



**Parker &
Crowther**
Vets

Your **NEW PUPPY**



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Congratulations, you've got a puppy

Getting a new puppy is a magical time in your life but we realise it can also be very daunting for new owners.

Your new family member will rely on you to become happy and healthy and will need your help to grow up to be a well socialised dog.

We have produced this guide to help you through the early stages of puppy ownership, as getting things right from the start can prevent more serious problems further down the line.

We are also on hand to help you at all stages of your dog's life. Our teams have a wealth of knowledge and don't worry - when it comes to puppies there are no such things as silly questions.

If you have any issues please call us for advice.



Getting to know the physical characteristics of your puppy

Getting your puppy used to being touched and handled is massively important. Throughout their life there will be times when they need to be examined by a vet, or you as an owner need to take a closer look at them and it will help if you sow the seeds at an early age.

Get to know what your puppy feels like. Run your hands gently over the whole of your dog so that as you continue to do this in later life you will be able to spot any changes such as lumps, bumps or swellings.

Make sure you feel their feet. Some dogs are particularly sensitive about having their feet touched, so if you get them used to it now it will help if you ever need to remove a thorn or bathe a cut to their paw pad. Make sure you touch in-between their toes too.

Groom your dog on a regular basis so that they get used to the sensation. This not only keeps their coat healthy, but also avoids mats and gets them ready for a trip to the groomer.

Regular brushing of your dog's teeth will reduce the build up of plaque and tartar. This is essential to prevent dental disease which is both painful for your dog and expensive to treat.

You will need to use a toothpaste specially designed for dogs - this is designed to be swallowed unlike human toothpaste. Human toothpaste is also too harsh for the thinner enamel on dogs' teeth. You can get special finger brushes to help you. Start by getting your puppy used to being touched around their mouth. You can then begin to use a finger brush to gently clean the outside of their teeth, before progressing to using dog friendly toothpaste on it.

Regularly check your puppy's eyes. They should be clean and bright.

If they appear to be red or runny for more than a day, consult your vet.

It sounds strange but check the condition of your puppy's ears by smelling them as well as looking at them. If everything is okay they should have a sweetish smell and be pale pink inside. If they smell unpleasant, it could be a sign of an ear infection. A black, sticky gunge is a symptom of ear mites or an infection.

Puppy proofing your home

Puppies are naturally curious - they will want to investigate and probably chew everything, so it is important to eliminate all dangers.

If you wish to limit the rooms your puppy can get to use baby gates in doorways or at the bottom of staircases.

Puppies like to chew, so ensure that electrical cords are covered or kept in cable protectors.

Fit child locks on floor level kitchen doors especially if they contain products which can be harmful to your puppy such as cleaning agents.

Always put things away or out of the way of puppies - a dishwasher tablet left in a reachable place for a few seconds will be a temptation.

Keep appliance doors shut. Small puppies have been known to climb into washing machines, ovens and tumble dryers.

Your puppy will think that your clothes are toys - particularly socks and underwear. Don't leave clothes on the floor and if you are drying washing make sure it's out of the way of your puppy. Vets operate on a lot of puppies to remove items of clothing that they have swallowed!

Always be conscious of your puppy escaping via an open door or window.

Use non-skid mats on slippery floors to prevent your puppy from slipping and causing an injury.

If you have precious ornaments move them to a place where they cannot get knocked and broken.



Safety outside your house

Make sure that your garden is fenced off and secure to prevent your puppy escaping. If there is any gap in or underneath the fencing, your puppy will find it.

If you have a slatted fence or gate, make sure that your puppy can't squeeze through the gaps. Fitting wire mesh is a good idea.

Make sure that you keep garden gates closed at all times.

You may need to put a fence around a garden pond and if you have a hot tub or swimming pool make sure that the cover is fitted.

If possible restrict your puppy's access to your driveway, to prevent potential mishaps.



Toxins & poisons

There are many toxic hazards around your home and garden including medicines, cleaning products, pesticides and plants. Puppies can be exposed to these toxins in a number of different ways including ingestion, contact with the skin or eyes, and inhalation.

If you think your puppy has been poisoned, you will need to get veterinary attention straight away. It will help your vet if you can provide the following details:

- What product you think your puppy has been exposed to (including brand names and a list of ingredients if possible - or take in the product or packaging if it is safe to do so).
- How much they have been exposed to.
- When it happened.
- If you have seen any changes in your puppy since the incident occurred.

If you are concerned about anything your puppy may have eaten, please contact your practice. Below is list of some common poisons and their symptoms, but please be aware this is not an exhaustive list.

HUMAN FOODS	
Toxin	Symptoms (may include some or all)
Chocolate	Vomiting, diarrhoea, excitability, twitching, tremors, fits.
Onion family (including leeks, shallots, garlic and chives)	Lethargy, stomach problems, rapid breathing, discoloured urine. May take a few days for symptoms to show.
Grapes, currants, raisins and sultanas	Stomach problems, kidney problems - look out for signs of increased thirst.
Xylitol (found in many sugar-free items and nicotine replacement products)	Weakness, lethargy, collapse, seizures, liver problems.
Other poisonous items include alcohol, blue cheese, raw bread dough, macadamia nuts and mouldy food.	

