



Puppy Instruction Manual

A step-by-step guide developed by top trainers and veterinarians



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Shopping Guide

Required Items

Recommended product

Product size and alternative product options



☐ **Crate**
Midwest iCrate
Metal wire
Double door

Choose a metal wire crate with an adjustable divider. Your crate should be big enough to fit your puppy when he or she is fully grown. You will adjust the space in the crate as your puppy grows. If possible, choose a crate with two doors, which gives you easier access and more flexibility for your crate location. Use the chart below to find your crate size.

Dog Size	Toy	Small	Medium	Large	Giant
Adult weight	<8 lbs	8-34 lbs	35-64 lbs	65-85 lbs	>85 lbs
Suggested crate size	22"L x 13"W x	30"L x 19"W x	36"L x 23"W x	42"L x 28"W x	48"L x 30"W x



☐ **Collar**
Lupine brand
1/2" width

Choose a standard 1/2" wide, flat nylon collar with a plastic clip for easy removal. The length will be adjustable. Bring your puppy so you can try on collars and ensure a good fit. You may want to wait awhile before splurging on a designer collar, because your puppy will grow out of this one within a couple of months.



☐ **Leash**
Lupine brand
6' length

Choose a standard flat, nylon leash that is 6' in length. A 1/2" wide leash is ideal for toy and small size puppies (expected adult weight below 35lbs.). Larger puppies can start with a 3/4" wide leash.



☐ **Harness**
Lupine brand
Step-in

Choose a simple, nylon STEP-IN harness with a plastic buckle. Harnesses are adjustable, so bring your puppy so you can try them on and ensure a good fit. A 1/2" wide harness is ideal for toy and small size puppies (expected adult weight below 35lbs.). Larger puppies can start with a 5/8" wide harness. Your puppy will probably outgrow the first harness within a month or two.



☐ **Training treats**
Zuke's Mini Naturals
16oz

Choose training treats made from real, natural ingredients. You'll be using LOTS of positive reinforcement to train your puppy, so buy a large quantity of small-size treats (many are the size of your fingernail or smaller) to prevent overfeeding.



☐ **Bully sticks**
Best Bully Sticks
6" length

Bully sticks will keep your puppy occupied for hours. Try to choose bully sticks that are made in countries with well-regulated beef processing industries.



☐ **Training toy 1**
Tug/chew rope toy

Other rope toys are OK. Just make sure you buy a size your puppy can fit in his/her mouth. You will use the rope toy for interactive play sessions.



☐ **Training toy 2**
Kong Squeakair balls
3-pack

You will use the tennis ball toys for interactive games and training. Other tennis ball toys are OK. Just make sure you buy a size your puppy can fit in his/her mouth.



☐ **Chew toy 1**
Puppy Kong

If your store doesn't have Puppy Kong, Kong for adult dogs is OK (it has a harder rubber compound). Select sizes that your puppy can fit in his/her mouth, but not so small that it could become a choking hazard.



☐ **Chew toy 2**
Nylabone Original

Other hard nylon toys similar to Nylabone are also OK. Just make sure you buy a size your puppy can fit in his/her mouth.



Required Items (continued)

Recommended product

Product size and alternative product options



- ☐ **Chew deterrent spray**
Grannick's Bitter Apple

Other chew deterrent sprays are OK, but Grannick's should be available at most pet supply stores.



- ☐ **Waste cleanup spray**
Nature's Miracle Stain and Odor Remover

Choose a stain and odor remover that uses enzymes to break down the stains and odors, rather than just covering them up. Potty accidents will be common when your puppy is young, so you will use LOTS of this stuff.



- ☐ **Pet waste bags**

Biodegradable bags are best, because you will likely use several per day. You may also want to buy pet waste bags that come with a dispenser that attaches to your leash, so you always have bags on walks with your puppy.



- ☐ **Puppy food**

Try to keep your puppy on the same food she's been eating if possible. It will be easier to transition your puppy to a new food after she's settled in for a few weeks. If that's not possible, make sure that the food you buy your puppy is labeled as complete and balanced for puppies as tested by AAFCO. To learn more, see Page 9.

Optional Items



- ☐ **Food bowl**
Dogit Go Slow Anti-Gulping Dog Bowl

If you need a bowl, look for one that has a wide, rubber base. This will make it difficult for your puppy to pick up or tip over the bowl. We also recommend anti-gulping bowls, which are designed to slow your puppy's eating to reduce vomiting and digestive issues.



- ☐ **Water bowl**

If you need a water bowl, look for one that has a wide, rubber base (like the one to the left). This will make it difficult for your puppy to pick up or tip over the bowl.



- ☐ **Pee pads**

If you do not have a yard or if you routinely leave the house for more than 4-5 hours while your puppy cannot access the yard, you will need pee pads to paper train your puppy. Your puppy will probably chew or move the pee pads, so you may also want to buy a plastic pad holder or duct tape to secure the edges.



- ☐ **Puppy gate**
Carlson Extra-Wide Walk-Thru Gate with Pet Door

Read Home Setup (Pages 4-7) to determine if you need one or more puppy gates. Puppy gates are a great way to establish a designated play area. Look for "walk through" pet gates with doors that allow you to pass through them (instead of stepping over them).



- ☐ **Exercise pen**
Midwest Homes for Pets MaxxLock Exercise Pen

Read Home Setup (Pages 4-7) to determine if you need an exercise pen to build your puppy's play area. If you buy an exercise pen, make sure you buy one with an integrated door so you can move in and out of the play area easily.



- ☐ **Crate pad**
Midwest Quiet Time Pet Bed Deluxe

If you want your puppy to have extra comfort in her crate, consider a crate pad. Look for a crate pad that is 1-2" thick (thicker pads may not fit between the floor and divider) and machine washable. Pads are often made in the same sizes as your crate floor.

- ☐ **Additional toys**

Ideally your puppy will have three sets of 3-4 toys. Feel free to buy additional toys now, or accumulate them over a few weeks.



