

Puppy Care - Keeping Your Puppy Happy (and Household Safe), While you are Away

Congratulations on your new puppy or dog! Dogs are wonderful companions and huge amounts of fun. But they also require a lot of care, training, exercise and understanding. This article provides brief tips on getting started with your new pet.

Most puppies are VERY active and love to run, play, chew, and potty on the floor. These are normal behaviors for puppies, so be patient and focus on mitigating problems.

Household Safety

• Keep all shoes and important items off the floor and away from areas where the puppy has access

• Obtain a dog crate and pet gates

- o The dog crate should be appropriate for the size the dog will grow into. Comfortable bedding should be placed in the crate.
- o [Pet Gates](#) are needed to section off areas of the house for when the puppy is unsupervised. In purchasing pet gates, again, consider the size your dog is expected to be full grown. Large breeds may need an [Extra-Tall Pet Gate](#), while very small breeds may only require [Step Over Pet Gates](#)

• While you are away from home, the puppy should be in the crate (crate trained) or contained to a small area of the house with a bed and fresh water. Puppies tend to be insecure initially when they are left alone. Confining them to a small area not only helps them feel safer, but it prevents chewing and destruction of household items. It also helps to give the puppy a treat or toy before you leave. A great item to purchase is called a "kong." It is a hard rubber toy that you stuff peanut butter or treats inside and it takes a while for the dog to get the food or treat out. The kong is a great way to provide some entertainment for your dog while you are away.

Puppies require frequent trips outside. A suggestion is to keep your puppy in his/her crate and then immediately take her outside to potty and play. Let her play in the house for short periods with supervision and put her back in the crate to rest. Repeat this process frequently. By doing this the puppy begins to learn that she should potty outside and it minimizes indoor accidents. Do not "spank" or discipline your puppy for accidents in the house, instead frequently take her outside to go potty. Always take her to the same door so she begins to learn the process.

Puppies love to play and chew. Provide your puppy with chew toys, stuffed animals, large knots of rope, tennis balls and other toys. Keep a toy box for her specific toys. She will love to be walked at least twice a day (rain, snow or shine)!

Puppy Daycare. If you work full time and there will not be someone home during the day to let the puppy out to potty and play, consider Puppy Daycare. Puppy Daycare is very similar to Child Daycare, where you drop the puppy off at a home or facility where she plays and has supervised activities with other dogs. This is an excellent way to socialize your dog. She will learn proper dog etiquette from other dogs, gain more people social awareness and have a blast playing instead of sitting in a crate all day. One of the best things about Doggy Daycare is your dog will usually come home happy and tired, as opposed to bursting with energy and demanding your attention.

Two other extremely important actions in caring for your new puppy are Obedience Training and Spay/Neutering. All adult and older children should attend obedience training with the puppy and practice consistent language and actions with the puppy. Your Puppy needs to be spay/neutered. Discuss timing with your vet.

Most of all, Enjoy your new family member!

About the Author

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