

Your Puppy Boxer

OWNER CONSIDERATIONS

Any admirer of the Boxer can tell you that he is a proud and confident dog. This “pure-bred” certainty goes without saying—it’s evident in the Boxer’s carriage, his expression and his distinctive personality. But a Boxer is also a sensitive creature that depends on human interaction. This is a vital part of what makes a Boxer a Boxer. Boxers thrive on people, revealing in the licking and kissing of their families, and often quite eager to “taste” any willing visitor. If you are looking for a dog that will sit handsomely by the fireside and never bother you, the Boxer is not the dog for you. If, however, you are willing to

YOUR SCHEDULE . . .

If you lead an erratic, unpredictable life, with daily or weekly changes in your work requirements, consider the problems of owning a puppy. The new puppy has to be fed regularly, socialized (loved, petted, handled, introduced to other people) and, most importantly, allowed to go outdoors for house-training. As the dog gets older, he can be more tolerant of deviations in his feeding and relief schedule.



A proper breeder would not sell a puppy to people who would not or could not care for the Boxer puppy in a safe and humane manner.

devote the time and attention to a Boxer that he rightly deserves, this is a breed for you for life!

Although the reader of these pages is more likely interested in finding a companionable family animal than a show champion, there remain many serious factors governing your choice. A primary consideration is time, not only the time of the animal’s allotted life-span, which is over ten years, but also the time required for the owner to exercise and care for the creature. If you are not committed to the welfare and whole existence of this energetic, purposeful animal; if, in the simplest, most basic example, you are not willing to walk your dog daily, despite the weather, do not choose a Boxer as a companion.

Space is another important



FAMILY TIES

If you have other pets in the home and/or interact often with the pets of friends and other family members, your pup will respond to those pets in much the same manner as you do. It is only when you show fear or resentment toward another animal that he will act fearful or unfriendly.

you as possible. He is not appropriately “dressed” to spend all his days outside. He needs to be indoors with the family. A Boxer that is kept outdoors exclusively is a miserable dog. Don’t subject your dog to such a life. Boxers do not tend to be independent and they want to follow you, spend time with you, sit with you, etc. Make sure that you want a Boxer in your home and in your life.

Remember too that Boxer puppies can be very inventive, that is to say, destructive. Unless you can supervise a puppy 24 hours per day, you must expect that he’s going to investigate and taste your woodwork, furniture, cabinets, etc. You must be prepared (emotionally and financially) for such mishaps. Needless to say, proper training and a dash

Boxers are prone to certain genetic diseases. Buy a healthy puppy and have him examined by a vet as soon as you take him home.

consideration. The Boxer in early puppyhood may be well accommodated in a corner of your kitchen but, after only six months when the dog is likely over 40 pounds, larger space certainly will be required. A yard with a fence is also a basic and reasonable expectation. Fortunately, most Boxers do not stray far from their properties (unless attracted by a strong-scented bitch). Unlike other breeds that tend to “escape” on a regular basis, the Boxer will not abandon his post. The fence is a convenient detail because it also keeps strangers from wandering upon your property and challenging your Boxer.

A Boxer is not an outdoor dog. He wants to be as close to





Try to observe your prospective Boxer puppy with his dam. If the dam plays with the puppies, you can take delight in knowing that your pup will likely have an inherited friendly attitude.

of discipline are all it takes to correct such problems. If you are extremely fussy about your house and cannot tolerate muddy paws and slobbery jowls, go for a guppy or parakeet and spare a Boxer the disappointment.

Likewise, the potential owner must consider that a dog impedes upon his freedom! You can no longer escape for a long weekend without preparing for your Boxer's accommodations. Perhaps you will choose a vacation that is suitable for a dog to come along, but the Boxer must now figure into your planning. Once you have selected a Boxer, and you have bonded with him, you will realize that you have found the ideal companion, one who accepts you for all your faults and appreciates

every little thing you do for him! The Boxer's life expectancy is a sure ten years, perhaps even a few years longer. Since 10 to 12 years is a long expanse of time, you must commit to keeping the Boxer for his whole life. Many Boxers are successfully rehomed (placed in second homes) through rescue



It is difficult to judge a puppy's personality until he is at least four weeks old.

White puppies in a litter should not alarm the potential pet buyer. These puppies are throwbacks to ancestors of the original Boxer, which is a man-made breed from several other dogs.



groups. Fortunately the Boxer's adaptability makes this unfortunate, heartbreaking situation more bearable. It's possible that you might want to consider adopting a Boxer from a rescue group. Since adopting an adult dog is almost always easier than starting from scratch (and bite) with a puppy, this is a sensible, viable option for many. If you would like to give a deserving Boxer a second chance, contact your local breed club or the AKC for the appropriate source.

ACQUIRING A BOXER PUPPY

Due to the popularity of the Boxer, there are many reputable breeders to choose from, and there are even more breeders to avoid. You should seek out the best Boxer that you can afford. There is no such thing as "just a pet dog" or a "pet-quality dog." You cannot afford to own a second-rate dog. Inferior quality in a pet only translates to high veterinary bills, wasted time and broken hearts! You are seeking a Boxer that looks and acts like a Boxer.