Home Setup



Introduction

The first and most commonly overlooked step for new puppy owners is home setup. Over the next few pages, you'll learn how to prepare your home to properly house a puppy, with designated areas for sleep, potty, and play. Setting these areas up the right way will not only limit damage to your home, but it will make it much easier for you to crate and potty train your puppy. If possible, we recommend preparing your home the week before you bring your puppy home so you can clearly think through your plan and lay the foundation for puppy training success.

Welcome to a smarter way to raise a puppy. Welcome to Puptimize.

Supplies Needed

- Crate
- Pet gate (optional)
- Exercise pen (optional)
- Thin blanket (optional)





Home Setup

The Basics: Your Puppy's New Home

1. **Identify a suitable puppy play area.** One of the best ways to manage chewing and destruction is to make sure your puppy has a dedicated play space. Your puppy's play area should be in a part of your home where most of the primary activity happens, like a kitchen or TV room. Ideally that space will be in a room with a hard floor (not carpet). You can use pet/baby gates, an exercise pen or even carefully positioned furniture to set up the play area. See some examples of good play areas below.



Crate combined with exercise pen



Exercise pens can be mobile play areas



Gate as play area boundary

2. **Remove valued items from your puppy's play area.** Soon we'll show you how to prevent property destruction, but for now, make sure the play area is free from anything your puppy can destroy.
3. **Identify a spot near your bed as your puppy's short-term sleeping area.** Puppies that are 8-12 weeks old probably haven't ever slept alone or away from their mother or siblings. To make their transition less stressful, keep them close to you for the first few nights. Find a suitable spot near your bed that's large enough for your puppy's crate.
4. **Assemble and position your crate.** We'll teach you what you need to know about crate training shortly, but first, let's get it set up. Most crates are simple—you won't even need tools. If you bought the crate brand and model recommended by Puptimize, you can see exactly how to assemble the crate at puptimize.com/videos.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: If possible, elevate the crate for the first 3 nights your puppy is in your bedroom. Use a sturdy object like a bench or stand to raise the crate to the same height as your bed. Your puppy will feel closer to you, which will make her transition to your home easier.



VIDEO: Crate setup and positioning

5. **Identify your puppy's long-term sleeping area.** Your puppy only needs to sleep near your bed for the first six nights, so pick a long-term crate location. Make sure it's a calm, quiet area away from the main living area.



5. Select your designated potty area, either outdoor or indoor.

Outdoor: If you have a yard, choose a paw-friendly potty area, like grass or gravel. Be mindful of potential messes and smells—avoid areas that can get muddy, don't drain well, or are located near open windows and doors. Note that dog urine can harm your lawn. Most importantly, choose your potty area carefully—once puppies get used to using one potty area, it can be difficult to teach them to use a different one.




Gravel potty areas are paw-friendly and easy to clean up



Grass and synthetic turf make great potty areas

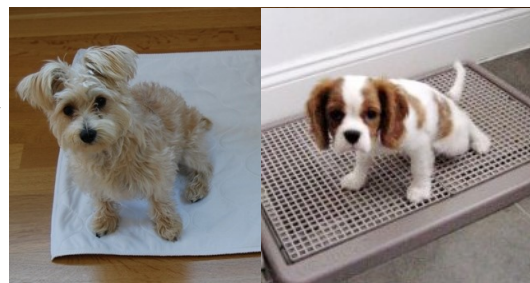


FOR BETTER RESULTS: Use only one door to the potty area. By always exiting through the same door, you'll train your puppy to associate that door with going potty. In time, your puppy will be able to alert you when he or she has to potty by waiting at that door.

Indoor: If you don't have a yard, no problem. Choose an area inside your home where you want your puppy to go potty. This can be a spare bedroom, a laundry room, a bathroom, or even a safely enclosed balcony. Non-carpeted areas are best since accidents will happen. Before your puppy comes home, cover the floor of the designated potty area in paper or pee pads. Your dog will gradually learn that she should only go potty on paper. We'll show you how in the  Potty Training lesson.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: Your puppy will probably chew or move the pee pad. Securing the pad in a plastic holder or duct taping the edges will help.



Pee pads are a common solution for apartments. For better results, consider plastic pad holders.



Ready to start teaching your puppy the seven most important commands? **Download the free Puptimize app for iPhone!**




Expert Tips



Remove valuable rugs from the designated puppy area to prevent soiling and/or chewing.

It's generally safe to return the rugs when your puppy is at least 16 weeks old.



A used blanket can help make your puppy's transition to your home easier. Find a small, thin blanket, used towel, t-shirt, or bed linen that you're willing to give up for your puppy. Sleep with that item during the week before your puppy arrives. Pass it around the family, so that everyone has a night or two with the item. DO NOT wash the item because you want it to smell like you/your family. Place the blanket in the crate before introducing the crate to your puppy. See  Crate Training and Sleep for more detail.



If you purchase an exercise pen for your puppy, select the largest pen that fits in your home.

You can configure the pen in many shapes and sizes and the larger pen gives you more flexibility to gradually add more space as your puppy grows. Pens can also be used as gates.



Use weights to reinforce exercise pens. Large puppies can sometimes move exercise pens. If you have exercise weights, place them around the base of the pen to limit sliding.

Common Questions and Answers



What should I do if I don't have an obvious location for the puppy play area?

If you don't have an obvious location, a good solution is an exercise pen. Exercise pens can be quickly folded so your puppy play area can be moved or stored. To learn more about pens, email our experts at fetch@puptimize.com.




If I am in a rush, is there a quick way to prepare my home before the puppy arrives?

An exercise pen is a great solution in this scenario as well. Exercise pens are fairly inexpensive and provide a quick, flexible area to contain your puppy at play. To learn more about exercise pens, email our experts at fetch@puptimize.com.



Should I put a puppy pad on the floor even if I have a yard?

If your puppy will be going potty in the yard, don't use puppy pads. They send the message that going potty in the house is OK. If you will be away longer than your puppy can hold it (see  Potty Training for details), you may want to place a tarp over the play area floor.



How long should I use an exercise pen before my puppy is free to roam around the home?

As a general rule, when your puppy is over 1 year of age, she can be left outside the pen. Use your judgment based on your puppy's behaviors. We're happy to answer any specific questions that you may have at www.puptimize.com.