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	
Chlorine based bleaches	Corrosive injury to mouth and gut. Excess salivation and stomach problems if diluted - eg bleached water drunk from toilet bowl.
Detergents	Vomiting, breathing problems, dehydration if ingested. Eye irritation through direct contact.
Oven/drain cleaners	Tissue damage, salivation, stomach problems, ulceration, chemical burns, breathing difficulties, difficulty swallowing.
Other toxic household items include dishwasher tablets and salts, kettle descalers and metal polishes.	

MEDICINES

Ibuprofen and non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs	Severe tummy upset, blood in their stools, ulceration vomiting, increased thirst, inappropriate urination and kidney failure.
Oral contraceptives	Mild stomach upsets and disruption to seasons in bitches.
Paracetamol	Vomiting, brown gums, increased heart rate, changes to breathing, swelling to face and paws and delayed liver failure.
Psoriasis creams (contain vitamin D derivatives)	Weakness, profuse vomiting, diarrhoea, increased thirst, muscle spasms, seizures, heart problems, kidney failure and calcification of the lungs and gut.
Other toxic medicines include antidepressants, aspirin, blood pressure medications, diabetes medications, heart medications and sleeping aids.	

IN THE GARDEN

Fungi	Stomach upset, blood in the stools or urine, hallucinations, seizures, kidney or liver failure.
Daffodils/Tulips/ Crocus bulbs	Vomiting, stomach upsets, excess salivation, seizures, increases to blood pressure, heart rate and temperature.
Toads	Irritation to and pain in the mouth, disorientation, increased breathing, heart rate changes and fits.
Other garden toxins include acorns, compost, foxgloves, conkers, apple seeds, fruit stones (plums, cherries), yew trees.	

IN THE SHED

Antifreeze	Vomiting, diarrhoea, weakness, drunken appearance, kidney failure.
Herbicides	Vomiting, dehydration, blood in the stools or vomit, mouth ulcers, breathing problems, heart problems, kidney and liver failure.
Rat and mouse poison	Internal bleeding, weakness, lethargy, lameness, bruising, vomiting, excitability, changes in temperature, seizures.
Slug pellets	Tremors, twitching, seizures.
Other toxins found in sheds and garages include creosote, teak oil, fertilisers, fuel, gloss paints, insecticides, white spirit and waterproofing sprays.	



Getting your puppy used to the car

If you have a puppy, it's a good idea to expose them to car rides early.

You can start while your car is stationary, encouraging them to sit calmly. Use treats to reward good behaviour but don't over fuss them. Get them used to the sound of the indicators and the radio and also the movement of the windscreen wipers.

After a few sessions in the car switch the engine on - make sure you are in a well-ventilated area and get them used to the engine.

Once they are used to being in the car, go on short journeys.

Keep these first rides short, pleasant and fun. Give them their favourite toy to play with during the journey. Go to somewhere they know and like, such as a local park.

Some dogs will experience motion sickness. It helps if you don't travel when your dog has a full or completely empty stomach. Drive carefully and avoid sudden, sharp changes of direction. If car sickness becomes an ongoing issue speak to your vet who can recommend products to help combat the effects of motion sickness.

If your dog pants heavily without drooling or vomiting, it is a sign of stress and we would advise consulting a dog behaviourist for advice.

Rule 57 of the Highway Code states that drivers are responsible for making sure animals are suitably restrained in a vehicle so that they cannot distract or injure the driver or themselves during an emergency stop. To comply with this always use a crate or a dog seatbelt/harness.

Diet and nutrition

Diet can be a complicated issue for owners. There is a huge range of commercially available dog foods on the market and it is difficult for owners to choose, as these products vary considerably in quality and palatability.

The food puppies are raised on may vary between breeders and you may have been given a small supply of food to bring home. Discuss your puppy's diet with your vet who will be able to advise if any dietary changes are needed.

Please note that any changes to diet should be done gradually to avoid stomach upsets.

The food you feed your puppy while they are growing, is absolutely critical to their development. A quality veterinary approved diet will be balanced and contain the correct balance of protein and minerals.

Whilst these diets tend to be more expensive than some brands they can be more economical in the long run because you can serve smaller portions. Cheaper food tends to be bulked out with lots of fibre - which can also lead to lots of messy poo to clear up! Tinned food can be as much as 80% water.

A puppy needs several small meals every day. Start by feeding your puppy four meals a day and reduce this to three meals when they are four to six months old. When they reach adulthood this can reduce to two meals a day.

Top tips for feeding your puppy include:

- Try not to vary their diet as this can affect their digestion
- Any changes in diet should be made gradually over the space of a week
- Choose a product specifically designed for puppies - your vet will be able to offer advice
- Always ensure that clean drinking water is available
- Don't overfeed - your vet will be able to advise you on portion size for your puppy's age and breed
- Avoid feeding them human food - don't respond to their begging. It may seem cruel but it is one of the kindest things you can do. Pet obesity causes many life threatening problems later in life which can be both distressing and costly to treat
- If you are using rewards to train your puppy, although you may find the training process easier with some dogs if you use treats

Make sure your puppy has access to fresh drinking water at all times and remember to wash food and water bowls before each meal in order to prevent the spread of germs.