You want your neighbors to admire your canine charge and tell you how handsome he is. If the appearance of the dog doesn't matter, why get a Boxer? It's not that simple. You want a handsome Boxer that is the picture of good health: a pedigree that indicates his parents have normal or better hips, no history of cancers or the like in their backgrounds and good eyes. Since the Boxer is prone to a number of genetic problems, you want the healthiest dog you can find. You're not merely investing money in this purchase—you're investing your heart and your family! What could be more costly than that? If the breeder is trying to pitch a "pet-quality puppy" at you, tell him that you want the best puppy he has. While the conformation of the dog isn't a primary consideration for a pet person, all of the other important factors that breeders emphasize are. Reread the temperament and character portion of the breed standard: is

If you buy a Boxer puppy, you must accept the responsibilities of ownership for at least ten years. Boxers usually live for over a decade.



there a single quality listed there that doesn't appeal to you?

Be aware that the novice breeders who advertise at attractive prices in the local newspapers are probably kind enough towards their dogs, but often do not have the expertise or facilities required to raise these dogs properly. These pet puppies are frequently badly weaned and left with the mother too long without the supplemental feeding required by this fast-growing breed. This lack of proper feeding can cause indigestion, rickets, weak bones, poor teeth and other problems. Veterinary bills may soon distort initial savings into financial or, worse, emotional loss. Inquire about inoculations and when the puppy was last dosed for worms. Check the ears for signs of debris or irritation, indicating the presence of mites.

Color is a matter of personal choice, but whether you prefer a bright fawn Boxer with flashy white markings or a brindle dog, your puppy should have a dark nose and, preferably, dark toenails. This is a consideration of pigmentation, which should not be confused with color. Color in Boxers generally becomes lighter, so it is wise to choose a puppy with deep rich pigmentation and as much black as possible. By six to ten weeks of age, the Boxer's nose should be well pigmented and broad. You do not want a



REGULAR PLAY SESSIONS

Your Boxer should have regular play and exercise sessions when he is with you or a family member. Exercise for a very young puppy can consist of a short walk around the house or yard. Playing can include fetching games with a large ball or an old sock with a knot tied in the middle. (All puppies teethe and need soft things upon which to chew.) Remember to restrict play periods to indoors within his living area (the family room, for example) until he is completely house-trained.

Boxer puppy with a narrow nose, since his muzzle will likely not develop to the desired broadness. In selecting a fawn-colored dog, seek a deep red coloration, especially down the back and head; in a brindle dog, look for distinctive

This Boxer puppy's color is not acceptable for a show dog, but as a pet dog the color is enchanting.



herringbone striations against a deep red background. For the flashy look, white markings should be present on the chest, legs and forehead and muzzle.

In show dogs, breeders seek out deep pigmentation complemented by white markings on the head, legs and chest. Dark eyes are best, and Boxer pups tend to have bluish eyes that darken as they age. Look for expression in your puppy's eyes, as this is a good sign of intelligence. Boxers often show the haw of the eye, one or both of which may be white; this adds to the Boxer expression. Since the Boxer is a "head breed," you want a puppy that makes a pleasing impression. The Boxer puppy's muzzle should be broad and deep; this is important for the expression of the dog as an adult. The puppy's head

should have some wrinkles, which will disappear as the dog matures. Check that the puppy's lower jaw is as wide as possible, ideal for incoming adult teeth. Never sacrifice overall balance and harmony for a fabulous head. Judges will view the whole picture, not just the dog's head.

Note the way your choice moves. The Boxer, even in puppyhood, should show clean

BOY OR GIRL?

An important consideration to be discussed is the sex of your puppy. For a family companion, a bitch may be the better choice, considering the female's inbred concern for all young creatures and her accompanying tolerance and patience. It is always advisable to spay a pet bitch, which may guarantee her a longer life.



movement with no tendency to stumble or drag the hind feet. Boxers tend to be awkward in their puppy months, so do not confuse this immature lack of coordination with a structural defect. It's best to take along an experienced Boxer person if you are concerned about the structure of the puppy. This tends to be a show-dog concern more than a pet concern, though we all want Boxers that can move easily and effortlessly. In evaluating the structure of your pup, consider that the topline (along his back) should be as straight as possible, with the shoulders sloping and the back short. Avoid toplines that "roach" toward the center (rise noticeably), weak rear quarters, poor feet and, of course, shy or spooky temperaments.

The puppy's bite should be somewhat undershot, meaning the lower jaw protrudes further than the upper jaw. Look for a



PEDIGREE VS. REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

Too often new owners are confused between these two important documents. Your puppy's pedigree, essentially a family tree, is a written record of a dog's genealogy of three generations or more. The pedigree will show you the names as well as performance titles of all the dogs in your pup's background. Your breeder must provide you with a registration application, with his part properly filled out. You must complete the application and send it to the AKC with the proper fee. Every puppy must come from a litter that has been AKC-registered by the breeder, born in the US and from sire and dam that are also registered with the AKC.

The seller must provide you with complete records to identify the puppy. The AKC requires that the seller provide the buyer with the following: breed; sex, color and markings; date of birth; litter number (when available); names and registration numbers of the parents; breeder's name; and date sold or delivered.

lower jaw line that is as wide as possible. Be sure that the tongue doesn't stick out when the puppy closes his mouth. The bite is important for show dogs as well as pet dogs. Although your pet puppy won't be disqualified at the dinner table for an incorrect bite, he may not be able to eat and breathe comfortably throughout his life.