Food, Water, and General Health



Introduction

Congratulations on your new puppy! You've got some great times ahead. Let's make sure the most basic elements of life are covered: food, water, and general puppy health.

These may seem simple, but once you've got a little living, breathing companion looking to you for all their needs, even the simplest things can seem a bit daunting. Not to worry, though--we've got your back. Puptimize's team of trainers and veterinarians has carefully scripted out what you need to know, so these seemingly simple items actually are simple.

Before You Start

Make sure you have completed the following lessons:

Supplies Needed

- Crate
- Food bowl
- Water bowl



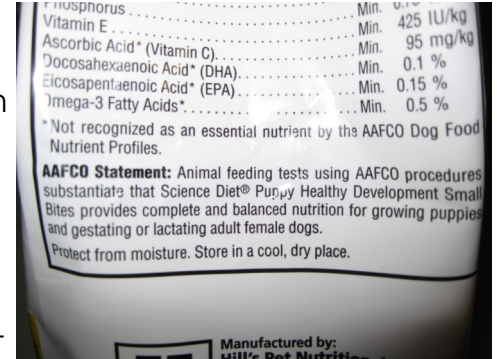
Home Setup



Food, Water, and General Health

The Basics: Food

WHAT to feed your puppy. There are puppy foods to fit every budget, but the quality of the food you give your puppy matters. Most puppies from rescues or breeders have been raised on a high quality food. Since puppies often have sensitive stomachs, try to keep your puppy on that same food if possible. If that's not possible, just make sure that the food you give your puppy is labeled as complete and balanced for puppies as tested by AAFCO (see photo). If you need a puppy food recommendation, email our experts at fetch@pupoptimize.com.



AAFCO statement

WHEN to feed your puppy. To fuel their growth, puppies need 3 meals per day until they are 4-6 months old. If you eat 3 meals per day, feed your puppy at the same time to make things easy.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: To reduce crate potty accidents, don't give your puppy food or water in the 2 hours prior to bedtime.

WHERE to feed your puppy. Feed your puppy 2 of her 3 daily meals in her crate. This will help your puppy create a positive association with the crate. It will also reduce the chances of your puppy going potty in the crate, since dogs don't like to potty where they eat—who can blame them?

For the meal not served in the crate (1 per day), feed your puppy in a different area that you want to be a "no potty zone". For example, this can be a spot inside their play area.

HOW to feed your puppy. Always make sure to read the directions on the food's packaging to see how much to give your puppy at each meal. If your puppy doesn't eat after 5 – 10 minutes, remove the food. This will encourage your puppy to eat when he or she has the chance.



INTRODUCE A COMMAND: Feeding time is a great time to teach your dog to sit. Take a piece of kibble and hold it near your puppy's nose, then slowly move it up and back towards the tail. Your puppy's body will follow the treat. As her head goes up, her butt should go down. Once your puppy starts to sit, say the word "sit". If your puppy is confused, then gently push down on his or her rump as you say "sit". As soon as she places her butt on the ground, tell her "good sit" then "OK". Your puppy will start to learn that "OK" means she is free to stand up and do what she wants. After she is released with "OK", place her food bowl on the ground. Practice "sit" multiple times a day, even between meal times. As she grows, the "sit" will become the puppy version of "please".



VIDEO: Using food to teach "sit"





The Basics: Water

WHEN to give your puppy water. Now let's move on to water. Your puppy should have access to water most of the day. But remember...what goes in, must come out. The less puppies drink late in the day, the less likely they will be to potty in their crate at night.

WHERE to give your puppy water. Since your puppy will be spending most of her time in the play area, she should always have access to water there. If you move the play area or set up a temporary play area in another room, move the water as well.




FOR BETTER RESULTS: To prevent accidents and spills, don't leave water in the crate. See the  **Crate Training** and  **Potty Training** lessons for more detail.

HOW to give your puppy water. Fill your puppy's water bowl with about an inch of water instead of filling it completely. If your puppy drinks the water, refill it with another inch of water. This will allow you to monitor the amount of water your puppy is drinking. If you won't be able to consistently refill the water bowl, feel free to fill more than an inch at a time.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: If you notice that your puppy has finished his or her water in a very short amount of time, that's probably a good time for a potty break.

The Basics: Health

1. **Ask about your puppy's vaccination history.** In this early phase of your puppy's life, there are pre-determined vaccinations and vet visits that need to take place. Many puppies will receive their first series of vaccinations at 6-8 weeks, often before they're brought home. If you didn't receive your puppy's vaccination history, call your shelter, rescue, or breeder. You'll want that information to share with your vet.
2. **Find a veterinarian.** Your puppy will need multiple vaccinations during their first year. These need to happen at specific times. We know you get busy. We'll remind you of the general timing, but note that only your vet should determine the exact timing. If you need help finding a veterinarian, email our experts at fetch@puptimize.com.
3. **Schedule your first appointment.** Once you've selected your puppy's veterinarian, give the office a call. Your veterinarian can help you determine the right vaccination schedule.
4. **Avoid feeding your puppy "people food."** Feeding your puppy what people eat not only establishes bad habits, but you risk feeding your puppy something dangerous or even poisonous. To see the foods that are hazardous to your puppy, refer to  **Hazardous Foods for Dogs** on the back cover of this manual.



Ready to start teaching your puppy the seven most important commands? **Download the free Puptimize app for iPhone!**



Expert Tips



Ask your veterinarian about flea and tick control. Before you buy any products on your own, make sure to ask your veterinarian about the right flea and tick control for your puppy. Not all flea and tick medications are puppy-safe. Your veterinarian can recommend or administer a safe medication.



Pet health insurance. Our veterinarians recommend pet health insurance to help keep the costs of many non-elective veterinarian services down. Perhaps more importantly, pet insurance helps prevent you from ever having to make a health decision for your puppy based on financial constraints. Puptimize can help recommend reputable third-party insurance companies for you. Just email our experts at fetch@puptimize.com.



Future procedures. You've likely started to wonder about the procedures that are a bit down the road, like spaying or neutering. There will be multiple vet visits in your puppy's first year. Your veterinarian will help you plan these events.

Common Questions and Answers



What if my puppy doesn't eat right away?

