



HOW TO SURVIVE PUPPYHOOD

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BEFORE YOU GET YOUR PUPPY

SO, YOU THINK YOU WANT TO GET A PUPPY?

First up - congratulations! You're very brave! I say often to my puppy training clients that the reason puppies are so cute is because otherwise we just wouldn't keep them around. Expect that even with the best management in the world, they will still have accidents indoors; they will still chew things that they shouldn't; there will still be days when you want to tear your hair out. But the rewards are incredible, and if you do it right you will lay the foundations to have a dog you can take anywhere and they will be a pleasure to live with.

CHOOSING A BREED

When considering a puppy, it is important to look *realistically* at your lifestyle and what kind of puppy would suit you best.

If your idea of a good day is hiking in the hills or beach walking for miles, you'd do well to consider a more active breed. Similarly if you are more inclined to go for a short adventure with your dog and then chill at home together, choosing a breed that has been developed over centuries to run endlessly is likely to cause some frustration for both of you!

CHOOSING A BREEDER

Choosing the right breeder is perhaps even more important than just choosing a breed.

To be a good breeder, they should be invested in their dogs and committed to improving their breed as a whole. Good breeders will often show or work their dogs in some way - it is a good sign if they take part in dog breed shows (even if you don't necessarily want a show-standard pup!), sports like agility or obedience, or important work like therapy or search and rescue dogs.

A good breeder won't just breed for pretty colours or sizes of dog, and will health test all breeding individuals - meaning genetic tests that ensure they won't pass anything down that could be detrimental to your puppy's life. Health tests do *not* mean "my vet said my dog is healthy!"

Contrary to popular belief it is *not* "all in how you raise them", and selecting a good breeder will help give your puppy the best possible start in life.



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AFTER YOU'VE GOTTEN YOUR PUPPY

THE FIRST FEW NIGHTS...

The very first thing you need to do with your puppy... is have *compassion* for and *patience* with them.

Your puppy has been taken away from everything they have ever known. They have likely only been *alive* for between 8 and 12 weeks, and they have only ever known their breeder's home and the safety of their mum and siblings. Now all that has gone, there is new rules in the house, and they're all alone.

Unfortunately some people do still recommend leaving a puppy alone overnight and letting them cry themselves to sleep. I strongly discourage doing this. It does not promote *confidence* or *happiness* for your puppy, and that's what we want. (Note that there is a difference between a puppy having a tantrum and howling the place down, and being left to cry and cry all night.)

For the first few nights (or weeks if needed) with a new puppy, I sleep next to them. I usually have them in a crate and I sleep right next to them so that I can poke my fingers through the crate bars to reassure them. You won't damage your puppy in doing this - but you might if you just leave them to think they've been abandoned.

TOILET TRAINING

Overnight toilet training is one of the toughest things about having a puppy for the first few weeks - or months if you're unlucky! Sleep deprivation is rough, especially if you're also juggling working or have other commitments that mean you need to be a functional human.

Remember that, *on average*, puppies can hold their bladder for about one hour per month of age. So an eight week (two month) old puppy will likely want to toilet every two hours, and a twelve week (three month) old puppy every three hours. Generally while sleeping overnight this stretches quite fast and may be double or more; but don't be surprised if your puppy is waking you five or six times a night to go to the toilet. It is important that they are given the opportunity to go out and relieve themselves, as if they get in the habit of peeing inside overnight it can be tough to break!



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THE FIRST WEEK

BY NOW YOU'RE EXHAUSTED AND COVERED IN PUPPY PEE

Remember guys: it's a good thing that your puppy is cute, isn't it?

On top of making sure your puppy is doing their business outside overnight, we also need to address daytime toilet training and crate training.

I love crates. I can't say it enough. They make that initial management so much easier and help prevent accidents indoors - meaning your pup can have more freedom a lot sooner. It's a win win situation!

EARLY CRATE TRAINING

It is important that we don't just stick the puppy in the crate and leave them in there forever. Patience and compassion is the name of the game!

You want to ensure that your puppy associates the crate with good things. Feeding them in there can help, as well as popping them in there when they are sleepy. Try not to leave them in there for too long as if they wake up and spend too long waiting for you, they're likely to start screaming! Don't let them out while they're barking - wait for a few seconds of silence, then get them out and quickly & quietly get them to the toilet!

TOILET TRAINING

When it comes to puppy pads, I have three words: *don't do it!*

Puppy pads are okay for *long term confinement* if you have to leave your puppy for longer than they are able to hold their bladder - e.g. in a large puppy pen with sleeping and toileting areas. They are at least usually easier to clean up than the floor! But don't leave them down when you are home (and actively supervising your puppy, as you should be doing) as the more that your puppy uses them, the more they think it is acceptable to pee on soft things on the floor. That means if a tea towel falls off the kitchen counter - it looks like something they can pee on. Your grandma's priceless rug? Also looks like something to pee on.

Your puppy will need to be taken out a *lot*: after eating, after drinking, during intense playing and upon waking - *as well as* sticking to the rule of "one hour for every month of age"!

Remember the more they toilet outdoors, the quicker they will learn.

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IMPORTANCE OF MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE YOUR NEW FAVOURITE WORD!

When someone is home, puppy should either be *actively supervised* at all times or *safely managed* so that they can't practise naughty behaviours while you aren't watching. It's no good doing the washing up and turning around in time to see your puppy chomp through the laptop wire, or step away from the washing machine and into a pile of still warm puppy poo!