Exercise

Puppies are bundles of energy, but they do get tired quickly, so it's important not to over-exercise them.

Always take water with you on the walk and if the weather is hot, walk them at cooler times of the day - early mornings and evenings. If you feel hot, your puppy will too.

You should aim to walk a dog at least once a day. This will help to strengthen their bones and muscles, and help with weight control.

Short, regular walks and building exercise gradually is recommended to help your puppy's development, and long sessions of chasing and fetching toys should be avoided.

If at any time during your walk you notice that your dog is struggling beyond their usual capabilities, consult a vet to see if there are any underlying causes.

Toys and chews

Your puppy will need toys to play with, as well as something to chew on every day, such as dried vegetable chews.

Many owners will choose soft, squeaky toys or rubber toys but most puppies will quickly destroy these and may swallow some of the pieces.

Puzzle feeders are a great way to stimulate your puppy. They are chew toys that you stuff with food or treats, and which will keep your new pal entertained endlessly! Do remember to clean them after they've been used.

Avoid giving your puppy bones and rawhide chews. Cooked bones can splinter and cause mouth injuries and chews can soften, breaking into small pieces which can get stuck in the teeth or throat.

Don't throw sticks for your dog. Sticks can cause horrific injuries to a dog's mouth and throat. Try and discourage your puppy from chewing on sticks on their walks as these can splinter.

You should carry one of their favourite toys with you on walks, to divert their attention from sticks or other undesirable objects.

Vaccinations

There are a number of potentially fatal disease that can affect dogs in the UK.

Having your puppy vaccinated is the only safe way to provide immunity against these diseases and if carried out, regular boosters can protect your dog for life.

As long as their mother is immune, puppies will usually be protected for the first few weeks of their life.

Puppy vaccination is usually a two step course.

The first vaccination may be given as early as six weeks of age, but may be better given later to avoid interference from antibodies passed from the mother. The second vaccination is given two to four weeks later at ten weeks of age at the earliest. You then need to wait a further two weeks before your puppy is fully protected to walk in public places.







Annual boosters will ensure that the protection is effectively maintained.

When your vet gives your puppy the initial vaccination course they will give you a vaccination record card. Keep this safe as you will need it when you attend training classes, put your dog into boarding kennels etc.

When you vaccinate your dog, not only are you protecting your dog but you are helping to stop the spread of disease to other dogs.



What diseases can we vaccinate against?

DISEASE	DESCRIPTION	WITHIN PUPPY VACCINATION COURSE	ADDITIONAL VACCINATION
Canine Parvovirus	A highly contagious disease that can be fatal to dogs. The virus may cause many symptoms, most obviously on the gut, causing bloody vomit and diarrhoea.		
Canine Distemper	Closely related to the human measles virus, canine distemper can be fatal. It attacks the dog's nervous system.		
Infectious Hepatitis	This is an acute liver infection spread through the faeces, urine, blood, saliva and nasal discharge of infected dogs.		
Leptospirosis	This is a bacterial infection that can lead to major organ failure. It is contracted by your dog coming into contact with urine from infected dogs, rats and foxes.		
Kennel Cough	A variety of infectious illnesses that result in a hacking cough, and are highly contagious. It can cause more severe disease in young, sick or stressed dogs.		
Rabies	A viral disease that causes inflammation of the brain. This disease is not normally found in the UK, but rabies vaccinations are usually essential if you are planning to travel abroad with your pet.		

Parasites

When it comes to parasites, prevention is better than cure. Start as you mean to go on with a treatment regime. Many vets will offer health plans which give you discount on veterinary supplied parasite prevention treatments and send owners a reminder on when to apply them.

Fleas

Due to their life cycle, fleas are a year-round problem. For every adult flea there are approximately 500 fleas at various stages of the life-cycle including eggs, larvae and pupae.

Because fleas like warmth, they are naturally a problem in spring and summer but central heating in our houses also means that autumn and winter can be just as bad.

The flea eggs lie dormant in the soft furnishings of an owner's home and when conditions are right, develop to adult fleas which then lay more eggs, which soon leads to an infestation.

Whilst many adult dogs live with fleas and show minimal symptoms, because fleas feed on blood, a puppy with fleas can soon become anaemic. This can cause them to be lethargic and even seriously ill.

Some dogs are allergic to flea saliva and can get dermatitis as a result of being bitten. The irritation causes the dog to scratch and chew at its skin resulting in sores and scabs.

Humans can also be bitten by fleas, usually lurking in the carpets, resulting in raised itchy lumps.

Fleas are also the intermediate host for a type of tapeworm. Tapeworm eggs are shed in a dog's poo and eaten by flea larvae which then develop into adult infected fleas. During grooming a dog can ingest these fleas and develop tapeworm.

Dogs can catch fleas from other dogs and from the environment, so it is important that you have a rigorous preventative routine in place.

Ticks

Ticks are oval shaped insects which attach themselves to a host animal to feed. When attached they may look like brown or grey warts.

Most dogs pick up ticks when moving through undergrowth.