If your puppy chooses not to eat or if your puppy stops eating before finishing, pick up the food bowl regardless of how much is left. It's natural for any puppy parent to feel displeasure doing this, but your puppy will be fine and will learn to eat when food is available.




What do I do if my puppy doesn't eat at all for multiple feedings?

Keep a close eye on this behavior. Some puppies don't like to eat when their teeth hurt, but if your puppy doesn't eat 2-3 meals in a row, call your veterinarian. Lack of appetite can be a sign of a health problem.



Should I be concerned if my puppy occasionally vomits after eating her food?

This is usually a result of eating too fast. Feeding your puppy in an anti-gulping bowl is a great way to prevent this. If you didn't already buy an anti-gulping bowl, you may want to do so online or at your local pet store.. For more detail, see the  Shopping Guide. If vomiting becomes a regular occurrence, call your veterinarian.



What do I do if my puppy is too excited about her food to sit?

If your puppy is too excited about eating to listen, save a few kibbles from the meal and practice "sit" after she finishes eating.



Crate Training and Sleep



Introduction

Think of the crate as your puppy's bedroom—the place where he is most comfortable sleeping. The goal of this training lesson is to make the crate a positive place, where your puppy feels happy, safe, and secure. If at a young age your puppy learns that being confined is OK, it will help prevent separation anxiety issues later.

Your puppy may whine or cry in the crate for about a week. Hearing your puppy cry will be heartbreaking and probably annoying, but this behavior is normal. DO NOT let your puppy out of the crate when he is crying. If you do, your puppy will learn that if he cries long enough and loud enough, you'll come get him. If it is time to let your puppy out of the crate but he is crying, wait for a moment of quiet, then calmly remove him from the crate.

The first week of crate training may test your patience and your eardrums, but your puppy will gradually learn to relax and enjoy his new bedroom.

Before You Start

Make sure you have completed the following lessons:



Home Setup

Supplies Needed

- Crate
- Toys
- Food bowl
- Training treats
- Thin blanket*





Crate Training and Sleep

The Basics: Day 1

1. **Install your crate divider.** If you haven't already done so, take the metal divider and install it in the crate to make a space no larger than what your puppy needs to stand up, turn around and lie down. While most people want their bedroom as big as possible, puppies do not. They are more comfortable in a smaller space. This will also give your puppy enough room to be comfortable while encouraging him to control his bladder and bowels.
2. **Place your blanket in the crate.** If your puppy came from a breeder or foster home, you may have been given a thin blanket that your puppy had been using. If not, that's OK. Just use a blanket that you and your family have been using. Large blankets likely won't fit in the small sleeping area, so you may have to use a shirt, sheet, or towel. Beyond the blanket's obvious comfort, the familiar smell of the blanket will help your puppy through the transition from his canine family to his new human family.
3. **Introduce your puppy to the crate right away.** Your puppy probably won't have much experience with crates when you bring him home, so you'll want to make the crate a positive place from the very beginning. Here's how you do that:



Give your puppy access to the crate during the day by leaving the door open. This will help prevent her from seeing the crate as a place of forced isolation. Encourage him to go into the crate on his own by placing treats on the floor during the day (1 – 2 times daily).



Feed your puppy in the crate. Place the food bowl in the crate and gently close the door when your puppy begins to eat. This will help create a positive association with the crate and door. Let him out right after she finishes eating, or he may potty in the crate.



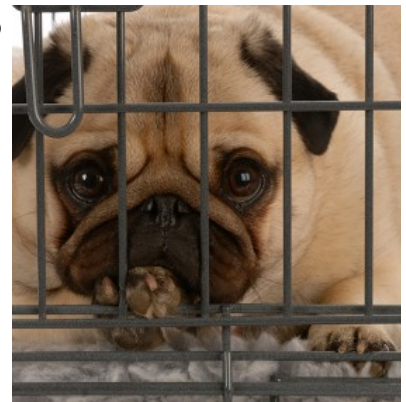
Introduce new toys to your puppy in the crate. What better way to make the crate fun and positive than with a new toy! Giving your puppy a brand new toy in the crate creates and sustains positive feelings about the crate. After giving him the toy, let him out to play with it in the play area or in a supervised area.



On Day 1, try not to leave your puppy in the crate for more than one hour. You want your puppy to have a positive impression of being in the crate from the very beginning. Less time in isolation on Day 1 helps.



VIDEO: Crate divider installation



Introduce new toys in the crate



3. Introduce your puppy to the crate right away (continued)



Limit your puppy's food, water, and napping during the two hours before bedtime. The less they eat, drink, and sleep during those two hours, the more likely they are to sleep through the night. If you can prevent your puppy from eating or drinking at all during those two hours, you will be rewarded with more sleep of your own!




Put your puppy in the crate for bedtime. You and your puppy are probably both exhausted after Day 1 together. Gently set your puppy in her crate and shut the door. Remember, this is probably your puppy's first night sleeping away from her canine family. She will likely cry off and on during the first couple of nights.



Cover the crate. Cover your crate with a crate cover or blanket to ensure that your puppy sleeps, even after sunrise.



Set an alarm. Young puppies won't make it through the night without needing to potty. Make sure you follow the directions in the  Potty Training lesson to avoid accidents.

The Basics: For Continued Success

- 1. Continue to make the crate a positive place for your puppy.** For the next few weeks (until your puppy is totally comfortable with the crate), make positive associations with the crate by:
 - Feeding your puppy at least 2 of her 3 daily meals in the crate
 - Leaving the crate door open during the day (and putting treats inside 1-2 times daily)
 - Introducing any new toys to your puppy in the crate
- 2. Limit the amount of time your puppy spends in the crate during the day.**
 - During Week 1, your puppy can be left in the crate for a max of 1½-2 hours during the day.
 - After the first week, use this simple rule to determine maximum crate time:
$$\text{Puppy Age (in months)} + 1 = \text{Maximum Time in Crate (in hours)}$$

Ex: A 3-month old puppy can spend a maximum of 4 hours in the crate during the day.
 - Your puppy should have at least one hour out of the crate before being put back in.
 - If you must leave your puppy alone longer than her maximum crate time, leave her in her play area. This will keep your puppy in a safe area without creating a feeling of isolation.



