

20 WAYS TO HAVE A HAPPY HEALTHY PUPPY.....

Firstly, thank you for downloading my information sheet, I hope you find it useful. I know myself the importance of giving your puppy the best possible start as I've recently added a puppy to the passionate about pets family.



Hello and Welcome

As a physiotherapist, I know how important it is to make sure that young dogs have the best start and that things are put in place to protect their joints and surrounding structures while they are developing and growing.

Also, as I puppy owner myself I'm more than aware that they are our babies, and we want to do the best that we can so I have put together 20 things that can be done to ensure that they are as happy, healthy and active as possible and hopefully don't have any issues later in life

Vicki and Rafa





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Want to give your puppy the best start? I've put together a list of things to do and why they are so important....

ENJOY!

1 - Do not over exercise your puppy.

Making sure that you don't over exercise your puppy is paramount to their development. It can negatively impact their musculoskeletal development especially in the large and giant breeds of puppies as they can continue to grow up until they are 18- 24 months old.

A general guide is allowing your puppy one or two sessions of 5 minute walking for every month of their age. So, a 4 month old puppy could enjoy walks that a up to 20 minutes at a time, once or twice a day.

2 - Get them used to being handled from a young age.

So that you have a well-rounded puppy is so important for their social development that they are used to being handled regularly. Start off at the head and work your way down the body, looking at their mouth, ears and touching their feet so that when they go to the vets is not such a stressful experience.

3 - Think about the home environment and what/if any changes need to be made,

What type of flooring do you have in your home? Will the puppy be spending a lot of time in an area that has wooden or tiled flooring. Yes, this is easier when your puppy is still young and there's a risk of the odd accident in the house, but it will also be putting undue stress on their developing joints and can cause issues later on if they develop developmental joint disease. Think about putting carpet runners or interlocking mats down in areas such as by their bed and where they eat and drink so that they have more stability.

4 - Teach them basic commands - Sit, Stand, Lay

Teaching these commands are great for getting your puppy used to carrying these tasks out should it be needed so that they can be inspected by a vet or physio or if you need to administer medication such as ear drops or need to trim their nails.

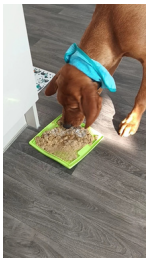


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5 - Invest in the right food that's going to support their joints/bones and muscles during development.

There are so many brands of food on the market, some better than others. I have personally used the following website AllAboutDogFood.co.uk and it allowed me to pick a food for Rafa that had the right ingredients in it for his development.

6 - Keep them mentally and physically active



As well as making sure your puppy has the correct amount of exercise, it's also important to keep their little minds active and developing. Why not scatter their feed in the garden so, they have to look for it rather than just eating it straight out of their bowl. You can also soak their food and spread it on a Licki mat so they have to work to get their food. During the hot weather I put the mat with the food in the freezer for a few hours, so it helped to keep Rafa cool too.

7 - Look at the breed of dog you have and what are their requirements.

Is your puppy a breed that is very active or is it one that's happy to laze about a lot of the day. If you have a working dog breed such as a Labrador or Spaniel, they will need more exercise and be mentally active, so they don't get bored and become destructive.

8 - Spend time getting to know your puppy and what's normal for them.

It is so important that you spend time getting to know your puppy so that you know how they move so that if they do start displaying something that's abnormal you are able to get them checked over and any treatment given before it becomes a major issue. This is especially important for breeds that are likely to develop conditions such as Hip and Elbow Dysplasia.



20 WAYS TO HAVE A HAPPY HEALTHY PUPPY.....

9 - Take them to different environments so they are happy in different surroundings.

While your puppy is still young it's a great idea to take them to different places so that they get used to different sights and smells. This is so easy to do when they can still be carried around. When Rafa was little he was introduced to ponies, went to the local pet shop, visited our vet to say hi, went to the local rugby club to watch my nephew and went to the local cafe for a coffee. They aren't walking around, and it only needs to be a matter of 10 - 15 minutes that they are there.

