

Top 10 Puppy Care Tips

Learn the top ten tips of caring for you puppy.

There's something about adopting a puppy that makes you want to yell "Carpe diem!" Perhaps you're inspired by the vigor of his youth—or maybe it's that you can't possibly do any thumb sucking while catching a falling vase. Given your new attitude, reading lengthy articles about dog behavior by acclaimed animal trainers might not rank. So, here's our Top 10 list of the Things You Should Know about your new pup. Read quickly. He has to pee again.

1. **Puppy-proof your home.** If your pal is right this second chewing the wires of your computer, you've got a problem. Pups are biologically predisposed to munch on anything and everything to help them cut their teeth. That includes wires and all sorts of other dangerous stuff. Hide or put away anything you would not want a toddler eating or pulling. Survey the area when you're done on hands and knees (his eye level) to make sure you've done a good job.
2. **Introduce your family slowly.** Do not spring your new pup on the extended clan at Cousin Heddy's bat mitzvah four hours after you picked up your pooch from the breeder. Instead, let him adjust to your normal routine for a couple weeks then gradually make the rounds. In fact, you're better off taking things slowly at home, too. Keep him in one room for a day or two before giving him a grand tour of the house. Resident pets should make short "visits" to his kennel for a couple of days to sniff him out before you allow them to play together. Don't worry; there will be plenty of time to take family photos later.
3. **Don't feed him human food.** We know your father made your childhood Cocker Spaniel scrambled eggs every day for breakfast, but that's probably why Taffy didn't live very long. Be a grown-up and buy Eukanuba. Our food is specially formulated based on your puppy's weight and nutritional needs. It includes a perfect balance of protein, carbs and, yes, even antioxidants.
4. **Housetrain him properly.** Cleaning up after a puppy that has piddled is one thing, having to muck up your own living room regularly for the next 12 years is another. Take the time early on to housebreak him in an appropriate fashion. This requires discipline on your part—just about every hour. Don't forget to reward him when he does his business in the right place. Even if it is 3 a.m., you want to encourage that he did the right thing by waking you up.
5. **Socialize him.** You cannot tolerate a pet that nips at your nanny. She will quit, and then you will have to stay home with both the kids and the dog. Take time now to regularly go to the park for play dates so that your pup has the opportunity to meet and greet many different types of individuals—human and canine alike.
6. **Teach him to be obedient.** You'll enjoy your pup much more if he's not driving you mad with his barking/jumping/begging. Spend time each day giving him lessons on how to be quiet, come, sit, stay, etc. Once you do that, then you can enter him in the Annual Beach Babe Frisbee Competition.
7. **Get her fixed.** Unless you honestly want to become a breeder, do us a favor and make The Appointment. While the science experiment is fun for the entire sixth grade class, you'll be the one who has to clean up after all those puppies. At four o'clock in the morning. While your 12-year-old daughter cries hysterically that she cannot possibly give up any of the babies.
8. **Get him fixed.** If you think your neighbors are a little standoffish now, wait until your Golden Retriever has impregnated their AKC-registered Tibetan Terrier.
9. **Exercise him.** Depending on their breed, puppies need a decent amount of exercise to stay in good physical and mental health. Start your day early with an extra-long walk then wind down at night with a stroll around the block, leash in hand. He'll blow through energy that might otherwise be destined for your new couch pillows, and you'll be able to save money by cancelling your gym membership.
10. **Make time to play with him.** Puppies are hugely social pack animals and need your undivided attention for some time each day. Relax with your pet by throwing a ball, teaching him a new trick or cuddling in bed with him. Studies have shown that developing relationships with pets relieves stress thus leading to improved human health. Besides, you can clean out your closet another day.

Now go outside and let him do his business. Don't forget the treats.