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Expert Tips



Reward good behavior. Frequently reward your puppy with a treat when he or she is quiet in the crate.



Monitor your puppy's growth. Your puppy will grow...fast. Check your crate divider position every two weeks and adjust as necessary. We'll remind you so you don't forget.



Adjust the crate's location during the day. If you're physically able to do so on a daily basis, the crate can be placed in the play area during the day. This will allow your puppy to nap if she gets tired. If you have an exercise pen, you can actually link the pen to the crate.



Crate linked to exercise pen



Wait to introduce the crate pad. If you purchased a crate pad, place it in the crate when your puppy is 12 weeks old to prevent destruction. If your puppy is still chewing her blankets at that age, you may want to introduce the crate pad later or spray it with chew deterrent.

Common Questions and Answers



What should I do if my puppy cries in the crate?

We know hearing puppies cry is heartbreaking, but they are doing OK. DO NOT let your puppy out of the crate when he is crying. If you do, your puppy will learn that if he cries long enough and loud enough, you'll let him out. Instead, wait for a moment of quiet, and then calmly remove him from the crate.



What do I do if my puppy potties in the crate?

Accidents happen, but crate accidents are usually avoidable. You may think it's the puppy's fault, but often times, it's something that could have been prevented. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the crate divider in the right position or is there too much room?
- Did I let my puppy out to potty before putting her in the crate?
- Was my puppy in the crate longer than the recommended crate time during the day?
- Did I let my puppy out to potty during the night?

If your puppy goes potty in the crate, quickly and thoroughly clean it with Nature's Miracle. For more detailed instruction, refer to the  Potty Training lesson.



What do I do if my puppy chews her blanket in the crate?

You can safely spray chew deterrent on your puppy's blankets.



Potty Training



Introduction

When you gotta go, you gotta go—and your new puppy is no different. She has very little control over her bladder at this young age; so remember that accidents are just that. Your puppy isn't being bad or disobedient and isn't marking her territory. She's simply learning to control her bladder and bowels, and mistakes are common during this process.

Never scold or punish your puppy for accidents. Your puppy won't understand the meaning and will likely be confused or frightened, slowing down your training progress.

Like human babies, puppies develop and learn at different rates. Most puppies can learn basic potty training in a month or so, and can be accident-free by the time they are 6-12 months old.

Before You Start

Make sure you have completed the following lessons:



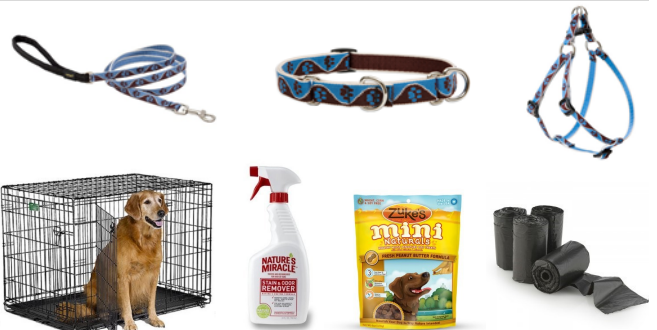
Home Setup



Food, Water, and General Health

Supplies Needed



- Leash
- Collar
- Harness
- Crate
- Cleaning spray
- Training treats
- Pet waste bags





Potty Training

The Basics: What to Do (Outdoor Potty Areas)

1. **First, put the collar and harness on and attach the leash.** To learn how, refer to the  Exercise and Socialization lesson.
2. **Lead your puppy to the designated potty area.** Having a specific spot to potty will encourage your puppy to go. Refer to  Home Setup if you haven't selected one.




FOR BETTER RESULTS: Use the same door each time you go out. Your puppy will make the association and will eventually alert you when she has to go by waiting at that door.

3. **When you're in the spot where you'd like your puppy to go, say "Go Potty."** The leash should still be attached to help your puppy maintain focus. Give her 5-10 minutes to go. See "Common Questions and Answers" in this lesson to learn what to do if she doesn't go.
4. **As soon as your puppy goes potty, immediately praise her and give her a treat.** Rewarding your puppy is the most important part. The more she is rewarded, the quicker she will learn.
5. **Let your puppy hang out for a few minutes after going potty.** Doing this will encourage her to go potty right away so that she has time to enjoy being outside. If you bring her in immediately after she goes, it sends the message that as soon as she goes potty, she has to go back inside.



VIDEO: Potty process

The Basics: What to Do (Indoor Potty Areas)

1. **First, put the collar and harness on and attach the leash.** To learn how, refer to the  Exercise and Socialization lesson.
2. **Lead your puppy to the pee pad.** Think of the pee pad as you would a patch of grass in a yard. Use the leash to help your puppy stay on the pad and remain focused.
3. **Tell your puppy to "Go Potty."** See "Common Questions and Answers" in this lesson to learn what to do if your puppy doesn't go.
4. **As soon as your puppy goes potty, immediately praise her and give her a treat.** Rewarding your puppy is the most important part. The more she is rewarded, the quicker she will learn.



VIDEO: Potty process




The Basics: When to Do It

- Initially, taking your puppy to potty once every hour is recommended. Once you learn your puppy's potty habits, you'll be able to decrease frequency.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: Keep a “potty log” to track your puppy's habits. Once you learn your puppy's general potty schedule, you'll be able to anticipate when she will need to go. You can find a printable version of the Potty/M meal Log in your first email from Puptimize.

- 10 minutes after eating or drinking
- Right after each play session
- As soon as your puppy wakes up in the morning or after a nap
- Right before you put your puppy in the crate for the night
- Once per night (if your puppy is younger than 12 weeks old). Your young puppy won't be able to hold it all night, so you'll likely need to take her to potty every 3-4 hours each night during her first week at home. Try adding an hour each week until she makes it through the night. Refer to  Crate Training and Sleep for more detail.

Expert Tips



Watch for potty warning signs. Your puppy may not bark or scratch when she has to go, so look for other signs. These include pacing, whining, circling, sniffing or leaving the room. If you see any of these, take your puppy outside as quickly as possible. You're on the clock!