Boxer puppies should be playful, lively and alert. They should be outgoing and neither shy nor frightened.

When you bring your Boxer puppy home, he should have a crate or bed...someplace to which he can retreat for a nap.



COMMITMENT OF OWNERSHIP

After considering all of these factors, you have most likely already made some very important decisions about selecting your puppy. You have chosen the Boxer, which means that you have decided which characteristics you want in a dog and what type of dog will best fit into your family and lifestyle. If you have selected a breeder, you have gone a step further—you have done your research and found a responsible, conscientious person who breeds quality Boxers and who should be a reliable source of help as you and your puppy adjust to life together. If you have observed a litter in action, you have obtained a firsthand look at the dynamics of a puppy “pack” and, thus, you have gotten to learn about each pup’s individual personality—perhaps you have even found one that particularly appeals to you.

However, even if you have not yet found the Boxer puppy of your dreams, observing pups will

help you learn to recognize certain behavior and to determine what a pup’s behavior indicates about his temperament. You will be able to pick out which pups are the leaders, which ones are less outgoing, which ones are confident, which ones are shy, playful, friendly, aggressive, etc. Equally as important, you will learn to recognize what a healthy pup should look and act like. All of these things will help you in your search, and when you find

ARE YOU PREPARED?

Unfortunately, when a puppy is bought by someone who does not take into consideration the time and attention that dog ownership requires, it is the puppy who suffers when he is either abandoned or placed in a shelter by a frustrated owner. So all of the “home-work” you do in preparation for your pup’s arrival will benefit you both. The more informed you are, the more you will know what to expect and the better equipped you will be to handle the ups and downs of raising a puppy. Hopefully, everyone in the household is willing to do his part in raising and caring for the pup. The anticipation of owning a dog often brings a lot of promises from excited family members: “I will walk him every day,” “I will feed him,” “I will house-train him,” etc., but these things take time and effort, and promises can easily be forgotten once the novelty of the new pet has worn off.

PET INSURANCE

Just like you can insure your car, your house and your own health, you likewise can insure your dog's health. Investigate a pet insurance policy by talking to your vet. Depending on the age of your dog, the breed and the kind of coverage you desire, your policy can be very affordable. Most policies cover accidental injuries, poisoning and thousands of medical problems and illnesses, including cancers. Some carriers also offer routine care and immunization coverage.

the Boxer that was meant for you, you will know it!

Researching your breed, selecting a responsible breeder and observing as many pups as possible are all important steps on the way to dog ownership. It may seem like a lot of effort...and you have not even brought the pup home yet! Remember, though, you cannot be too careful when it comes to deciding on the type of dog you want and finding out about your prospective pup's background. Buying a puppy is not—or should not be—just another whimsical purchase. In fact, this is one instance in which you actually do get to choose your own family! But, you may be thinking, buying a puppy should be fun—it should not be so serious and so much work. If you keep in mind the thought that

your puppy is not a cuddly stuffed toy or decorative lawn ornament, but instead will become a real member of your family, you will realize that, while buying a puppy is a pleasurable and exciting endeavor, it is not something to be taken lightly. Relax...the fun will start when the pup comes home!

Always keep in mind that a puppy is nothing more than a baby in a furry disguise...a baby who is virtually helpless in a human world and who trusts his owner for fulfillment of his basic needs for survival. That goes beyond food, water and shelter; your pup needs care, protection, guidance and love. If you are not prepared to commit to this, then you are not prepared to own a dog.

"Wait a minute," you say. "How hard could this be? All of my neighbors own dogs and they seem to be doing just fine. Why should I have to worry about all of this?" Well, you should not worry about it; in fact, you will probably find that once your



Just yesterday your Boxer pup was playing, sleeping and eating with his siblings. The first day in your home is a completely new experience for your new charge.

Boxer pup gets used to his new home, he will fall into his place in the family quite naturally. But it never hurts to emphasize the commitment of dog ownership. With some time and patience, it is really not too difficult to raise a curious and exuberant Boxer pup to be a well-adjusted and well-mannered adult dog—a dog that could be your most loyal friend.

PREPARING PUPPY'S PLACE IN YOUR HOME

Researching your breed and finding a breeder are only two aspects of the “homework” you will have to do before bringing your Boxer puppy home. You will also have to prepare your home and family for the new addition. Much like you would prepare a nursery for a newborn baby, you will need to designate a place in your home that will be the puppy’s own. How you prepare your home will

depend on how much freedom the dog will be allowed: will he be confined to one room or a specific area in the house, or will he be allowed to roam as he pleases? Will he spend most of his time in the house? Will he have an outdoor house too? Whatever you decide, you must ensure that he has a place that he can “call his own” in your home.

