

Beta's First Week

By Kerri Danskin

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We've had our little Beta with us since Saturday night (she's my new Boxer puppy, for those of you just tuning in) and boy has it been an experience. She's already growing, learning and making us laugh, not to mention robbing us of quite a few hours of sleep in the last few days. Last night was the first night she slept straight through. John had an alarm set to take her out twice overnight. The first one we skipped since she was out like a light and the next time he woke her up and took her out just in case. But otherwise, not a peep!

There are two things I tried last night that were new and which I think were pretty effective in quieting her down. One was putting a ticking clock next to the crate. I had read that the sound can be comforting to puppies because it's similar to the beating of the mother's heart. The other thing I did was put a hot water bottle rolled up in a pillowcase in the crate with her. She's single coated and so tiny and I noticed any time we sit on the floor she wants to be snuggled up, so I thought she might be cold. Lo and behold, a silent night. Considering the night before last had me up Googling crating tips until 2 a.m. while she did her adorably maddening puppy howl, this was very good timing.

I love what having this puppy has done for John (my husband) and I. We are engaging in a lot more teamwork than usual out of necessity; this little pup has a lot of needs. And it's sweet to see him love an animal so much immediately upon meeting her. We both adore our cat too, but since he's less needy, we don't get to show it as often.

A couple days after coming home, Beta's fecal test came back from the vet and it showed that she has giardia, which is a parasite in the digestive tract, so she's been taking some medicine for that. We had one day of scary diarrhea, but she's good as new now, thank goodness.

As a lifelong dog lover, my moment of triumph came when John said to me about a day after we brought her home, "I don't know why we waited so long to get a dog." I can't wait to see what kind of dog Beta grows up to be and how our lives are changed by welcoming her into our home.