Feed your puppy one of her daily meals in different parts of your home. Dogs don't like to eat and potty in the same spot, so this will help teach your puppy that they need to go outside. Your puppy will spend most of her early days in the play area, so start by feeding her there. You can actually spread food or treats on the floor to create wider “no potty zones.”



Fill your puppy's water bowl with an inch of water instead of filling it completely. If your puppy drinks the water, refill it with another inch. This will allow you to monitor the amount of water your puppy is drinking. If you notice that your puppy has finished her water quickly, it is probably a good time for a potty break. Always keep water in the bowl. You should not restrict your puppy's water intake.



Keep your puppy on a consistent daily feeding schedule. This will allow you to learn your puppy's potty schedule more quickly.



Don't give your puppy food or water two hours or less before going to sleep. This will reduce nighttime accidents.



Ready to start teaching your puppy the seven most important commands? **Download the free Puptimize app for iPhone!**



Common Questions and Answers

What should I do if I catch my puppy in the middle of a potty accident?

If you catch your puppy in the act of going potty where she shouldn't, follow these 4 steps:

1. Clap sharply twice--just enough to startle but not scare her. If your puppy seems upset or scared from the clapping, clap a little softer the next time you catch her in the act.
2. When you clap, she should stop mid-stream, so quickly take her outside.
3. If she finishes outside, reward her with praise and a treat. If she doesn't finish, that's OK. Calmly bring her after a few minutes.
4. Never punish your puppy for an accident. Instead look back through this guide to see how it might have been prevented.

How do I clean up my puppy's accidents and make sure they don't leave an odor?

If your puppy has an accident in the house, clean it up as soon as possible with the enzymatic cleaning spray (you'll need to completely break down the odor). This will remove the smell of the accident so your puppy won't think of that location as an acceptable potty spot.



VIDEO: Proper potty accident clean-up

What do I do if my puppy won't go?

If your puppy doesn't go potty within 5-10 minutes and you think she has to go, calmly bring her inside and either tether her to you with the leash or put her in her crate for 20-30 minutes. Then take her out to her potty spot again. Repeat this until she goes. This will reduce accidents in the house while teaching her that she should always go right away when given the opportunity.

What if my puppy potties on the floor when she exits the crate in the morning?

Take your puppy to the potty area as soon as you open the crate door. Don't let her stop on the way. If she still can't make it, carry her to the potty area when you take her out of the crate. Only carry your puppy until she has more bladder control.

Is it normal for my puppy's potty training progress to go backwards sometimes?

In a word, yes. It's perfectly normal for minor setbacks to happen. New environments can trigger setbacks too. Just remain calm and follow the instructions above.



Exercise and Socialization



Introduction

We've all seen dogs walking on leashes interacting with people and other animals. Some are friendly and well-behaved...some are not. Their adult behavior is the culmination of many little learnings that began in the early days of their puppyhood.

Those early learnings are part of socialization, a vital part of your puppy's development. The more experience puppies get with a wide variety of people, places, and things, the lower their stress and fear will be later in life.

Exercise and play will also be an important part of every life stage as your puppy grows into adulthood. However, your puppy's immune system and skeletal structure are still developing at this young age. This lesson will help you socialize and exercise your puppy safely, so she is healthy, well-adjusted, and ready to meet the world.

Before You Start

Make sure you have completed the following lessons:



Home Setup



**Food, Water, and
General Health**

Supplies Needed

- Leash
- Collar
- Harness
- Training treats
- Rope toy
- Tennis balls





Exercise and Socialization

The Basics: Leash, Harness, and Collar Introduction

1. **Adjust your puppy's collar to the proper size.** If the collar is sized correctly, you should be able to fit two fingers between it and your puppy's neck. You don't want the collar to be uncomfortable or allow his jaw to get stuck, but you don't want it to slip off either.
2. **Adjust your puppy's harness to the proper size.** First, make sure the harness is unbuckled. If you lay it on the ground, you'll see two openings for your puppy's paws and an adjustable chest strap in between. Put your puppy's paws through the openings, bring the ends up and over the dog's back and fasten the buckle. Adjust the front and back straps for a secure fit, then adjust the chest strap so it fits snugly. Go to pup-timize.com/videos to see this in action.
3. **Put the collar and harness on your puppy.** Every time your puppy is out of the crate, put the collar and harness on him. Your puppy may initially fuss with these items, but if you ignore him, he'll quickly get used to how they feel. Your puppy should always wear his collar and harness unless he's in the crate or play area.
4. **Clip the leash to the harness.** You can leave the leash on your puppy whenever he is not in his crate or play area. Doing so will give you more control over your puppy's actions. You can stop doing this when your puppy is 4-5 months old if you wish.



VIDEO: Leash, harness, collar introduction



FOR BETTER RESULTS: To help your puppy learn to calmly stand and not nip you as you put on the collar/harness, place a few treats on the floor. As your puppy eats the treats, put on the harness and/or collar while praising him.

The Basics: Socialization

Handle your puppy frequently, and let others do the same. In the first 4 weeks in your home, your puppy needs to get used to the human touch. You can use quick, simple activities to socialize your puppy (we'll remind you when to do these). Think of these exercises as "fake veterinarian exams" to be completed 3 times per week. Immediately reward your puppy after each action that you take. Here's a list of basic activities that we recommend:

- Gently play with your puppy's ears (inside and out)
- Gently touch your puppy's face and mouth
- Gently play with your puppy's tail
- Rub your puppy's belly/back lightly
- Dry or handle your puppy's paws
- Hold your puppy in different positions
- Gently brush your puppy



Socialize your puppy to the human touch



The Basics: Socialization (continued)

Take your puppy on walks to experience a variety of surfaces and objects: Go on short walks inside and outside the home to allow your puppy to safely walk on as many materials as possible – wood, tile, metal, glass, carpet, rock, grass, etc. If your puppy has not received all three sets of shots yet, avoid parks or areas with other dogs while your puppy's immune system strengthens.

Invite visitors to your home frequently: Introduce your puppy to new people to make him more comfortable with people other than his family. Try to include men, women, children, people with light skin, dark skin, high voices, deep voices, etc. Give your guests toys and treats so the puppy has a positive experience with everyone. Avoid large crowds. This experience shouldn't be scary or intimidating for your puppy.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: Let your puppy meet other pets. If you have other pets, let them meet your puppy. Praise and reward your puppy when he is calm around those pets.