When you bring your new puppy into your home, you are bringing him into what will become his home as well. Obviously, you did not buy a puppy so that he could take over your house, but in order for a puppy to grow into a stable, well-adjusted dog, he has to feel comfortable in his surroundings. Remember, he is leaving the warmth and security of his mother and littermates, plus the familiarity of the only place he has ever known, so it is important to make his transition as easy

It only takes a short time before your Boxer puppy becomes a well-mannered family member who will fit into your lifestyle and make himself comfortable in most situations.





as possible. By preparing a place in your home for the puppy, you are making him feel as welcome as possible in a strange new place. It should not take him long to get used to it, but the sudden shock of being transplanted is somewhat traumatic for a young pup. Imagine how a small child would feel in the same situation—that is how your puppy must be feeling. It is up to you to reassure him and to let him know, “Little guy, you are going to like it here!”

WHAT YOU SHOULD BUY

CRATE

To someone unfamiliar with the use of crates in dog training, it may seem like punishment to shut a dog in a crate; this is not the case at all. Crates are not cruel—

crates have many humane and highly effective uses in dog care and training. For example, crate training is a very popular and very successful housebreaking method; a crate can keep your dog safe during travel; and, perhaps most importantly, a crate provides your dog with a place of his own in your home. It serves as a “doggie bedroom” of sorts—your Boxer can curl up in his crate when he wants to sleep or when he just needs a break. Many dogs sleep in their crates overnight. When lined with soft padding and with his favorite toy inside, a crate becomes a cozy pseudo-den for your dog. Like his ancestors, he too will seek out the comfort and retreat of a den—you just happen to be providing him with something a little more luxurious than leaves and twigs lining a dirty ditch.

You will have to be prepared for bringing a new puppy home. Keep in mind that your puppy has always been surrounded with other Boxers, other puppies and even other people. You have become the substitute “pack.” Are you ready for this?

THE COCOA WARS

Chocolate contains the chemical thebromine, which is poisonous to dogs, although “chocolates” especially made for dogs are safe (as they don’t actually contain chocolate) but not recommended. Any item that encourages your dog to enjoy the taste of cocoa should be discouraged. You should also exercise caution when using mulch in your garden. This frequently contains cocoa hulls, and dogs have been known to die from eating the mulch.



Your most necessary accessory for the care and training of your Boxer is a dog crate. Pet shops have many sizes and styles from which you can choose.



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Special crates can be fitted into your van for transporting your Boxer in a safe and secure manner.

As far as purchasing a crate, the type that you buy is up to you. It will most likely be one of the two most popular types: wire or fiberglass. There are advantages and disadvantages to each type. For example, a wire crate is more open, allowing the air to flow through and affording the dog a view of what is going on around him. A fiberglass crate, however, is sturdier and more suitable as a travel crate since it provides more protection for the dog. The size of the crate is another thing to consider. Puppies do not stay

puppies forever—in fact, sometimes it seems as if they grow right before your eyes. A small-sized crate may be fine for a very young Boxer pup, but it will not do him much good for long! Unless you have the money and the inclination to buy a new crate every time your pup has a growth spurt, it is better to get one that will accommodate your dog both as a pup and at full size. A large crate of sufficient height will be necessary for a full-grown Boxer, as their approximate weight range is between 55 and 70 pounds.

BEDDING

A crate pad in the dog's crate will help the dog feel more at home. First, the bedding will take the



CRATE-TRAINING TIPS

During crate training, you should partition off the section of the crate in which the pup stays. If he is given too big an area, this will hinder your training efforts. Crate training is based on the fact that a dog does not like to soil his sleeping quarters, so it is ineffective to keep a pup in an area that is so big that he can eliminate in one end and get far enough away from it to sleep. Also, you want to make the crate den-like for the pup. Blankets and a favorite toy will make the crate cozy for the small pup; as he grows, you may want to evict some of his “roommates” to make more room. It will take some coaxing at first, but be patient. Given some time to get used to it, your pup will adapt to his new home-within-a-home quite nicely.

place of the leaves, twigs, etc., that the pup would use in the wild to make a den; the pup can make his own “burrow” in the crate. Although your pup is far removed from his den-making ancestors, the denning instinct is still a part of his genetic makeup. Second, until you bring your pup home, he has been sleeping amid the warmth of his mother and littermates, and while a pad is not the same as a warm, breathing body, it still provides heat and something with which to snuggle. You will want to wash your pup’s bedding frequently in case he has an accident in his crate, and

replace or remove any bedding that becomes ragged and starts to fall apart.

Toys

Toys are a must for dogs of all ages, especially for curious playful pups. Puppies are the “children” of the dog world, and what child does not love toys? Chew toys provide enjoyment to both dog and owner—your dog will enjoy playing with his favorite toys, while you will enjoy the fact that they distract him from your expensive shoes and leather sofa. Puppies love to chew; in fact, chewing is a physical need for



Not only are crates valuable for training, but dogs whose ears have been cropped, or who have undergone other surgical procedures, can be securely isolated for recuperation.

Pet shops offer a multitude of safe dog toys. Only buy toys made for dogs as children's toys are unsuitable because they may be easily torn.

pups as they are teething, and everything looks appetizing! The full range of your possessions—from old rag to Oriental rug—are fair game in the eyes of a teething pup. Puppies are not all that discerning when it comes to finding something to literally “sink their teeth into”—everything tastes great!