10 - Keep them at a healthy weight for their breed.

When you are training your puppy its best to take some of their food from their daily allowance so as they don't put too much weight on, too quickly. Your puppy needs to increase its weight at a steady rate so as not to add any strain to their developing musculoskeletal system as this can lead to issues later in life.

11 - Avoid them using stairs until they are at least 12 weeks.

Going up and down stairs puts jarring pressure on a young dog's hips that can damage the hip ligaments which can lead to hip dysplasia in larger breeds. If stairs are the only way your puppy can enter your home or wherever you are taking them then its best to carry them until they are at least 6 months and then they can be introduced to walking up and down them in a controlled manner without having free access to run up and down them.

12 - Get them used to different sounds.

Play different sounds to them to help with their social and mental development. Play sounds such as fireworks, children playing, cars etc. If you go on YouTube there are some great ones, just type in sounds for puppy socialization and loads come up.



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13 - Socialise them with puppies of similar size.

Where possible socialise them with puppies that are of similar size to reduce the risk of either party becoming injured unnecessary and, make sure that play is in a controlled environment so that they don't overdo it.

14 - Look at exercises to improve their core strength and stability.

It's a good idea, once your puppy is old enough to introduce exercises and activities that will help with their core strength, proprioception, balance, flexibility, and posture. It's also a good way to teach them self-control, focus and body awareness.

Sign up to my puppy Facebook page to be one of the first to hear about my puppy strengthening package. Details are on my main page Passionate About Pets Animal Physiotherapy.

15 - Don't allow your puppy to jump in and out of the car.

It is very important that your puppy is lifted in and out of the car until they are at least 6 months old and then, if possible, you should still assist them so that they don't put stress on their joints which can lead to long term damage.

16 - Don't allow your puppy to jump off the sofa.

Jumping on and off the sofa isn't ideal due to the combination of different surfaces, going from hard to soft and vice versa. This is because it increases the risk of twists and injuries to their limbs.

17- Play age-appropriate games for your puppy.

Always make sure that you are playing games that are suitable for your puppies breed and size. If you are using rope toys to play with your puppy keep them low to the ground and don't allow your puppy to jump up to grab toys as this will mean they could land funny on their legs putting strain on their joints.



20 WAYS TO HAVE A HAPPY HEALTHY PUPPY.....

18 - Don't start high energy activities such as agility until your puppy is at least 12 -18 months old.

If you are thinking about doing high intensity activities such as agility, please speak to your trainer first to make sure that your puppy is the correct age and that jumps etc are set at the correct height for your puppies breed and age. There may be some equipment that you will not be able to do with your puppy until they are an adult such as the A frame.

19 - Limit the amount of off lead running your puppy does.

You need to make sure that all off lead play is under supervision. You don't want your puppy to be running around a lot when out on a walk especially in large open spaces. Not only is it a risk that they may run off as they will get distracted by other dogs and smells and sounds. Also, there is a higher risk that you could twist and injure joints if they are running around uncontrolled.

20 - Make sure your garden is puppy safe.

Make sure that if you have walls and steps in your garden that your puppy does not have free access to them so there isn't a risk of injury. It may mean that you have to temporary fence off part of the garden just for the puppy. Likewise, if you have a pond you need to make sure that your puppy can't fall into it.

I hope that you have found this useful and have lots of fun with your new puppy.

Join my Puppy Facebook group for more tips and information on new packages coming out just for puppies.

Also, please post pictures of your lovely puppies on the page so I can see all your lovely puppies.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1511013439324150/>

I can't wait to see all your pictures!

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Fun puppy facts...

- Puppies can be twins
- Their coat colour may change as they grow
- Puppies don't find your yawns contagious
- Puppies like 'baby talk' more than adult dogs do
- Dalmation puppies are born without spots
- Puppies know how to manipulate you with their eyes
- Looking at puppies can make you more productive
- All puppies are born with blue eyes



How many of these facts did you already know? Find me on FB and tell us.

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