When feeding, a tick hooks its mouth parts onto the host, so never just pull a tick off as you may leave its head under the skin which can become infected. Use a tick removal tool which, when used correctly, ensures that all the tick is removed. Then remember to kill the tick so that it cannot run off and attach itself to another animal.

Worms

There are two common types of worm that can infect your puppy - roundworms and tapeworms.

Due to the life-cycle of the roundworm it is fair to assume that all puppies are infected with roundworm at birth. Dogs can pick up roundworm eggs from soil that has had dog faeces on it. The eggs can lie dormant in the soil for up to two years.

Infected eggs can also be present in a dog's coat, so it is important that you wash your hands after touching your pet or cleaning up their faeces, as worm larvae can cause permanent damage to human eyesight.

Dogs catch tapeworm by eating infected mice, birds or fleas. If your dog has tapeworms little egg-filled segments of the tapeworm's body will crawl out of your dog's bottom, causing intense itching.



Microchipping

Microchipping is a legal requirement for dogs over eight weeks old. In most cases the breeder will have already had your puppy microchipped, but the database will need to be updated with your details. In fact, it is a legal requirement for you to keep your contact details up to date on the database, throughout your pet's life.

A microchip is a small device approximately the size of a grain of rice, which is inserted under your dog's skin, usually on the back of the neck. The microchip holds a unique number which is then registered to your dog on a national database.

Microchip scanners are used to read the microchip. Vets, the police and dog wardens all use microchip scanners to identify dogs.

Remember that if you move to a new house or change your phone number, you will need to update your details on the database.

Your puppy will also need to wear an ID tag on a collar when out in public this is also a legal requirement. The ID tag must contain your name and address. It is not compulsory to include a contact telephone number, but we would highly recommend that you do.



Insurance

Dogs can be very expensive. Modern day veterinary medicine is a highly sophisticated and technological branch of science and this comes at a cost. Recent advances mean that MRI scans and CT scans are increasingly being used for diagnosis, and costs naturally increase when such expensive pieces of equipment are required.

At some point during their life, your dog might get ill or have an accident. If you are unlucky you may have a dog that has a lifelong problem which requires regular ongoing treatment.

Having insurance cover can mean that difficult choices, involving the costs of different treatment options, can be avoided.

There are many, many pet insurance providers and it can be a minefield checking through the small print to check that you have adequate cover.

Some policies limit the amount that can be claimed in a set period of time. Some policies will exclude a previously claimed for condition on the annual renewal date and all policies will have an excess that the owner will need to pay.

You may need to pay your vet's bill and claim the money back through your insurance, or your practice may take payment directly from the insurance company. This will depend on the company you are insured with, the time they take to settle accounts and your practice's policy.

When choosing a policy you need to consider the following:

- Check that the amount of veterinary fee cover is adequate. A single condition can end up costing thousands of pounds over time
- Check whether there are time limits included in your policy. You can purchase lifetime policies, limited lifetime policies only covering to a set amount of money, and annual policies which only cover a condition for one year. Chronic conditions, such as arthritis and certain skin conditions can continue throughout your pet's life.
- Check that your dog will still be covered in later years
- Check the small print. For example, some policies guarantee not to increase your payments after you make a claim, which may allow you to budget better. Most policies do not cover dental work - those that do, may insist on an annual dental check with your vet.

Your insurance should also cover you for claims if your dog causes injury to a person or another animal and also if they cause damage to property.

Insurance will not cover you for routine vaccinations and parasite protection.

Neutering

There are many abandoned dogs in rescue centres, so if you are not planning on breeding from your dog, discuss having them neutered with your vet, to avoid unplanned pregnancies.

When neutering is performed on male dogs it is known as castration and on female dogs it is known as spaying. Several factors can influence when neutering is best performed, so discuss your options with your vet.

Castration

Castration in male dogs will help avoid prevent unplanned breeding, and may discourage unwanted sexual behaviour and reduce hormonally-induced aggression. Castration is the surgical removal of the testes under anaesthetic. The procedure is generally carried out as a day patient.

The removal of the testes stops production of the male hormones and so can have a positive effect on behaviour. Behavioural changes may not be instant, and are restricted to the behaviours associated with male hormones.

- Undesirable sexual behaviour: this can include attractions to female dogs, escaping from the garden, roaming and mounting.
- Urine marking: depending upon how confident they are with other dogs, some dogs will raise their leg whilst urinating and instead of emptying the whole bladder will retain some urine to deposit on vertical surfaces. This behaviour is called scent marking - leaving their scent at nose height for other dogs. Some dogs will do this within the home.
- Neutering may cause dogs to be less aggressive towards other dogs. However, castration of anxious or fearful dogs can make defensive and nervous aggression worse. Please discuss castration with your vet if your dog has any behavioural problems, as these will need to be addressed before any surgery is undertaken.

There are also medical benefits to having your dog castrated:

- Castration eliminates the possibility of testicular cancer
- It may reduce the change of your dog getting certain types of prostatic disease
- It can reduce the risk of perianal tumours and hernias in older dogs

The question of when to castrate your dog can be a complex one. Some dogs can be castrated from six months of age, but for others it may be more appropriate to delay neutering until they are older. If you are unsure of when to neuter your dog, or whether for them to have the procedure at all, please speak to one of our vets or nurses for advice that is personal to your pet.

