Welcoming a New Puppy Into Your Home

A Guide to Setting Your Puppy Up for Lifelong Success

Bringing home a new puppy is exciting and foundational. The first few days and weeks shape long-term behavior, confidence, and emotional regulation. Preparation, structure, proactive veterinary care, and family education prevent frustration and set your puppy up for success.

Puppy Proofing Your Home

- Remove cords, shoes, children's toys, remotes, and small swallowable objects.
- Secure trash cans and store medications and cleaning products safely.
- Block off unsafe areas using baby gates if needed.
- Puppies explore the world with their mouths.

Understanding Breed-Specific Behaviors

- Every breed was developed for a purpose—herding, guarding, retrieving, scent work, companionship, or protection.
- Herding breeds may chase movement or nip at heels. Sporting breeds may require daily structured activity. Guardian breeds may be watchful or reserved. Working breeds often need significant
mental stimulation.
- Understanding energy levels, prey drive, vocal tendencies, and sensitivity levels prevents mislabeling instinctual behaviors as problematic.
- Educate all household members on calm handling, appropriate play, and consistent expectations.
- Provide breed-appropriate outlets such as enrichment, scent games, structured exercise, training sessions, and rest.

Feeding & Nutrition

- Transition food gradually over 5–7 days when switching diets.
- Feed three meals daily: morning, midday, and late afternoon or early evening.
- Divide the full daily nutrition evenly to support growth and predictable potty schedules.

Potty Training Foundations

- Take your puppy out immediately after waking, after eating, after play, and before bedtime.
- Expect outdoor trips every 1–2 hours initially depending on age and size.
- Reward immediately after outdoor elimination.
- Avoid punishment—consistency and timing build reliability.

Safe Confinement & Crate Training

- Use a crate, X-pen, or gated area to prevent accidents and promote independence.
- Begin with 10–15 minute sessions and gradually build to 45–60 minutes.
- Progress toward age-appropriate durations of 3+ hours over time.
- Pair confinement with safe chews and light calming music.

Introducing Other Dogs
• Start with visual exposure through gates before direct interaction.
• Allow short, calm, supervised introductions.
• Limit high-intensity play during the first few weeks so both dogs can adjust gradually.

Busy Work Schedules
• Young puppies cannot hold their bladder for a full workday.
• If gone 6+ hours, implement a professional dog walker to provide potty breaks and reinforce training.
• Consistency prevents stress-related behaviors.

Veterinary Care & Vaccination Schedule
• Schedule an initial wellness exam immediately.
• Stay current on booster vaccinations, deworming, fecal testing, heartworm prevention, and parasite
control.
• Missing booster appointments delays immunity and safe social exposure.

Recognizing Signs of Medical Distress
• Persistent vomiting or diarrhea.
• Refusal to eat for 12–24 hours.
• Lethargy, pale gums, labored breathing, or swollen abdomen.
• Sudden behavior changes or signs of pain.
• When in doubt, consult your veterinarian promptly.

Seek Professional Training Early
• Do not wait for unwanted behaviors to escalate.
• Early intervention prevents separation distress, reactivity, resource guarding, and frustration behaviors.
• Training during the first 3–6 months is prevention—not correction.