Stuffed toys are another option; these are good to put in the dog's crate to give him some company. Be careful of these, as a pup can de-stuff one pretty quickly, and stay away from stuffed toys with small plastic eyes or parts that a pup could choke on. Similarly, squeaky toys are quite popular. There are dogs that will come running from anywhere in the house at the first sound from their favorite squeaky friend. However, if a pup de-stuffs

A dog bed is a must for your puppy. Pet shops have many styles in different shapes, sizes and types of material. Get one before you bring the puppy home.



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one of these, the small plastic squeaker inside can be dangerous if swallowed. Monitor the condition of your pup's toys carefully and get rid of any that have been chewed to the point of becoming potentially dangerous.

Be careful of natural bones, which have a tendency to splinter into sharp, dangerous pieces. Also be careful of rawhide, which after enough chewing can turn into pieces that are easy to swallow, and also watch out for the mushy mess it can turn into on your carpet.



LEASH

A nylon leash is probably the best option, as it is the most resistant to puppy teeth should your pup take a liking to chewing on his leash. Of course, this is a habit that should be nipped in the bud, but if your pup likes to chew on his leash he has a very slim chance of being able to chew through the strong nylon. Nylon leashes are also lightweight, which is good for a young Boxer who is just getting used to the idea of walking on a leash. For everyday walking and safety

purposes, the nylon leash is a good choice. As your pup grows up and gets used to walking on the leash, and can do it politely, you may want to purchase a flexible leash, which allows you either to extend the length to give the dog a broader area to explore or to pull in the leash when you want

CHEWING TIPS

Chewing goes hand in hand with nipping in the sense that a teething puppy is always looking for a way to soothe his aching gums. In this case, instead of chewing on you, he may have taken a liking to your favorite shoe or something else which he should not be chewing. Again, realize that this is a normal canine behavior that does not need to be discouraged, only redirected. Your pup just needs to be taught what is acceptable to chew on and what is off-limits. Consistently tell him “No!” when you catch him chewing on something forbidden and give him a chew toy.

Conversely, praise him when you catch him chewing on something appropriate. In this way, you are discouraging the inappropriate behavior and reinforcing the desired behavior. The puppy’s chewing should stop after his adult teeth have come in, but an adult dog continues to chew for various reasons—perhaps because he is bored, needs to relieve tension or just likes to chew. That is why it is important to redirect his chewing when he is still young.



to keep him close. Of course there are special leashes for training purposes, and specially made leather harnesses for the working Boxer, but these are not necessary for routine walks. For the adult Boxer who tends to pull on the leash, you may want to purchase something stronger, like a thicker leather leash.

COLLAR

Your pup should get used to wearing a collar all the time since you will want to attach his ID tags to his collar. Also, the lead and collar go hand in hand—you have to attach the leash to something! A lightweight nylon collar will be a good choice; make sure that it fits snugly enough so that the pup

Pet shops usually carry an extensive range of leashes. A nylon leash is probably the best option as your Boxer puppy's first leash.



TOYS, TOYS, TOYS!

With a big variety of dog toys available, and so many that look like they would be a lot of fun for a dog, be careful in your selection. It is amazing what a set of puppy teeth can do to an innocent-looking toy; so, obviously, safety is a major consideration. Be sure to choose the most durable products that you can find. Hard nylon bones and toys are a safe bet, and many of them are offered in different scents and flavors that will be sure to capture your dog's attention. It is always fun to play a game of fetch with your dog, and there are balls and flying discs that are specially made to withstand dog teeth.

cannot wriggle out of it, but is loose enough so that it will not be uncomfortably tight. You should be able to fit a finger in between the pup's neck and the collar. It may take some time for your pup to get used to wearing the collar, but soon he will not even notice that it is there. Choke collars are made for training, but should only be used by an owner who knows exactly how to use it. If you use a stronger leather leash or a chain leash to walk your Boxer, you will need a stronger collar as well.

FOOD AND WATER BOWLS

Your pup will need two bowls, one for food and one for water. You may want two sets of bowls, one for inside and one for outside,

depending on where the dog will be fed and where he will be spending time. Stainless steel or sturdy plastic bowls are popular choices. Although plastic bowls are more chewable, dogs tend not to chew on the steel variety, which can be sterilized. Boxer owners should put their dogs' food and water bowls on specially made elevated stands; this brings the food closer to the dog's level so he does not have to bend down as far, thus aiding his digestion and helping to guard against bloat or gastric torsion in deep-chested dogs. The most important thing is to buy sturdy bowls since, again, anything is in danger of being chewed by puppy teeth and you do not want your dog to be



Your Boxer puppy should be introduced to the collar and leash as soon as possible. It may take a few days for your puppy to become accustomed to a collar.



You will need bowls for food and water. Most breeders opt for stainless steel bowls since they are the most convenient.

Your local pet shop will be able to show you a wide range of food and water bowls. Select the size, color and style that best suits you and your Boxer.



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constantly chewing apart his bowl (for his safety and for your wallet).

CLEANING SUPPLIES

Cleaning up messes will be a way of life until your Boxer pup is housebroken. Accidents will occur, which is okay for now because the puppy does not know any better. All you can do is clean up any accidents—old rags, paper towels, newspapers and a safe disinfectant are good to have on hand.

BEYOND THE BASICS

The items previously discussed are the bare necessities. You will find out what else you need as you go along—grooming supplies, flea/tick protection, baby gates to partition a room, etc.—these things will vary depending on your situation. It is just important that right away you have everything you need to feed and make your Boxer comfortable in his first few days at home.