Please be aware that castration may change the relationship with other dogs in the household.

Spaying

There are many advantages to having your bitch spayed.

- Spaying prevents the bitch from coming into season, which can occur between one and three times a year, and usually lasts for around three weeks. Sometimes during their season the bitch will have a swollen vulva and a discharge of blood and/or mucus. You may also notice her urinating to scent mark, showing signs of restlessness or losing appetite.
- It prevents unplanned pregnancies.
- It stops the unwanted attention of male dogs may be very persistent in trying to mate with your bitch. Conversely, unspayed female dogs may seek to escape to find a mate when they are in season.
- If the operation is performed at the right stage of the cycle, it eliminates the risk of a false pregnancy. This is when the bitch feels unwell, produces milk, starts nest building and may be aggressive.
- It prevents a serious, potentially life threatening infection of the womb called pyometra, which is more common in older dogs.
- It greatly reduces the chance of developing mammary cancer if the bitch is spayed before reaching maturity.

Most bitches will need to reduce their calorie intake after being neutered. You should discuss a suitable diet with your vet. They can also train you to body condition score your dog so that you know how to tell if they are beginning to gain weight.

Certain breeds may be predisposed to urinary incontinence and spaying may exacerbate this situation. Again, you can discuss any concerns you may have with your vet.

Spaying is generally recommended either before the bitch has first season, or three months after her season, when hormone levels are at their lowest and blood supply to the tissues is not increased.

The operation will be performed under general anaesthetic. A traditional spay involves an incision being made along the middle of abdomen and removing the ovaries and uterus. Keyhole operations involve several small incisions and the removal of the ovaries only, and generally result in less painful and shorter recoveries.



House-training & toilet training

As long as you put in the time and effort to establish a routine, toilet training shouldn't be difficult.

Choose a place you want them to associate with toileting. If you have used puppy pads indoors, pop the pad down in the area as the smell will help them to know where you want them to toilet. This could be an area of the garden or an outdoor space nearby. Always pick up after your dog and dispose of the mess responsibly.

As a general rule puppies need to urinate immediately after waking up and will generally need to urinate within 15 minutes of eating and defecate within 30 minutes of eating, so be ready at these times to take them out. Keeping a record can help you look for patterns.

Repeat words to them that they will associate with their actions when they are urinating or defecating and reward their successful actions. You will be able to use these words as prompts later on. It is important that you remain positive - negative reinforcement such as shouting or intimidation will not work, and will make your puppy frightened of you. Remain patient and shower them with praise when they are successful.

If your puppy doesn't toilet straight away wait a few minutes before going back inside. Keep an eye on them and then take them out after 10 minutes and try again. You may have to repeat this several times.

When your puppy is indoors look out for the signs that they need the loo. These include:

- Sniffing the floor
- Circling
- Restlessness
- Going into a room they have previously toileted in

If you see any of these signs take them out to their designated toileting area. It all sounds so simple but every puppy is an individual and accidents are inevitable. Routine will help a lot in the early days, as will trying to avoid the following mistakes:

- Don't leave your puppy all night without taking them out to toilet. Setting an alarm and taking them outside will speed up training, but if this is not practical use puppy pads so at least they have a designated indoor spot.
- Maintain a consistent diet - don't swap and change and don't overfeed.
- Don't feed at irregular times - stick to a routine.
- Don't expect your puppy to tell you when they need to go out.
- Don't leave the door open to the garden so that they can come and go as they please. They need to know to understand that they should wait to use the garden if the door is closed, for example in cold weather, or when you are out of the house.
- Avoid saying phrases like "good boy" when they toilet. This is a common term you would use for lots of other occasions and you don't want them urinating every time you say it!
- Don't punish your dog if they have an accident inside. Just ignore them, as otherwise it can make them scared of toileting in front of you - even when they are outside.
- Don't leave your puppy alone in the garden. As your puppy is learning, it is important that you are there to reward them with a treat.
- Avoid playing games with them in the garden before they have toileted as this will distract them from the matter in hand.
- Restrict access to absorbent surfaces like carpets and rugs.
- Don't use ammonia-based cleaning compounds as they smell similar to urine and may encourage them to wee there again. Use a warm solution of biological washing powder to clean the area.

Now that you've mastered the art of getting your puppy to only toilet in the garden, you will get frustrated that they don't go to the toilet on a walk, preferring instead to hold it in until they get home. To break this habit you need to get up early and take your puppy for a walk before they have had their morning wee. They may still choose to hold it in so patience is the key.

You will need to keep your routine going for several months. During this time your puppy will learn that they get praise for toileting outside and as they will be well supervised when inside, they won't get the opportunity to toilet indoors.

As your puppy gets older you can gradually increase the time between visits to the garden. You should find that as your puppy gets the urge to go they will let you know by walking over to the door.



Socialisation

Meeting strangers

Your puppy needs time to settle in to their new environment. Everything is new and exciting so let them settle in before inviting people over to say hello.

