

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BRINGING THEM HOME

the
Practical Puppy

Preparation Guide

12 Basic
items to have
before
puppy arrives

NUTRITION IS KEY:
THE BEST
SUPPLEMENTS
& **DOG FOODS**
FOR A LONG, HAPPY LIFE



Puppy Proof
YOUR HOME
AND YARD

A kid's guide:
Handling Puppy



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can play with their new best friend

Recommendations

Many items or practices are recommended in this document. Some are vital to raising a healthy and well-trained dog. Others are simply suggestions for you to consider and decide whether or not they work well with your lifestyle.

Links

There are several affiliate links in the beginning of this document. We work with brands like NuVet and PawTree to recommend high quality products. Similar items to those we recommend can be found on most pet-product retail websites.

Practical Puppy Training

Check out our website to see videos of puppies training in our Bootcamp, find our training booklets, or to connect with us.

Preparation 101

a practical guide

Your puppy is coming home soon! This is an exciting time, but it can be a little overwhelming when looking at dog products to decide what you need to make your puppy comfortable and safe in your home.

We want to help make this transition as easy and fun as possible for both you and your new little one, so here's a list of the 12 basic items we recommend getting before your puppy comes home. These will help keep your puppy safe, comfortable, and happy!

The Basic Puppy Starter Kit

Equipment:

- Food & Water Dishes
- Crate
- Leash & 4-6 ft Collar
- Exercise Pen
- Brush
- Dog Bed

Toys & Chews:

- Rope Toy
- Soft Bone
- Hard Bone
- No Stuffing Toy
- Ball

Treats:

- Soft Puppy Training Treats

Nutrition

for a long and healthy life

Not all dog foods supply balanced nutrition. Many brands you'll find on the shelf of the store are made primarily with cheap fillers that do little for your dog's health. Feeding your dog foods like this make it far more likely that they will have health problems that lead to expensive veterinary bills in the future. Invest in a good food now - not in veterinary care later. Your dog will be healthier and happier for it.

You can choose to feed your dog a raw diet, a freeze-dried diet, or dog kibble. There are pros and cons to each. Whichever you choose, it will always be best to provide the occasional variety to your dog's diet, or to add supplements to their meals. Do your research on whatever food you buy for your dog - diet is critical to a long and healthy life!

When preparing for your new puppy to come home, ask what kind of food he is currently eating. A dog's digestive system is sensitive to change. If your puppy is suddenly switched from one food to another, it is very likely he will have diarrhea for several days.

To prevent this, buy a small bag of the food he is currently on. Over the first week you have your puppy, mix his old food with his new food, slowly decreasing the old and increasing the new.

Companies often change the formulas they use in their dog foods, and sometimes recalls can happen. For this reason, I recommend always checking the Dog Food Advisor website before buying a new food. They report on the ingredients, processing, and quality of dog food brands.



Recommended Foods:

As of writing this, there are three brands of dog kibble that I use and recommend.

1) [PawTree Turkey and Sweet Potato recipe.](#)

PawTree is a high-quality food that I use with most of my dogs. Their health and stools have always been great while on this food.

2) [Life's Abundance Puppy Food](#)

Life's Abundance is also a great high-quality food. The only thing to note is that their main protein is chicken, and some breeds (typically Poodles) often have allergies to chicken.

3) [Venture Turkey and Squash recipe](#)

I don't typically recommend a grain-free diet, but this dog food has limited, quality ingredients, which is fantastic for dogs with numerous allergies.

Supplements

If you want to feed your dog a diet that will set them up for the best life possible, supplements are a very good idea. There's no need to go overboard, but there are a few I recommend considering.

The nutrition in any dry dog kibbles will not cover %100 of what your dog needs. If you feed freeze dried or a raw diet, you will be closer, but there will still be some gaps. Here's what you can provide to help cover those. All of these supplements are ones I use either daily or weekly with my own dog.

Salmon Oil

Providing fish oil for your dog is great for their skin, coat, and overall health. You can find it on many pet store sites. I get mine from PawTree here.