PUPPY-PROOFING YOUR HOME

Aside from making sure that your Boxer will be comfortable in your home, you also have to make sure that your home is safe for your Boxer. This means taking precautions to make sure that your pup will not get into anything he should not get into and that there is nothing within his reach that

may harm him should he sniff it, chew it, inspect it, etc. This probably seems obvious since, while you are primarily concerned with your pup's safety, at the same time you do not want your belongings to be ruined. Breakables should be placed out of reach if your dog is to have full run of the house. If he is to be limited to certain places within the house, keep any potentially dangerous items in the "off-limits" areas. An electrical cord can pose a danger should the puppy decide to taste it—and who is going to convince a pup that it would not make a great chew toy? Cords should be fastened tightly against the wall. If your dog is going to spend time in a crate, make sure that there is nothing near his crate that he can reach if he sticks his curious little nose or paws through the openings. And just as you would with a child, keep all household cleaners and

THE CLEAN LIFE

By providing sleeping and resting quarters that fit the dog, and offering him frequent opportunities to relieve himself outside his quarters, the puppy quickly learns that the outdoors is the place to go when he needs to urinate or defecate. It also reinforces his innate desire to keep his sleeping quarters clean. This, in turn, helps develop the muscle control that will eventually produce a dog with clean living habits.

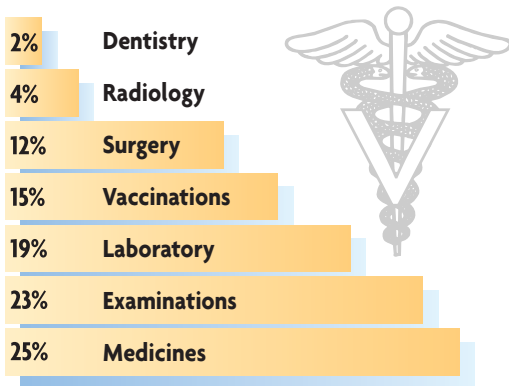


You will need something to assist you in cleaning up after your Boxer has relieved himself. Pet shops usually have several gadgets suitable for sanitary collection and disposal of waste.

chemicals where the pup cannot get to them.

It is just as important to make sure that the outside of your home is safe. Of course your puppy should never be unsupervised, but a pup let loose in the yard will want to run and explore, and he should be granted that freedom. Do not let a fence give you a false sense of security; you would be surprised how crafty (and persistent) a dog can be in figuring out how to dig under and squeeze his way through small holes, or to jump or climb over a fence. The remedy is to make the fence high enough so that it really is impossible for your dog to get over it (about 6 feet should suffice), and well embedded into the ground. Be sure to repair or secure any gaps or weak spots in the fence. Check the fence periodically to ensure that it is in good shape and

Breakdown of Veterinary Income by Category



make repairs as needed; a very determined pup may return to the same spot to “work on it” until he is able to get through.

FIRST TRIP TO THE VET

Okay, you have picked out your puppy, your home and family are ready, now all you have to do is pick your Boxer up from the breeder and the fun begins, right? Well...not so fast. Something else you need to prepare for is your pup’s first trip to the veterinarian. Perhaps the breeder can recommend someone in the area who

Every Boxer puppy should be vaccinated against a variety of maladies. Follow the advice and direction of your vet. Be punctual and observant of the recommended time schedules.



specializes in Boxers, or maybe you know some other Boxer owners who can suggest a good vet. Either way, you should have an appointment arranged for your pup before you pick him up; plan on taking him for a checkup within the first few days of bringing him home.

The pup’s first visit will consist of an overall examination to make sure that the pup does not have any problems that are not apparent to you. The veterinarian will also set up a schedule for the pup’s vaccinations; the breeder will inform you of which ones the pup has already received and the vet can continue from there.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMILY

Everyone in the house will be excited about the puppy’s coming home and will want to pet him and play with him, but it is best to make the introduction low-key so as not to overwhelm the puppy. He is apprehensive already; it is the first time he has been separated from his mother and the breeder, and the ride to your home is likely the first time he has been in a car. The last thing you want to do is smother him, as this will only frighten him further. This is not to say that human contact is not extremely necessary at this stage, because this is the time when an instant connection



Boxers have very individual personalities. This fellow likes to collect sticks. Take advantage of these natural instincts and train the dog to bring you the newspaper or your slippers.

between the pup and his human family are formed. Gentle petting and soothing words should help console him, as well as just putting him down and letting him explore on his own (under your watchful eye, of course).

The pup may approach the family members or may busy himself with exploring for a while. Gradually, each person should spend some time with the pup, one at a time, crouching down to get as close to the pup's level as possible and letting him sniff their hands and petting him gently. He definitely needs human attention and he needs to be touched—this is how to form an immediate bond. Just remember that the pup is experiencing a lot of things for the first time, all at the same time. There are new

people, new noises, new smells, and new things to investigate, so be gentle, be affectionate and be as comforting as you can be.