Expose your puppy to common sounds: If your play area is near a TV, leave the television on with sound or play sounds from your phone or computer. Start by playing the sounds at low volume, then increase as your puppy gets used to them. Try to expose your puppy to common but potentially frightening sounds. Exposure to sounds such as sirens, doorbells, motorcycles, helicopters, thunder, and fireworks will help your dog stay calm when he hears them in the real world.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: Show your puppy something new each day. The world is full of new things for your puppy to learn. Each day, try to introduce something new to him. These can be new things like wearing a hat, sitting on a bicycle, or wearing a costume.

The Basics: Interactive Play

Play with your puppy in a structured play session. Twice per day, set aside 30-45 minutes to play with your puppy. Playtime should be separated from meal time by at least 30 minutes. Don't expect your puppy to be great at these games right away. Most young puppies have short attention spans and limited physical coordination.

- **Let your puppy chase you, but don't chase your puppy.** It can be fun to chase your puppy around the house or yard, but you're teaching him that he's quicker than you and that he can run away. Instead, have your puppy chase YOU! Move or run away from him, using a treat and lots of praise and encouragement to get him to follow you.



VIDEO: Learn interactive games



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The Basics: Interactive Play (continued)

- **Play tug of war:** Most puppies love tug of war, but avoid overly aggressive play. ALWAYS make sure you start the game by saying "OK" and end it by saying "drop it" as you show him a treat.
- **Play fetch.** Throw the ball or rope toy 5-10 feet away from you as you say "OK", which gives him permission to chase the toy. If he's hesitant at first, wave the toy back and forth before you throw it. When he picks up the toy after you throw it, praise him. Then use your praise--and the leash if necessary--to encourage him to come back to you. Once he does, praise him heavily. Show him a treat as you say "Drop it." When he drops the toy, tell him "good drop it", then repeat all over again! See fetch and "drop it" in action at puptimize.com/videos.
- **Avoid rough-housing.** Using your hands to 'box' with your puppy encourages him to be mouthy.

Expert Tips



Keep your puppy on leash when outside of the crate or play area. When your puppy is out of the crate or play pen, he should ALWAYS be on leash. The leash can be dragging behind him as he walks around. It will give you immediate control if you need it.



Avoid interaction with dogs you don't know. Puppies without a full set of vaccinations are susceptible to viruses like parvo. Avoid parks and areas where they can interact with sick dogs. Short walks in the neighborhood are OK. Ask your vet when such interaction is OK.

Common Questions and Answers




How can I tell if my puppy is afraid of something and what should I do if he is?

When afraid, puppies will tuck their tail under them, lay their ears back and/or try to move away from something that scares them. The key to socialization is to show your puppy that the world is a fun and exciting place, not a scary one. If you see any of these body signals, remove him from the situation. The next time you introduce him to the same sound/person/etc., act excited and interact with the scary thing in a fun and happy tone. If he is still scared after 2-4 minutes, remove him and try again later with the sound/person farther away.



What do I do if my puppy chews on her leash or harness?

If your puppy is chewing on the leash or harness, spray it with bitter apple spray once a day. Refer to the  Damage Control lesson for more detail.



How should I handle it if my puppy bites/nips me when we play?

If your puppy nips you, first remove all attention from your puppy for 3 seconds. Refer to the Nipping/Biting section of the  Damage Control lesson for more detail.



Damage Control



Introduction

Let's just say it—puppies bite and chew. A lot. This is NOT bad behavior and they are NOT being bad dogs.

Imagine if you didn't have any fingers or toes. You'd have to find other ways to explore the world around you, right? Well, that's what your puppy is doing. A puppy's only way to check out all the exciting new people and things around them is with their mouth.

The most important thing for you to remember is that this is totally normal, non-threatening and age-appropriate puppy behavior.

You know it's coming, so let's learn how to properly and proactively control this behavior. Doing so is good for your puppy, good for you, and most definitely good for your stuff.

Before You Start

Make sure you have completed the following lessons:



Home Setup



Food, Water, and General Health



Exercise and Socialization

Supplies Needed




- Leash
- Collar
- Harness
- Rope toy
- Kong toy
- Nylabone
- Bully sticks
- Bitter spray





Damage Control

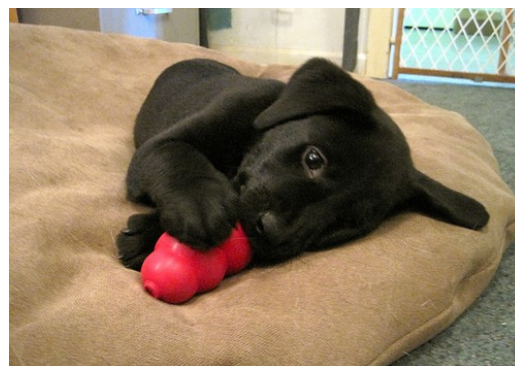
The Basics: Property Destruction

1. **Set your puppy up for success.** We know you can't keep an eye on your puppy 24/7. The best and simplest way to prevent destruction is to make sure your puppy is always in her play area or crate when you can't watch her. Refer to  Home Setup if you haven't yet set these areas up.
 2. **Hide tempting or dangerous items.** In case you didn't do this as part of  Home Setup, make sure you hide or relocate any items that may be tempting for a young puppy. Cords/wires, plants, papers, children's toys, and rugs are a few examples.
 3. **Use bitter apple spray as a line of defense.** The flavor of the spray discourages your puppy from chewing the items on which you've sprayed it. In a word, it tastes...bitter. Spray it liberally on any item that your puppy appears to be focused on—furniture, rugs, cabinets, even her leash. Note that the bitter taste doesn't last forever, so you'll likely need to reapply often.
-  **FOR BETTER RESULTS:** Use the leash, collar, and harness. Keeping your puppy on a leash any time she's outside of her crate or play area will help you physically redirect her with a gentle pull if she starts to chew on the wrong thing.
5. **Use toys to redirect your puppy's attention.** Toys are a key part of preventing puppy destruction. We'll show you proper usage for specific toys below. If your puppy starts to chew on an inappropriate item, firmly but quietly, tell her "No." Then immediately give your puppy something else to chew on or play with. Remember, your goal is to always redirect your puppy to an appropriate object.

