner can have. Watch as they play with their friends at the dog park, see snow for the first time, and meet their first farm animals.

You need to remind them what is and what isn't acceptable behavior on these outings. Just like kids, puppies like to push the boundaries, and it's up to you, the pet parent, to reel them back when they get overexcited.

Here are a few ideas for easy and fun socialization:

- ▶ Take new routes on your daily walks
- ▶ Ask friends with dogs to meet-up for walks (just be sure to introduce your pooches on neutral territories)
- ▶ Take a road trip to visit new areas (for example, if you live in the city, go for a day out in the country!)
- ▶ Take your pup along as you run errands
- ▶ Have other friends pet-sit for you

THE DANGERS OF AN UNSOCIALIZED DOG

NEW THINGS SCARE THEM

If you're trying to enjoy a nice family road trip or hike - it might not be so much fun for your fluffy friend if he hasn't seen much outside of your house and yard. That's not to say that a dog will be scared of new things, but if he's not used to seeing new things - he could have a very hard time indeed.

By the time they are sixteen weeks old, puppies in the wild would have seen everything they would be likely to see for the rest of their life.

If your puppy has not had the proper socialization, it will perceive new things as threatening and react accordingly.



THEY CAN APPEAR AGGRESSIVE

We have all seen instances where we see a dog getting scared or acting aggressively. This is frequently due to poor socialization. While this can seem like no big deal with a smaller breed, but when a larger breed is put into this situation it can have a dangerous outcome.

While we very much believe that each dog is the product of his owner and training, there are certain breeds that have deliberately been bred by humans to have a stronger tendency toward aggression, and therefore, it's our responsibility that we socialize these breeds thoroughly.

There will be instances when a dog may get a shock, on a windy day for example, when a newspaper flies up at him. But a well-socialized dog recovers quickly and carries on.

A poorly socialized dog would be upset by the newspaper and remain prickly and alert to more perceived danger for the rest of his walk.

What started as a fear reaction would be transferred into a potentially aggressive action depending on other encounters on the walk.

chapter eleven

In Summary - General Dos and Don'ts

Having a puppy, like all great superpowers, brings great responsibility. But follow our guide, surround yourself with trusted professionals and a network of like-minded friends, and this will be a transformational time in your life.

Mistakes will happen, fun times will be had, wet dogs will jump in your car, and soggy toys will be lovingly deposited on your pillow. And the fur! Lots of fur. Everywhere. Unless you have a non-shedding dog, of course. Enjoy every moment.

We know he's just one puppy, and how much can one puppy do? Well, they say it only takes one person to change the world, and it will only take one puppy to change your world.



DO

- ▶ Keep a close eye on your puppy - those small rascals can get into big trouble quickly!
- ▶ Start training him from day one and stay vigilant (especially with housebreaking!)
- ▶ Start and stick to a routine
- ▶ Stick to the same food your pup had in his prior home, and gradually introduce new food
- ▶ Have a feeding and watering schedule to aid with housebreaking
- ▶ Make sure everyone in the family knows the rules to hold the pup accountable to
- ▶ Sign up for obedience school
- ▶ Invite - but stagger - family, and friends to come and meet your new pup. This is great socialization for him!
- ▶ Use positive reinforcement
- ▶ Pay attention to his health, and take him to the vet if he isn't acting himself
- ▶ Take lots of pictures, and consider starting an Instagram account for your dog; you know you want to!

DON'T

- ▶ Rush your puppy's training. Practice and consistency make perfect!
- ▶ Forget to take him for deworming and vaccinations
- ▶ Leave him home alone for too long
- ▶ Feed him human food. Puppies have especially weak stomachs and could get sick.
- ▶ Punish or hit him for mistakes - EVER.
- ▶ Let him interact with babies or children unsupervised, even after they have been introduced
- ▶ Forget to have fun!



www.diggs.pet