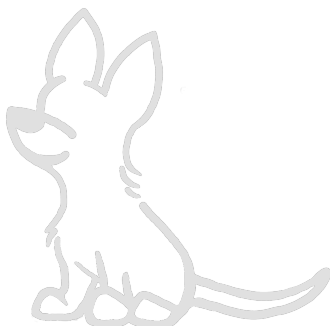


WHAT TO DO WITH A NEW PUPPY

A plan for the first week



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"I GOT A PUPPY! ...NOW WHAT?"

You may have dreamed about this occasion for years. And now the time has finally arrived: you're getting a puppy of your very own. It can be fun, exciting, and as you quickly discover, really overwhelming.

You've got this little ball of fluff and sharp teeth wandering around your house and it's like, *what do I actually DO with this creature? Should I... walk her? Train her to do something? Enroll in puppy preschool? Start a puppy college fund?*

Okay, first of all, breathe! Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Here's a plan of action for your first week of puppy parenthood.

And if you need more guidance than this, we can help. Check out [Puppy Survival School](#), our online program where you can watch detailed video tutorials and ask questions on our forum. More details on the last page of this guide.

- Jake

WHAT TO DO FIRST

This is the basic stuff to get in order before you do anything else. Ideally, you'd do this before the puppy comes home, but you can still do it after.

PUPPY-PROOF

Puppies have this charming tendency to destroy everything in their path. They like to chew – a lot. Go through the area that Sparky will spend most of her time, and remove anything you don't want chewed, and anything that might hurt her.

For example:

- Kids' toys
- Shoes
- Laundry
- Books
- Video game controllers
- Cleaning supplies
- Antique furniture
- Electrical cords

You can use a bitter-tasting deterrent spray, like Bitter Apple, on anything valuable that can't be removed, like corners of furniture. (Just test it first in a small area to make sure it doesn't stain)

Don't give the puppy access to every room right away. More access equals more opportunities to get into mischief. Use baby gates and closed doors to keep the pup where you can see her.

GATHER THE CRUCIAL SUPPLIES

- A crate.** In most situations, a crate makes training easier and faster. It gives you a place to keep the pup out of trouble when you can't supervise, therefore preventing any bad habits from developing.
- Chew toys.** Lots of 'em. Get a variety of types so you can figure out what kind your puppy likes best.
- Puzzle toys.** At least a couple Kong-style ones that you can stuff with goodies to keep the puppy busy. [Click here to learn more about puzzle toys.](#)
- Training treats.** Use soft treats chopped into pea-sized pieces.
- A puppy-pee remover.** Important: It must be an enzyme-based cleaner, like Nature's Miracle. Other types of cleaners don't do a good enough job of eliminating the scent. If the pup can still smell the mess on the carpet, he's likely to go in the same spot again.

(Also see the more comprehensive puppy supplies checklist that came in your Puppy Starter Kit)

CALL A FAMILY MEETING, GET EVERYONE ON THE SAME PAGE

Establish ground rules for the new dog. Things to talk about include:

Where will the dog sleep at night? (See below for advice)

Will she be allowed on the couch/bed?

Are there any rooms that are permanently off-limits to the dog?

Who will feed/walk/train/take the pup on his 3am potty break?

Decide on words for cues. If one person says “down” when they mean to get off the furniture and someone else says “off,” your pup is going to be very confused.

BEHAVIOR:

- Sitting
- Lying down
- Coming when called
- Get off the furniture
- Go into the crate
-
-
-
-

CUE:

"Sit" (that was easy)

THE FIRST WEEK

INTRODUCE THE PUPPY TO THE CRATE

Take a full day to slowly introduce the crate before you start using it for real. Make it comfortable: add some old towels or blankets. If you received a blanket with the smell of “home” from his breeder, put that inside. I wouldn’t buy any expensive bedding until you know if Sparky is a bedding-destroyer.

To begin: Get Sparky's attention, then open the crate door and toss some really good treats inside. Praise him when he goes inside to get the food. Don’t force him to go in and don’t close the door behind him.

Several more times during the day, call Sparky over to the crate and toss some treats inside. Sparky will start to see the crate as a good place where awesome things happen.

Once the puppy is happily going in and out of the crate, you can start closing the door behind him. Start by keeping it closed for just a few seconds, and work your way up to longer periods of time. Always open the door before he gets anxious.

BEGIN HOUSE TRAINING

Step 1: Pick a potty spot

You can actually teach your dog to use one small area of your yard as her bathroom, instead of creating a "minefield" all over the place. Pick the area you'd prefer she use. When you let her out, take her directly to this spot. Dogs are creatures of habit, and if you're consistent about this, she'll come to prefer it over any other area.

Step 2: Set up a play pen area, if necessary

When in their crate, a two-month-old puppy can be expected to "hold it" for no more than 2-3 hours at a time. A four-month-old, about five hours. And no dog should be crated more than six hours during the day. If you will be at work or school longer than this, and can't arrange for anyone else to come take your pup out, you'll need to create a "play pen."