[Buy Here](#)

Coconut Oil

This is also great for coat health. It can make an obvious change in some dogs. If a dog with a faded red coat is given a tablespoon of coconut oil a day, their coat can change to a dark red - it's natural color when it's in a healthy state provided by good nutrition.

NuVet Vitamins

NuVet Plus is a complete system support, cold-pressed vitamin made in the USA with natural, human grade ingredients. It has a formula of antioxidants, amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and more for the health and proper development of puppies and young growing dogs.

Along with promoting a healthy skin and coat, it provides maximum immune system support, helps stop itching and scratching, supports healthy ears and eyes, aids in digestion, and more.

This vitamin supports pups during the stressful transition into a new home, and helps bolster their immune system through those first puppy vaccines.

NuJoint Plus is typically for elderly dogs who are losing energy and have joint pain (I've seen this one work wonders in my family's elderly dogs. They regained so much energy and almost acted like their younger selves!)

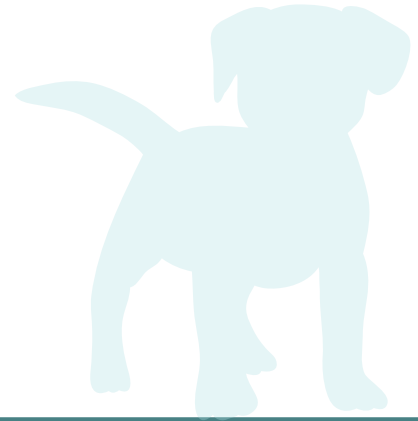
BUT NuJoint is also great for large-breed puppies to take during the first year of their life. Large-breed dogs are at risk for hip and joint issues. Taking a vitamin like NuJoint during that first year can not only be a preventative for their later years, but it can help keep your puppy's joints stronger while they grow.

[Buy Here](#)

Diggin FirmUp! Pumpkin

Pumpkin is a great aid in firming up loose stools. When a puppy transitions into a new home, they can become nervous, and that often makes them have loose stools for a few days. This product has saved me many times with puppies that are having to go diarrhea every hour.

[Buy Here](#)



Puppy Care

Most of these things are not necessary to have on hand right away, and some may not be needed by everyone. For example, having potty pads and a rack to cover them would only be critical for someone living in a multiple-story apartment where taking your puppy outside every 30 minutes during potty training is not practical.

Look over these lists and see which items best apply to your situation. Some of them can make puppy raising much easier, or help keep your dog in top health!


You can find most of these items at any pet store or online retailer. You can also click on the links provided to go to convenient shopping lists or product pages of items we recommend.

Puppy Care:

- Poop bag dispenser & refill bags
- Nature's Miracle Stain & Odor Remover
- Flea & Tick Spray
- Ear Cleaner
- Ear Powder
- Potty Pads (*for indoor/apartment house training)
- Potty Pad Rack (*for indoor/apartment house training)
- Dog Nail Clippers

Grooming:

- Gentle Puppy Shampoo
- Blunt Tipped Scissors
- Nail Clippers



If you're going to train your puppy at home, there are a few simple things you should have on hand...

TRAINING PREP

Here's a list of our favorite treats and the items we recommend having to make training sessions easier. As long as you just have treats, you can teach your puppy almost anything! As training advances, there are some items that can make training easier, but it is up to you to decide what you do or don't want to have available!

Treats:

- Pet Botanics Mini Training Rewards
- Zuke's Mini Naturals
- Crazy Dog MINI Train-Me! Rewards
- String cheese
- Tiny pieces of chicken

Starter Equipment:

- Treat Bag
- Leash or Long Line
- Specific Mat, Towel, or Dog Bed for "Place" work
- Doggy Door Bells (if doing door bell training)
- Clicker (if doing clicker training)

Advanced Equipment

Most people won't need or want most of these items. The only one I highly recommend considering is the stopwatch - if you are planning on doing any consistent training on cues like Place, Stay, or Leave It, having a stopwatch can be invaluable. After a certain point you can get away with just watching the minutes on a clock, but if you are outside or only just started training these cues and need to count seconds, you would have to use a cell phone's stopwatch feature. It works, but I find an actual stopwatch to be much more convenient. And you can get one for a few dollars online!