YOUR PUP'S FIRST NIGHT HOME

You have traveled home with your new charge safely in his crate or on a family member's lap. He's been to the vet for a thorough check-up; he's been weighed, his papers examined; perhaps he's even been vaccinated and wormed as well. He's met the family and licked the whole family, including the excited children and the less-than-happy cat. He's explored his area, his new bed, the yard and anywhere else he's been permitted. He's eaten his first meal at home and relieved himself in the proper place. He's heard lots of

Meeting a family of potential owners, these Boxer pups are enjoying a picnic in their honor.



new sounds, smelled new friends and seen more of the outside world than ever before.

That was just the first day! He's exhausted and is ready for bed...or so you think!

It's puppy's first night and you are ready to say "Good night"—keep in mind that this is puppy's first night ever to be sleeping alone. His dam and littermates are no longer at paw's length and he's a bit scared, cold and lonely. Be reassuring to your new family member, but this is not the time to spoil him and give in to his inevitable whining.

Puppies whine. They whine to let the others know where they are and hopefully to get company out of it. Place your pup in his new bed or crate in his room and close the door. Mercifully, he will fall asleep without a peep. When

DEWORMING

Ridding your puppy of worms is very important because they remove the nutrients that a growing puppy needs and certain worms that puppies carry, such as tapeworms and roundworms, can also infect humans.

Breeders initiate deworming programs at or about four weeks of age. The routine is repeated every two or three weeks until the puppy is three months old. The breeder from whom you obtained your puppy should provide you with the complete details of the deworming program.

Your veterinarian can prescribe and monitor the rest of the deworming program for you. The usual program is treating the puppy every 15–20 days until the puppy is positively worm-free. It is advised that you only treat your puppy with drugs that are recommended professionally.

the inevitable occurs, ignore the whining; he is fine. Be strong and keep his interest in mind. Do not allow your heart to become guilty and visit the pup. He will fall asleep.

Many breeders recommend placing a piece of bedding from his former homestead in his new bed so that he recognizes the scent of his littermates. Others still advise placing a hot water bottle in his bed for warmth. This latter may be a good idea, provided the pup doesn't attempt to suckle—he'll get good and wet and may not fall asleep so fast.

Puppy's first night can be somewhat stressful for the pup and his new family. Remember that you are setting the tone of nighttime at your house. Unless you want to play with your pup every night at 10 p.m., midnight and 2 a.m., don't initiate the habit. Surely your family will thank you, and so will your pup!

PREVENTING PUPPY PROBLEMS

SOCIALIZATION

Now that you have done all of the preparatory work and have helped your pup get accustomed to his new home and family, it is about time for you to have some fun! Socializing your Boxer pup gives you the opportunity to show off your new friend, and your pup gets to reap the benefits of being

an adorable velvety creature that people will coo over, want to pet and, in general, think is absolutely precious!

Besides getting to know his new family, your puppy should be exposed to other people, animals and situations. This will help him become well adjusted as he grows up and less prone to being timid or fearful of the new things he will encounter. Your pup's socialization began at the breeder's, now it is your responsibility to continue it. The socialization he receives up until the age of 12 weeks is the most critical, as this is the time when he forms his impressions of the outside world. Lack of socialization can manifest itself in fear and aggression as the dog grows up. Your pup needs lots of human contact, affection, handling and exposure to other animals. Be careful during the eight-to-ten-week-old period, also known as the fear period. The interaction he receives from you



There is no better entertainment for a Boxer puppy of any age than to play with his human friends.

Keep your eye on your Boxer puppy when he is released in the yard. A koi pond is lovely, but it can be dangerous if a puppy decides to chase a fish!



during this time should be gentle and reassuring.

Once your pup has received his necessary vaccinations, feel free to take him out and about (on his leash, of course). Take him around the neighborhood, take him on your daily errands, let people pet him, let him meet other dogs and pets, etc. Puppies do not have to try to make friends; there will be no shortage of people who will want to introduce themselves. Just make sure that you carefully supervise each meeting. If the neighborhood children want to say hello, for example, that is great—children and pups most often make great companions. But sometimes an

excited child can unintentionally handle a pup too roughly, or an overzealous pup can playfully nip a little too hard. You want to make socialization experiences positive ones; what a pup learns during this very formative stage will impact his attitude toward future encounters. A pup that has a bad experience with a child may grow up to be a dog that is shy

EATING IN PEACE

Give your pup his own little corner of the kitchen where he can eat undisturbed and where he will not be underfoot. None of the family members should disturb the pup during his mealtimes.

around or aggressive toward children, and you want your dog to be comfortable around everyone.

CONSISTENCY IN TRAINING

Dogs, being pack animals, naturally need a leader, or else they try to establish dominance in their packs. When you bring a dog into your family, who becomes the leader and who becomes the “pack” are entirely up to you! Your pup’s intuitive quest for dominance, coupled with the fact that it is nearly impossible to look at an adorable Boxer pup, with his “puppy-dog” eyes and his lovable expression, and not cave in, give the pup almost an unfair advantage in getting the upper hand! And a pup will definitely test the