Choose an area with floors that won't be hard to clean if Sparky makes a mess. The kitchen is usually a safe bet. Build a small pen area with baby gates or an exercise pen. Put her crate and toys in one end, and cover the other end in newspaper or pee pads.

Step 3: Supervise, supervise, supervise

When you can't keep an eye on Sparky, she needs to be in her crate or pen. When you CAN watch her, watch her closely. I'm talking your complete and total attention here. She'll usually give some subtle warning that she needs to go, like sniffing or circling. However, some puppies will squat with no warning whatsoever, so keep her close so you can interrupt her if necessary.

Step 4: Take the puppy to the bathroom about once per hour

Some puppies need to go more often, some need less. You'll figure it out as you get to know your puppy.

Step 5: When she goes, reward

As soon as she's finished her business, reward her with a really good treat, and maybe something else she really loves, like playing or ear scratches.

Step 6: Come back inside the house...

If Sparky went potty, you can reward her with a little bit of freedom in the house. If she didn't go, either supervise SUPER closely, or put her in her crate. In about 15 minutes, take her out again. Repeat until she goes.

When puppy has an accident:

Scenario one: you discover the mess three hours or three seconds after she did it. Just clean up the mess and don't bother the dog. You can't punish a dog after the fact. She won't know why you are punishing her.

Scenario two: you catch Sparky in the act. Interrupt her by saying "ah ah!" or clapping your hands. (*Interrupt*, don't scare. This is not a "No! Baaaaad dog! Wait til your FATHER gets home" situation). Then rush her to her bathroom spot. If she goes, praise her. If she doesn't, oh well. Just remember to supervise better next time.

I know how frustrating it can be, but never yell, hit her, rub her nose in the mess or otherwise punish her. Yeah, it might teach her not to pee in the house, but she'll *also* learn never to pee in front of you again, indoors OR outdoors, because for some weird reason it makes you all crazy and scary. Instead of peeing on the rug in plain sight, she'll go under the table or in a back room where she figures you can't see her. Not exactly what we're going for.

GET THROUGH THE FIRST FEW NIGHTS

To survive your puppy's first nights with your sanity intact, there are two things you should understand:

1. Sparky will be a little bit freaked out.
2. You are not going to get much sleep.

The sooner you accept these facts, the better off you'll be. Your dog's first night will turn you into a sleep-deprived zombie. That's just how it goes.

Decide where Sparky will sleep. I recommend either letting him sleep in your bedroom, or you sleeping on the couch next to him, temporarily. He doesn't know what's going on, and sleeping near you will be reassuring. You'll have a better shot at getting *some* sleep, since Sparky is less likely to howl and carry on if he can see you.

Set up his own bed. If you spent the day getting him used to the crate and he's taken to it nicely, use that. Place it right next to the bed/couch so you can reach over and reassure him as needed. If he freaks out when he gets locked in the crate, you can use a dog bed, and a leash to tether him to a sturdy piece of furniture. (You don't want him getting up during the night to relieve himself on your carpet)

Right before bed, take him for a bathroom break, then put him to bed with a chew toy. He'll probably whine for a while. Stick your fingers through the crate bars to reassure him briefly. Then ignore the whining. When he stops whining, you can toss a treat into the crate to reward the quiet.

If he's quiet for a while but starts whining again, he might have to go. A two-month-old puppy may need to go out as little as 30 minutes after his last bathroom trip.

SCHEDULE A VET VISIT

The first rule of adopting a pet: take them to the vet ASAP. Your vet can tell you what vaccines your puppy needs, whether she has worms, and alert you to any possible health concerns. And just as important, this is an opportunity for socialization. Taking your pup to the vet early on will get her used to the experience. Try to make it positive: feed her treats, maybe play with a toy in the exam room. Your pup will start to get into a good vet-visit habit and be easier to handle at the vet's office when she's older and larger.

TEACH THE PUP THEIR NAME

Keep some treats in your pockets. Once in a while, call your puppy's new name, and immediately toss him a treat. Toss the treat even if he doesn't turn around to look at you right away. After a few repetitions, he'll soon associate the word "Sparky" with treats flying past his face, and he'll start to respond appropriately. Any time you want to offer Sparky something really awesome, like his dinner, a walk, or ear scratches, call his name first. He'll learn to love his name pretty quick.

EXPECT CHALLENGES AND FRUSTRATION

Puppy life isn't *always* super fun. You'll probably encounter normal (but annoying!) puppy behaviors like biting, harassing the other pets, and whining when left alone. And these challenges often lead people to secretly wonder if maaaaybe getting their puppy was a huge mistake. The new-puppy blues, or as I like to call it, the "What The **** Was I Thinking?" phase, can be a pretty terrible time. For help dealing with both the behavior challenges and the mental/emotional challenges, check out the ebook I wrote on the subject:

[I Got a Dog - What Was I Thinking?](https://3LostDogs.com/books/I-Got-a-Dog-What-Was-I-Thinking/) at 3LostDogs.com/books

PROVIDE LOTS OF IRRESISTIBLE CHEW TOYS

Puppies like to chew *everything*. Partly because of teething, but chewing is something that most dogs love to do well into adulthood. It's how they relax. So you have to provide plenty of appropriate outlets for this natural canine behavior.