1) Stopwatch

2) Puppy Tunnel

Puppies are usually nervous about entering small or dark spaces. Having a puppy tunnel for them to explore and learn to run through helps build their confidence and creates a dog that's calm and comfortable even if they're in a situation where they have to pass through a tight space.

3) Wobble Board and/or Squishy Steps

These are great socialization enrichment toys. Many dogs and puppies are afraid to step on anything that moves under their feet or feels different than anything they're used to. If you plan to take your dogs places where they could encounter things like this, whether it's bridges, stairs, strange turf, vehicles, etc, it's best to get your puppy comfortable with them in their prime socialization period (6-16 weeks of age). Having a wobble board and a disc that squishes under their feet is perfect for this. And you can use these items as workout gear when your puppy isn't using them!

If you don't have these items, you can always find similar things to use just by looking around your house!

4) Flirt Pole

This is great for highly energetic pups or delayed gratification and Out (release what's in your mouth) training. While this is a fantastic tool, it must be used properly. It is not intended for children to use, and while playing this game with a young dog, you should never make them jump up for it or make sudden turns or spins - if they land wrong, they can damage their still-settling joints.

Preparation 102

puppy proofing

To keep your puppy safe and prevent any unnecessary destruction, check your house and yard for these items before you bring your new family member home. You don't want to deal with a problem after it's happened if you can prevent it from ever taking place!

Every puppy is going to chew until you teach them what is and isn't acceptable to put their mouth on. It's how they explore the world – they don't have hands!

Make Your Home Safe:

- Place any chemicals or cleaners behind cupboard doors or on high shelves.
- Pick up any plants from the floor – many can be poisonous.
- Tuck away or cover any electrical cords.
- Pick up or tie up any hanging curtains or tablecloths – they will be too tempting to chew on!
- Make a habit of keeping human food out of reach. Don't leave anything out!
- Make it a habit to put away any shoes, bags, or other items that you wear. These items will smell like you, and Puppy will not be able to resist them.
- Make sure you never have things like ant poison or mouse traps on the floor or in locations puppy could climb to.

Prep Your Yard:

- Check the fence line. If the fence does not go all the way to the ground, shore it up or block it off. Puppies can squeeze through much tinier spaces than you might think, and if they see a gap they will likely dig to make it bigger.
- Make sure there aren't any chemicals or bags of fertilizer sitting out.

Puppy Set Up:

- Choose where you will keep their crate.
- Set up an exercise pen for longer confinement times.
- Place a treat jar near their crate for night time Keenel Up rewards, and near the exterior door for Potty rewards.
- Choose where you will keep the dog bed in the house.
- Pick a location for food and water bowls.

Preparation 103

A Kid's Guide to Handling Puppy



First, for adults:

Children typically aren't ready to be allowed to take care of dog responsibilities like brushing or feeding until they are around 7 years old.



Young children should also be supervised at all times with your puppy until they are around 10. Younger children typically don't understand why a real dog can't be treated like a stuffed animal. If a puppy is treated like an object, either by having their tail or ears pulled, being forced to be held or carried, being drug around, or being chased or yelled at, the puppy will treat your children as they would another puppy. They will grow and snap.

The last thing you want is for your puppy to feel threatened, respond by snapping, and hurt your child. If that happens, your child could become afraid or angry at the dog, or the dog could develop a fear or dislike of your child. The problem would only grow from there. To stop this from happening, never leave your children unsupervised with puppy until you can trust them to treat the puppy gently and to respect the puppy's personal space.

The guide below is just as important for adults to follow as it is for kids! I specifically recommend taking a look at how to hold your puppy. Puppies are top-heavy and prone to sudden wiggling — I've seen them flop right out of an un-prepared adult's arms!