When meeting strangers in the home for the first time it may help to have them on a lead and to have some treats handy to reward good behaviour.

The person they are meeting needs to be relaxed and to avoid overly fussing your puppy, as this can be overwhelming, and possibly intimidating. Puppies will be tempted to growl, bark and jump at visitors so using the command “off” from an early age will stop them getting into bad habits.

Let your puppy go to the person, rather than the other way round. Once your puppy has learned to sit on command each new friend should ask them to sit and then give them a reward. This will make your puppy less likely to jump up.

Meeting other dogs

Your puppy needs to be vaccinated before meeting other animals. Once vaccinated, it is a good idea for them to meet other dogs to help them to socialise.

When introducing your puppy to another dog ensure that they are both on leads so that you can keep control. Introduce them gradually and if there is a negative reaction use the word “no” and move them apart to a point where they have stopped reacting. Make sure you are relaxed and keep a positive tone. Try introducing them again. Over time each dog should acclimatise by sniffing and getting closer without any negative behaviour.

Dogs and children

Puppies are inquisitive and like to play... and they are a magnet to children. It is therefore important that children are taught how to behave around a puppy because the puppy can growl and will nip if they feel threatened.

Children should be taught to:

- Never scream or run towards your puppy
- Never to pick up the puppy as they may unintentionally hurt or frighten them
- Never harass or mistreat them
- Never to be rough with them
- Never encourage play biting
- Never stare at your puppy
- Never corner your puppy
- That your puppy is a living creature - not a toy

Look out for signs that your puppy is getting tired of a child's attention and give them their own quiet space.

Never leave a dog alone with children.

General Socialisation

If you want your puppy to grow into a well-developed adult dog, it pays to expose them to as many scenarios as you can whilst they are a puppy.

It is a good idea for your puppy to mix with a wide range of people including toddlers and babies (under strict supervision), elderly people, people with a physical disability, people in uniform, loud vivacious people etc.

Get them used to the hustle and bustle of the streets - traffic noise, car horns, lorry air brakes, motorbikes and cyclists.

Give them as many experiences as you can - bus and train journeys, lifts, escalators.

It is important that your puppy is given the chance to relax in these situations and not just be excited by everything. Remember to reward them for positive behaviour with treats or a happy tone of voice.

Socialisation Checklist

(under supervision and on a lead where appropriate)

GENTLE HANDLING			
Head		Groom with a soft brush	
Ears		Collar	
Mouth		Lead	
Neck area		Gentle restraint until accepted	
Tail		Car harness	
Paws, legs and toes		Reward based training	

OBJECTS TO PLAY WITH			
Cardboard box		Bucket	
Large stuffed toy		Treat ball	
Empty plastic bottle (remove lid)			

SMELLS			
Kitchen and household		People	
Cats		Horses	
Baby		Livestock	
Other dogs		Rabbits	
Veterinary surgery		Boarding kennels	

SOUNDS			
<p>To give your puppy access to a wide variety of sounds you can buy a specially designed CD for desensitising pets</p>			

OTHER ANIMALS			
Friendly adult dogs		Goats/sheep	
Cats		Fish in ponds	
Rabbits/small pets		Fish in tanks	
Horses		Chickens	

PEOPLE			
Young adults		People wearing glasses	
Middle aged adults		Men with beards/facial hair	
Elderly adults		Postman/woman	
Loud, confident people		People wearing dark clothing	
Shy, timid people		People wearing a mask	
People wearing hats		People wearing a motorcycle helmet	
Disabled/infirm/people in wheelchairs			

PREPARING FOR VETS/GROOMERS			
Being lifted on to a table		Veterinary product smells	
Gentle restraint on table		Hair dryer	
Veterinary examination			

EXPERIENCES			
Watching passing traffic		Buses	
Car/van ride		Trains	
Park		Countryside	
Streets		Towns	
Bicycles		Crowds	
Motorcycles		Lorries	

MEETING CHILDREN			
Babies (0-2 years)		School age (6-13 years)	
Toddlers (2-6 years)		Teenagers (13 - 17 years)	

SURFACES			
Clean grass		Carpet	
Lino, tiles, slippery surface		Gravel, stones, pebbles	
Steps, stairs			

PLAYING			
With a ball		With a tug toy	

Separation anxiety

Dogs are very social animals and have evolved to live in groups.

Dogs that do not like being alone may show physiological signs of fear, including an increase in heart rate, panting and salivating - all classic signs of separation anxiety.

They may also exhibit unwanted behaviour including:

- Destructive behaviour - scratching at carpets, chewing door frames etc
- Vocalisation - barking, whining or howling
- Inappropriate toileting

On your return, your puppy may be very excitable and follow you around the house.

Although dogs shouldn't be left alone for long periods, it is important that they are trained to accept being alone and to tolerate this for reasonable lengths of time. This training should begin while they are a puppy. You have to decide where you want to leave them alone. Some people will use a utility room for example where accidents are easy to clean up whilst some people will use the dog's crate. It is important that you don't just put them in this room when you are leaving them as they may learn to associate this room with isolation.