The Basics: Proper Toy Usage

Puppies are expensive enough, so let's not add on the cost of replacing destroyed items. Make sure they always have access to a few chew toys.


Puppy Kong: Fill the Kong toy with peanut butter, cream cheese or wet dog food and freeze it for 3 – 4 hours before giving it to your puppy. The cold rubber will help your puppy's gums feel better while also keeping your puppy occupied longer. The food you give your puppy in the Kong counts toward her daily recommended intake. Think of your puppy's total food intake in terms of cups. If your puppy needs 4 cups of food per day, and you put 1 cup of food in the Kong, feed your puppy 3 cups during the other feedings. Email our experts at fetch@pupoptimize.com if you would like more guidance.




A filled Kong will keep your puppy engaged



The Basics: Proper Toy Usage (continued)

Rope Toy: Wet the rope with water or low sodium chicken broth, then put it in the freezer for 3 – 4 hours. Refer to  Exercise and Socialization for more detail on rope toy play.

Nylabone: To start, just give the Nylabone to your puppy and let her gnaw away at it. If your puppy doesn't seem interested in the Nylabone, wrap it in a slice of deli style turkey meat for a few hours, then remove the turkey. The Nylabone will smell and taste like turkey, which should delight your puppy. Never freeze the Nylabone because it will be dangerously hard.

Tennis Balls: These toys are typically for interactive play, but your puppy may enjoy simply chewing on them because of the squeaking noise. Refer to  Exercise and Socialization to learn about interactive play with the tennis balls.

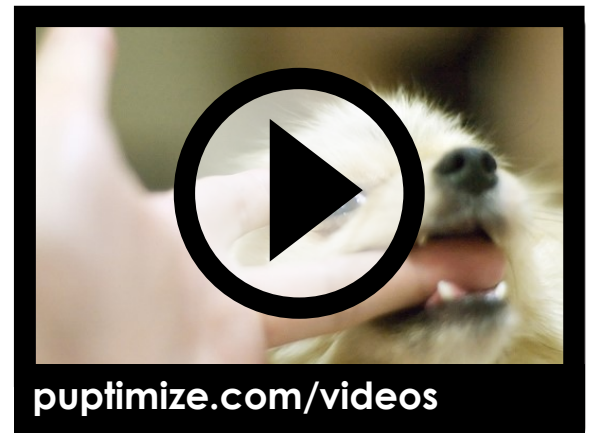
Bully stick: A bully stick is a great way to keep your dog entertained while also maintaining oral health and cravings. Make sure the stick is premium quality and from a reputable food-producing country, such as the U.S., Canada, or New Zealand. Throw the stick away when it becomes small enough to be a choking hazard. Bully sticks are a food source, so account for them in your puppy's total food intake, especially if she eats many of them.



FOR BETTER RESULTS: Rotate your puppy's toys. Rotating your puppy's toys will help keep her excited about each one, so she is less interested in chewing on inappropriate items. Give her 3 – 4 toys at a time. Rotate them with a different collection of toys each week. Ideally you will have 3 sets of 3-4 toys, but don't worry if you don't have that many right away. For more toy ideas, email our experts at fetch@pupthimize.com.

The Basics: Nipping and Biting

1. **Remove attention.** If your puppy nips you, remove all attention for 3 seconds. Look away or turn your body so your puppy notices that attention has been removed.
2. **Redirect your puppy's attention to a chew toy.** If your puppy chews a toy instead of you, great—keep giving them attention. If not, remove attention again. Your puppy will learn that if she bites you, all attention stops.
3. **If biting persists, walk away.** If your puppy continues to bite you after 3 attempts to redirect her, stop interacting with your puppy and walk away for 5-10 minutes or until your puppy is calm.



VIDEO: How to handle nipping/biting



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Expert Tips



Puppy Psychology 101: Stay calm. It's natural to get mad if your puppy chews on something she shouldn't, but understand the cause and effect. If you overreact when your puppy chews something she shouldn't, she'll quickly learn that chewing gets her lots of attention. So if you overreact, she'll actively seek out items to destroy. Calmly remove the inappropriate item from your puppy's mouth. Be attentive because puppies think in the moment. If you don't catch them in the act, you can't correct them.



Give your puppy attention when she's chewing toys. You want to encourage your puppy to chew toys instead of property, so when she's chewing a toy or stick, praise her. Give her attention so that she wants to chew the toys. If you give her a toy and then ignore her, she may think that chewing a toy leads to a lack of attention from you.



Remember that your puppy is teething. Starting at about 12 weeks of age, your puppy's teeth and gums may hurt, so she may be looking for ways to relieve the pain. Make sure that she has chew toys and understand that she might be chewing other items to relieve pain.

Common Questions and Answers



What do I do if the Bitter Apple Spray doesn't work on my puppy?

If the spray isn't preventing your puppy from chewing, try reapplying. In some cases you may need to reapply every day or two. If that simple fix doesn't work, email us at fetch@puptimize.com. Our experts can recommend other sprays you can try.



How can I prevent my puppy from quickly losing interest in her toys?

Have you tried the freezing technique? If not, try that. The frozen toys generally maintain your puppy's attention longer and may be more enjoyable for her. Adding some flavor to the toy also helps maintain interest. Freezing is specific to the Kong and rope toy. Do not freeze other toys. Additionally, each week you'll be alternating your puppy's toys to keep her interested.



Hazardous Foods for Dogs



Alcohol



Avocado



Bones



Chocolate



Cat Food



Chives



Coffee/Tea



Dough



Fish (raw)



Garlic



Grapes



Gum (Xylitol)



Hops



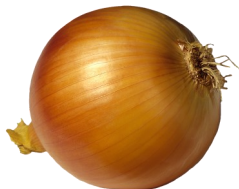
Moldy food



Mushrooms



Nuts



Onions



Pits/Seeds



Raisins



Salt



pupptimize
Great dogs begin here