The trick is to get chew toys that are more appealing than your shoes or expensive replica sonic screwdriver. You'll have to experiment to find out what Sparky really likes.

Some good choices include:

Hollow bones that you can fill with soft food

Carrots (chilled carrots are great for soothing teething puppies)

Nylabones

Kongs filled with peanut butter or canned food (freeze it to make it last longer)

Pig ears

Hooves

Bully sticks

Antler chews

Keep a stash of 5-10 toys. Rotate through them so Sparky doesn't get bored.

Make three or four available at all times.

Any time you see her chewing on a dog toy (instead of your valuables) reward her with praise and affection.

DO SOME PUPPY TRAINING GAMES

Don't worry too much about formal "obedience" training in the first week. These puppy training games give you a no-pressure way to teach good manners and help your puppy bond with her new humans:

Puppy Pinball

Get the whole family involved! Give everyone a handful of treats and have them sit in a big circle with Sparky in the middle. Everyone takes turns calling the puppy to them, feeding her treats and making a big fuss over her. This is early come-when-called training, and it also teaches the pup that her new people are fun and trustworthy.

Hide and Seek

Have someone gently restrain the puppy while you run off to hide, and then call his name. When he finds you, praise him and give him treats or a toy. When you first play this, don't hide yourself *too* well or the pup might get discouraged. As he gets better at the game you can go farther away and make it harder for him to find you.

Automatic Check-In

Take a walk with the puppy on leash and let her explore. Every time she glances back at you, praise and give her a treat, then let her go back to what she was doing. If she doesn't look at you, say her name or make an interesting sound to get her attention. It's not uncommon for a puppy to catch on quickly and start walking next to you with her eyes glued to you. If that happens, give her a steady stream of treats for as long as she'll stay next to you.

Video tutorials for these games and other handy training exercises available in [Puppy Survival School](#).

PLAY!

The best for last. This is why you got a puppy in the first place, right? Plan on a lot of playing. It's the best way to exercise and bond with your pup. Aside from the above puppy training games, here are some ideas:

Fetch

To teach your pup to play, get two toys. Throw or roll one, and when Sparky grabs it, wave the second toy around so that he'll come running back. When he gets to you, gently take the first toy, and throw the second one.

Toy-on-a-string

Tie a dog toy to a rope and drag it around for the puppy to chase. Great for puppies who need to be encouraged to play with toys. For some reason, even many dogs who don't like fetch love this game.

Chase

Get down on the pup's level, gently shove her around, then run away. Let her catch you, and praise and offer a toy or treat when she does. This teaches beginner come-when-called skills. (Have the puppy chase YOU, don't play chase-the-puppy. You don't want her to learn that running away from her human is a fun game)

Puppies love to play, but they may have very short attention spans. Hold several 5-15 minute play sessions throughout the day.

In the first weeks, some puppies will be too shy or overwhelmed to play. That's okay. Proceed at his pace, and he'll come around eventually. It took my shy, very serious puppy Jonas several days before he'd play with me.

BEYOND THE FIRST WEEK

After the puppy settles in, it's time to begin the most important part of puppy-raising: socialization!

Socialization is all about introducing your pup to new people, animals, places, and things, and making it a good experience. The more new, positive situations a puppy encounters during the critical age of 4-16 weeks, the better behaved he'll be as an adult.

This is the time to:

- Invite people over to meet the puppy and play puppy training games
- Arrange visits with healthy, friendly adult dogs
- Go hang out at friends' houses
- Sign up for puppy class. Puppy classes offer a safe, clean environment for puppies to meet each other and learn how to communicate

For more information on socialization, as well as everything else discussed in this guide, see the next page to learn about Puppy Survival School.

ONLINE PROGRAM: PUPPY SURVIVAL SCHOOL

RAISE A HAPPY, WELL-BEHAVED PUPPY WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND

Our most comprehensive resource ever! Puppy Survival School includes eight self-study courses that will walk you through pretty much every aspect of training and caring for your furry bundle of joy. With detailed, step-by-step video tutorials, you'll learn how to:

- Potty train your pup (even if he's had a lot of accidents)
- Get your puppy to stop whining when left alone
- Socialize your puppy
- Help a shy puppy overcome their fears
- Stop puppies from barking at strangers or other dogs
- Survive the obnoxious biting phase
- Teach your puppy to walk on leash and follow cues
- Avoid common mistakes that can teach dogs bad habits
- And much more

The program includes community forums where you can ask questions and connect with other puppy parents on the same journey as you. We've also added a fun way to track your training progress: achievement badges!

[Click here](#) or go to PuppySurvivalSchool.com