Once you have chosen which room you will be leaving them in you need to prepare it. You can either put them in their dog crate or fix a stair gate in the doorway. Stair gates are perfect for training your dog for periods alone, as they still allow them to see, smell and hear you. Put a comfortable bed, water and a chew toy in the room. You can also try turning on the radio tuned in to a talking station, and putting unwashed clothing in the room so they can still smell you.

Put them in this room randomly throughout the day. Initially this can be for short periods. If your pup struggles at this point you can stay in the room with them but do not interact with them. Gradually over time move to the other side of the gate and then further away. Build up to your puppy being left alone for half an hour whilst you are elsewhere in the house.

You can use a dog appeasing pheromone in the room to relax your puppy, as well as to help them to settle overnight. Your vets will be able to give you advice on which product will best suit your needs.

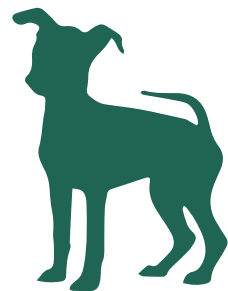




Once they are comfortable with this, you can try leaving the house for a few minutes. Again, as long as they don't show signs of distress you can gradually increase the length of time you are away. If your dog gets anxious when he sees you putting on your coat or picking up your keys, you will need to desensitise them to these actions by randomly picking up keys or putting on your coat throughout the day without going out. They will then not associate these actions with being left alone.

When you return, keep your greetings low key.

If you cannot progress to this stage and your puppy is showing signs of separation anxiety when they are left alone you need to seek the advice of a pet behaviourist.





Crate training

A dog crate is a very useful accessory. It is your puppy's safe, secure den. Get the largest crate that you can fit into your space, and allow it to be your puppy's safe space - when they're in there, leave them alone! Your dog needs to be able to stand, turn and stretch. You should make sure that they have access to food, water and toys.

Dog crates have a number of functions:

- They can be very useful when training your dog
- Use crates for short-term confinement, for example, when you are not able to supervise them
- Your vet may advise the use of a crate to aid recovery after surgery
- They can help keep dogs secure and comfortable whilst travelling in a car

Ideally the crate should be in a social area as dogs are sociable animals. The best place in the room is where your dog naturally goes to when he wants a rest.

Some owners will put their dog in a crate whenever they leave the house. This is not cruel, but the crate needs to be large enough for your dog and you need to return before your dog needs to go to the toilet.

So that your puppy does not associate their crate with being left alone, make sure that you regularly put your puppy in their crate when you are around - this can be their quiet time. Leave the crate door open when at home so they can go in and out as they please.

Building a good relationship

It is vital that you establish a good relationship with your dog, with clear rules that are applied consistently. If this is not the case, your dog may revert to naughty and disobedient behaviour - possessiveness of toys or food, climbing on furniture and running off or not responding to calls.

Dogs mainly communicate through body language and scent, whereas owners communicate through speech and body language.

You need to be consistent in your approach so that your dog is motivated by your instructions.

Here are a few simple rules to follow:

1. Keep meal times consistent and never feed your dog scraps from the table. We wouldn't recommend you giving dogs human food.
2. Consider how much you want your dog to climb on to the furniture. You can always make the floor the place for cuddles. If you want them to sit on your lap make sure it is by invitation only.
3. Groom and inspect your dog daily.
4. Ask your dog to sit before they receive a treat or you open a door for them.
5. Do not allow your dog to demand attention. Reward behaviour you want to encourage and either ignore what you don't, or distract your puppy until they stop.
6. Always stop playing games before they have had enough. This way you are in control of playtime. Say "that's enough" at the end of the play session and they will learn the command.

Training

Training should be fun. A positive, relaxed environment will encourage your dog to perform and learn more quickly.

Only use reward based methods of training which stimulate a waggy tail response.

Train your puppy in a distraction free, quiet environment to help them learn.

When rewarding your dog it is important to take into account two different factors:

- What to reward with
- When to reward

To encourage rapid learning use both praise and food as rewards. You can use your puppy's normal food as well as any treats. Use small amounts to encourage your puppy to continue to work.

It is vitally important that you give the reward at the appropriate time so that your puppy learns the right response. For example, if you want your puppy to sit, you must give the reward whilst they are sitting.

You must give the reward within one second of the action you are trying to teach your dog.

Each day, train them in short sessions of five to ten minutes in length.

Repetition is important when teaching your puppy a new command. Initially begin by rewarding every time your puppy obeys the command. Once your dog is happily performing the command without hesitation go on to rewarding them intermittently. This will encourage them to work harder and establish the learned command.

If your dog is having trouble learning the command, slow down. Try shorter training sessions and use tastier rewards.

Dogs can be location specific when learning a command. For example your puppy may be very good at the "sit" command at the training class but won't carry out the command anywhere else. If you are in a different location and this happens, go back to an earlier stage of the training and take your time.

Be patient - practice makes perfect.

Stopping your puppy from mouthing

We all love to cuddle and play with our puppy and the majority of interaction we have with them is fine. However, sometimes when puppies are handled they will put their mouth around your hand and chew a little. The amount this happens will vary considerably between puppies.

Some puppies may actually cause bruising and puncture marks to the skin.