How to Love Your New Puppy



Just like you, your puppy doesn't like to be woken up too early. It can make him have a bad mood. The only way he can tell you what he's feeling is with his mouth. But he can't say human words! The way he will tell you to let him keep sleeping is by growling or nipping. He's not trying to be mean, he's just talking to you!

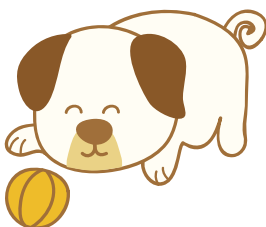
Even if you're just trying to give him a gentle pet while he's sleeping, he won't know that you're there and could get scared. What if he thinks that you're a monster in his dream? He might wake up fast and growl or nip in fright!

If he's taking a nap or is inside his crate, wait, don't touch!

One way you can love your puppy is by leaving him alone whenever he's sleeping.



Since your puppy doesn't like being pet when he's sleeping, when does he want pets? How about you ask him! Instead of going to your puppy, ask them to come to you. If you call them and they run over, they're ready to pet or to play! If they don't, they'd like to be left alone for a little while. Some times puppies get overwhelmed and need a little quiet time alone before they're ready to play or snuggle again.



Ask your puppy if they would like to be pet by calling them to you.

Puppies are full of surprises! One minute they'll be very still, and the next they'll be ready to run. They can move fast. Their front half is also heavier than their back half, which means that they tip forward easily!

So, if you picked your puppy up and were holding her, she might be still at first. But when she was ready to get down, she would move very quickly in your arms. This would make her tip forward and fall onto the floor. That could hurt!

To keep your puppy safe, never hold her while you are standing up or walking.



You can protect your puppy by only holding her while you are sitting on the floor.

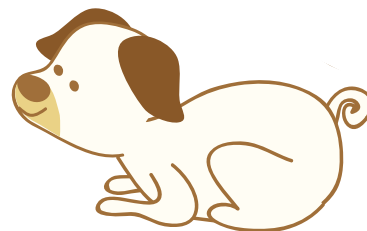


Since a puppy is heavier in its front half than its back half, they need to be held in a way that will keep them from tipping out of your arms. The best way to stop them from falling is to keep one hand on their chest. That way they can't tip forward! But be extra careful not to put your hand on their neck!

When you hold them against your chest, wrap your left arm around their lower back and let their belly rest on your arm. Bring your hand up in-between their front legs, then spread your fingers to hold their chest. Now you can wrap your right arm around their front, laying your hand on their back. Hold them well, but don't squeeze!

Now, even if your puppy suddenly moves, they shouldn't fall!

Support your puppy by always keeping a hand on their chest when you hold them!



Your puppy's neck is a sensitive place! It's fun to go on walks, but you don't want to accidentally hurt him by pulling too hard on the leash. You're a lot bigger than he is, and a lot stronger! If your puppy stops moving forward on his walk, he might be scared of something.

Don't pull him forward. Wait and let him come back to your side on his own.

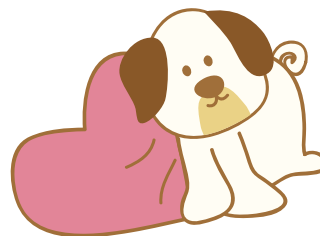


You can love your puppy by never dragging him on the leash.



The most sensitive part on your puppy is her ears and tail. It's easy for these to get hurt! You always want to be very gentle when touching them. If you pull at all, she will be in pain, and she might get upset. And the only way she can tell you that she is hurting is by crying, growling, or nipping. We don't want that to happen!

You can care for your puppy by always being gentle with her ears and tail.



Puppies tummy's work differently than ours. Some human food is poisonous to them, like onions, grapes, and chocolate. Some can hurt their mouth, like sharp bones that break when they bite them. Other food can just make them very sick if they eat too much of it. To protect them, it's best to never give them human food from the table.



Keep you puppy safe by never feeding them human food.