PUP MEETS WORLD

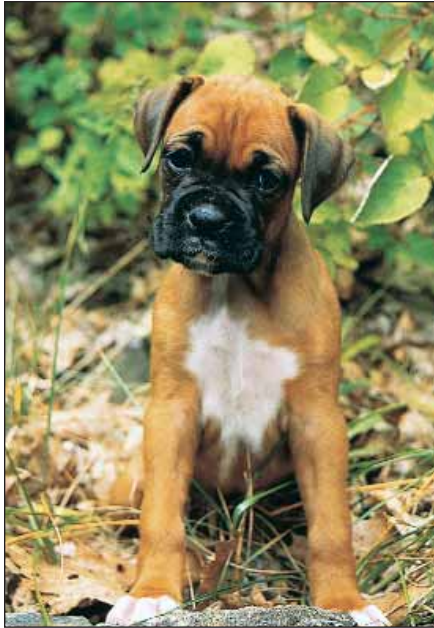
Thorough socialization includes not only meeting new people and other pets but also being introduced to new experiences such as riding in the car, having his coat brushed, hearing the television, walking in a crowd—the list is endless. The more your pup experiences, and the more positive the experiences are, the less of a shock and the less frightening it will be for your pup to encounter new things.

Children’s toys are usually unsuitable for Boxer puppies because they are easily shredded, may contain toxic dyes or stuffing or may have wire frames that could injure the dog.



waters to see what he can and cannot get away with. Do not give in to those pleading eyes—stand your ground when it comes to disciplining the pup and make sure that all family members do the same. It will only confuse the pup when Mother tells him to get off the couch when he is used to sitting up there with Father to watch the nightly news. Avoid discrepancies by having all members of the household decide on the rules before the pup even comes home...and be consistent

The Boxer puppy's face clearly reveals his dependence and needs. A puppy should never have to wonder if his owner loves him.



in enforcing them! Early training shapes the dog's personality, so you cannot be unclear in what you expect.

COMMON PUPPY PROBLEMS

The best way to prevent problems is to be proactive in stopping an undesirable behavior as soon as it starts. The old saying "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" does not necessarily hold true, but it is true that it is much easier to discourage bad behavior in a young developing pup than to wait until the pup's bad behavior becomes the adult dog's bad habit. There are some problems that are especially prevalent in puppies as they develop.

There is no better way for children and puppies to get acquainted than to meet and to exchange smiles and embraces.

NIPPING

As puppies start to teethe, they feel the need to sink their teeth into anything...unfortunately that includes your fingers, arms, hair, toes...whatever happens to be available. You may find this behavior cute for about the first five seconds ...until you feel just how sharp those puppy teeth are. This is something you want to discourage immediately and consistently with a firm "No!" (or whatever number of firm "Nos" it takes for him to understand that you mean business) and replace your finger with an appropriate chew toy. While this behavior is merely annoying when the dog is still young, it can become dangerous as your Boxer's adult teeth grow in and his jaws develop, if he thinks that it is okay to gnaw on human appendages. You do not want to take a chance with a Boxer, as this is a breed whose jaws become very strong. He does not mean any harm with a friendly nip, but he also does not know his own strength.



CRYING/WHINING

Your pup will often cry, whine, whimper, howl or make some type of commotion when he is left alone. This is basically his way of calling out for attention, of calling out to make sure that you know he is there and that you have not forgotten about him. He feels insecure when he is left alone, for example, when you are out of the house and he is in his crate or when you are in another part of the house and he cannot see you. The noise he is making is an expression of the anxiety he feels at being alone, so he needs to be taught that being alone is okay. You are not actually training the dog to stop making noise, you are training him to feel comfortable when he is alone and thus removing the need for him to make the noise. This is where the crate with cozy padding and a favorite toy comes in handy. You want to know that he is safe when you are not there to supervise, and you know that he will be safe in his crate rather than roaming freely about the house. In order for the pup to stay in his crate without making a fuss, he needs to be comfortable in his crate. On that note, it is extremely important that the crate is never used as a form of punishment, or the pup will have a negative association with the crate.

Accustom the pup to the crate in short, gradually increasing time

**TEMPERAMENT COUNTS**

Your selection of a good puppy can be determined by your intentions. A show potential or a good pet? It is your choice. Every puppy, however, should be of good temperament. Although show-quality puppies are bred and raised with emphasis on physical conformation, responsible breeders strive for equally good temperament. Do not buy from a breeder who concentrates solely on physical beauty at the expense of personality.

“Come play with me!” All puppies need playmates to share in a game of ball.



intervals in which you put him in the crate, maybe with a treat, and stay in the room with him. If he cries or makes a fuss, do not go to him, but stay in his sight. Gradually he will realize that staying in his crate is okay without your

help, and it will not be so traumatic for him when you are not around. You may want to leave the radio on softly when you leave the house; the sound of human voices may be comforting to him.

Crate-trained adult dogs can be given a “time-out” for some relaxation, such as these Boxers at a dog show.



TAKE HIM TO A TRAINER

Young dogs with mellow personalities and temperaments are much easier to train than more assertive dogs. If you have a puppy that seems untrainable, take him to a trainer or behaviorist. The dog may have a personality problem that requires the help of a professional, or perhaps you need help in learning how to train your dog.



Boxer puppies may look well posed among flowering plants, but take care. Many plants are poisonous to dogs.



1. Esophagus
2. Lungs
3. Gall Bladder
4. Liver
5. Kidney
6. Stomach
7. Intestines
8. Urinary Bladder

INTERNAL ORGANS OF THE BOXER