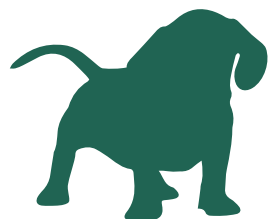
Mouthing behaviour is a normal part of behavioural development. During their first six months of life they will show excessive oral behaviour, trying to pick up and investigate things with their mouth. At this age they are not aware that this can be painful and is inappropriate behaviour.

Normally puppies will learn not to use their mouths inappropriately as the rest of the family pack would teach them not to do so and the behaviour would gradually stop over the course of a few months. However, as your puppy lives in a house with humans you need to teach them that this sort of behaviour is not permitted.

When your puppy mouths you anywhere on the body you must react. React as soon as their mouth touches you. Do not wait for them to bite down hard as we need to teach them not to open their mouth over any body part.

When your puppy mouths, gently remove your hand and give them a toy to bite instead. It is really important that everyone in the house is consistent with this reaction.

Make a note of when the mouthing happens and make adjustments as necessary. For example, if it happens when they are sleepy avoid interacting with them when they are tired or first wake.



Preventing your puppy from becoming possessive

Many dogs suffer from possessive related aggressive behaviour in adult life. They may run away with stolen objects or chews and if approached may become aggressive. This behaviour is related to anxiety regarding the item they have acquired and any aggression is a defensive response.

It is valuable to teach your puppy from a very young age that they need not be anxious in regard to their food, chews or toys and that they should relax when you approach them. It is also important to teach them to give up an object when you ask them to. This will help when they pick up valuable or dangerous items.

When your puppy is chewing an item teach them to regard your approach as a positive interaction. This can be done by regularly approaching them when they are chewing or playing with a toy and rewarding them for relinquishing it.

Approach your puppy and in a calm voice ask them to “give”. Then pick up the object. Praise your puppy, give them a treat and then give the object back to them.

Repeat this daily when they are playing with items that they are allowed, in order to make this a habitual response.

When situations arise where they have an object they are not allowed, they will learn that they do not get the object returned.

Practice adding a little food to your pup’s bowl when they are eating. Do this daily to get them to relax in case anyone approaches whilst they are having their food.

Do not regularly take your dog’s food away from them as this will make them anxious and can spoil their trust in you. If you must remove their food on occasion, exchange it for a favourite reward.





Stopping your puppy from jumping up

Puppies will spend a lot of their time jumping up. At an early age this can be a very endearing behaviour and one which we respond to by cuddling or talking to them. However, when your puppy grows up and becomes a large adult this can cause problems, so it is useful to teach your puppy not to jump up from an early stage of development.

You need to teach your puppy that jumping up will not achieve a reward or attention. It is therefore important that you do not respond when they jump up. Instead you should either turn around, or step backwards so that their feet fall to the ground, and then ignore them until they stop.

Teaching your puppy to sit

Teach your puppy to sit on command. Stand or crouch in front of your puppy, show them a treat, let them sniff it but not eat it.

Once you have their attention, hold the treat just near to their nose but do not let them eat it. Lift the food above their head so that they sit down then immediately give them the treat.

Do not push your puppy's bottom down or force them into position, it should be natural.

Do not say the command "sit" until you are sure that your puppy already knows and can perform the action. When you are at this stage, repeat the process and say "sit" before you move the treat above their head.

Once your puppy has grasped this command use it regularly at home. Try and encourage your dog to sit before you give them any attention or play.

Do not punish your puppy for jumping up at you as this may affect their behaviour when greeting people by causing them to become defensively aggressive.



Stopping your puppy from chewing

All dogs need something to chew daily, and it is important that you train your puppy from an early age to chew the toys and treats you provide. From an early age they begin to lose their temporary teeth and their new permanent teeth begin to make an appearance. The sensation this process creates within the mouth makes it very satisfying for them to chew different items.

During the first six months of life puppies also go through a developmental stage which increases their oral behaviour - thus they wish to investigate items using their mouth. Both of these factors contribute to the puppy chewing stage that we all know and often dread!

Accidents will inevitably happen. There will be a time when your puppy will have chewed or destroyed a valuable piece of clothing or furniture. The aim at this time of their life is not to eliminate chewing, as this is not possible, but rather to plan to provide suitable outlets for this behaviour.

Try and give your puppy different items to chew which will be more rewarding than the remote control, chair legs or the sofa.

Different dogs have different preferences for chewing, such as pulling stuffing from toys. In this instance, provide them with safe soft toys so that they don't focus their attention on your cushions.

All puppies should be provided with rubber toys that release treats when chewed, and which also provide mental stimulation, positively rewarding them for focusing on these items rather than furniture.

If you find your puppy chewing something inappropriate then if possible remove the item and give them an alternative chew toy. If there is a particular item or piece of furniture your puppy returns to time and time again you will need to aim to make this item repellent to your puppy. You need to make sure it is not associated with punishment on your part as this only means that your puppy will go back to it when your back is turned. Safe, pet-specific products that can be applied to furniture to make it taste unpleasant to pets and therefore discourage chewing are available.

Never punish your dog for chewing, as it is normal behaviour.





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