Punishment is very ineffective in teaching your puppy new or correct behaviour. They don't learn well unless you "catch them in the act", and even then nine times out of ten it is more likely lack of management that has caused "naughty" behaviour (which usually very normal and natural for dogs) - so give yourself a slap on the wrist and up your management game!



HOW DO I MANAGE MY PUPPY?

If you can't actively supervise your puppy, they should be in safe environments, e.g:

- Crated for short periods of time.
- Penned for longer periods of time (with spaces for sleeping / toileting / playing)
- Tether your puppy to you via a lead (ideally attached to a harness)

Always provide your puppy with something to do, such as a stuffed kong or a natural chew. Bored puppies are naughty puppies!

MY PUPPY WON'T STOP BITING ME & CHEWING!

Not only do puppies explore the world through their mouths, but they also very soon start *teething*. This means they will have pressure in their jaws that they are desperate to relieve - and chewing things helps this.

Provide your puppy with as many chews as you can. Give them different textures - soft chews, hard chews, food chews. Filled kongs are *great* for occupying your puppy for 20min! Different types of chews are very important as if your puppy is seeking out hard things like coffee table legs, they probably don't want a soft squishy toy; but may appreciate a coffee root or hoof.

If you do slip up and catch them doing something they shouldn't, try not to scare them away from it by shouting or clapping your hands. Simply redirect them on to something safe. We always want to build our puppy's confidence, and scaring them will achieve the opposite of that. Then give yourself a slap on the wrist - and if need be, ask a friend to look after your puppy for a few hours so you can get some decent sleep and reboot!

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YOUR PUPPY'S SOCIAL LIFE

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO THINK ABOUT?

Toilet and crate training are very important - there's certainly no denying that! On top of that there is a very big subject you need to think about - and that is socialisation.

SOCIALISATION OR EXPOSURE?

Socialisation means that your puppy is able to be in or witness a variety of new experiences - and have a positive overall response. Exposure means that the puppy is in these experiences but the overall response is neutral. Both are useful, but when we talk about socialisation it means that we need to set up situations for our puppies to experience these different things and have a good time!

Socialisation should always be at your puppy's pace. Never compare your puppy to another (even if you're in contact with a littermate, for example) and always adjust your socialisation and training plan for the puppy in front of you. Always focus on building your puppy's confidence - this will give them the skills they need to deal with new situations in the future.

SUGGESTED READING

Before You Get Your Puppy (Ian Dunbar - download for free on Google)

After You Get Your Puppy (Ian Dunbar - download for free on Google)

Easy Peasy Puppy Squeezy (Steve Mann - available on Amazon)

BRIEF EXAMPLES OF SOCIALISATION NEEDS

- People of all different shapes, sizes, ages, sexes & ethnicities
- People wearing and carrying weird & wonderful things - glasses, hats, umbrellas, big coats & masks (etc)
- Dogs of different shapes, sizes, ages, sexes and neuter/intact status - especially bigger dogs, smaller dogs and brachycephalic dogs
- Vehicles, prams, bicycles, motorbikes & joggers.
- Modern technology e.g. hoovers, brushes & hairdryers.
- Groomers & vets

Remember that socialisation means your puppy has a positive experience when seeing or interacting with these things - giving them opportunity to explore at their own leisure, praising and rewarding bravery, but allowing them to move away if desired. Don't just give 20 people treats to give your puppy and think you've got it sussed!

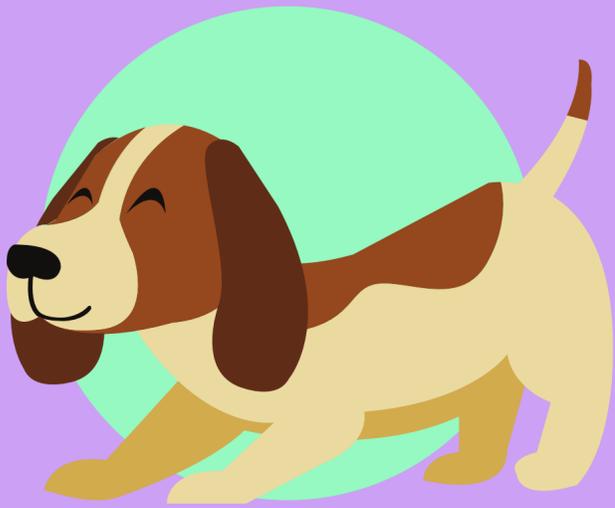


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THE NUTTER PUPPIES CLASS

a skills based class - always focused on improving puppies' confidence in the modern world

During the course we use games and positive based training to teach puppies (and owners)...



PATIENCE

To have patience when nothing is going on (e.g. while teacher is talking to students).



FOCUS

To focus on their owner, even when people and other puppies are nearby.



ENGAGEMENT

To play with and take treats from their owner; and to bring toys back for further play.



FOUNDATION SKILLS

Foundations for puppy control (sit, down); for loose lead walking; and for recall.



FUTURE PROOFING

To actively work against puppies stealing things; to prevent resource guarding; and to work against obsession with other dogs.



PROBLEM SOLVING

We even discuss how to handle those common puppy issues - including toilet training, mouthing and crate training woes!



WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE NUTTER PUPPIES CLASS!

If you need any help with your new best friend,
feel free to get in touch with us via:

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