

# The Focus Guide to Puppies

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# Setting up for success

“Management is an essential part of dog training. It's essential we set puppies up for success right from the word go.”

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## **Gated Communities**

You would be amazed just how many different ways there are for a puppy to get into mischief. Having certain areas gated off will help you keep an eye on what your pup is up to and prevent them from chewing wires and eating shoes.

## **Safe Spaces**

Create a 'safe space' for your puppies to sleep in using a puppy pen or a large crate. This space should contain a comfy bed and plenty to chew on. It's a 'dog only zone' where they can go to chill out.

**Top Tip: If you don't want puppy to put it in their mouth, keep it out of reach! It'll save you a fortune in socks (and potentially vet bills)**

# Toilet Training

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- **Be Prepared** Puppies will have accidents. We recommend using crates or pens with wipable floors for when you need to take your eyes off them. Make sure you have some enzymatic cleaner on hand! If the area still smells like pee or poop puppy will be more likely to toilet in that spot again.
- **What gets rewarded gets repeated** Let your puppy know they've got it right by rewarding them for going to the toilet outside. Make it rain treats and give them plenty of verbal praise to show them they've made a fabulous choice.
- **Predict when your puppy is about to go to the toilet** Your puppy is likely to need to toilet after playing, eating, sleeping, drinking, and in the early stages after any form of excitement. So make sure to take them out after any of those things have happened. Watch your puppy carefully, they will likely sniff the ground or start circling when they're about to go, if you see that happen get them outside as quickly as possible!

**Remember...** It's really important not to punish your puppy if they do have an accident inside, this will damage your relationship with your puppy and can lead to them being too scared to go in front of you. If they do have an accident inside, simply clean it up with as little fuss as possible and remember to watch them a little closer next time!



# Puppy Biting

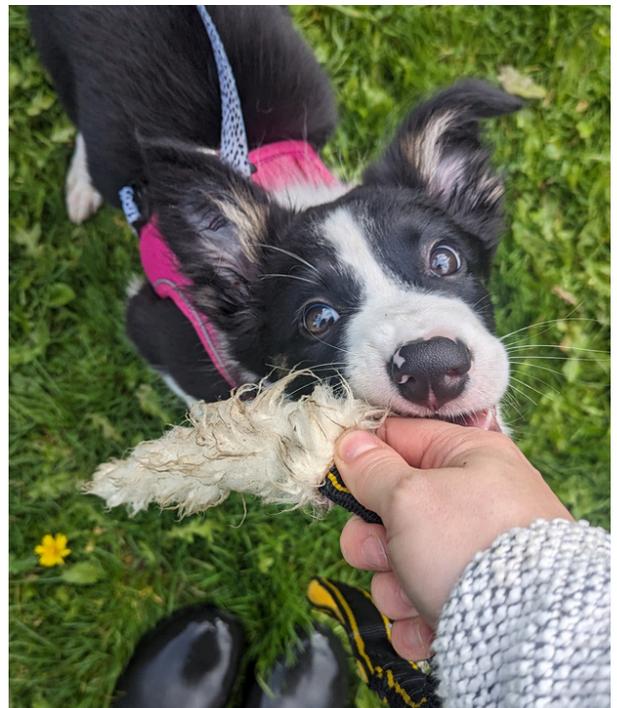
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## **Prevention is better than cure**

It's very common for puppies to have a 'witching hour' where they go a bit loopy. This is when they tend to get overly bitey and are really hard to calm down. The most effective way to prevent this from happening is to make sure your puppy is getting enough sleep. Puppies should be getting 18-20 hours of sleep a day! Getting enough sleep into your puppy has a huge impact on their 'witching hour'

## **In the moment**

We know it's hard but try not to get angry at your puppy. They are not biting to hurt or upset you they're just puppies who have got themselves carried away. Avoid shouting 'no' or making yippy noises as this will most likely get them more excited. Try to redirect them onto a toy instead to show them what they can bite. If that



doesn't work then pop them in their safe place with something tasty to chew on. Chewing something appropriate will help calm them down, and if they're teething it will help soothe the pain



# Our favourite chews for teething puppies

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“Puppies and dogs **need** to chew, it’s an essential part of their wellbeing”

- **Carrots:** A healthy snack with good crunch, you can freeze them to boost their soothing affect on gums
- **Coffee and Olive Wood chews:** These are designed to be anti splinter so they’re safe for puppies to chew. These are great for dogs who like to chomp on furniture
- **Natural Chews:** For small puppies dried rabbit ears and chicken feet are a great natural chew option. For bigger pups or heavy chewers try beef tails, trachea and hooves. Pork products tend to be high in fat and can upset sensitive puppy bellies. Stay away from rawhide or overly processed chews.
- **Stuffable toys:** Kongs are the most popular but we find toppls are better for small pups as they’re not quite as challenging. Start off easy and gradually increase the difficulty.

# What should I feed my puppy?

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This really is a minefield with each study coming to a different conclusion about what type of food is best for our dogs. As a general rule we like to make sure we are giving our dogs the highest quality nutrition we can for our budget.

We are ambassadors for **Butternut Box** which we find suits lots of dogs and is super high quality fresh food. To get 75% off your first box, visit the website using our special URL: [www.butternutbox.com/focusdogtraining](http://www.butternutbox.com/focusdogtraining)

Alternatively, check out [www.allaboutdogfood.co.uk](http://www.allaboutdogfood.co.uk) this is a super website which gives a nutritional rating to pretty much every dog food in the UK. Sort by quality and then scroll down until you find your price range. You can also use it to check the nutritional rating of their current food.



# Sleep

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“A lack of sleep is one of the biggest causes of the puppy blues in humans and a tired puppy is a wired puppy”

## Why do they struggle?

When they were still with their mum and siblings your puppy would have slept in a pile, all snuggled up to keep safe and warm. If they moved around in their sleep and became separated from the pile they would quickly find their way back to the pile and go back to sleep. If they couldn't find their way back they would wake up properly and squeak to tell their mum they'd got separated, she would pick them up and pop them back with the others.

In your house, they don't have a puppy pile to go to when they stir in the night. So when they wake up and there's no one there, they wake up fully and realise they're alone which can be really worrying.

If there's no one there to comfort them and they don't go back to sleep, they're more likely to realise they need a wee or feel a bit hungry too.

So how do we help them? For the first few nights, when they wake up worried about being alone, comfort them. Don't leave them to feel abandoned. Once they feel safe they will start to sleep for longer and be able to settle themselves.

# Sleep continued

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## **Where should they sleep?**

That's really up to you. For the first week or so we recommend that you sleep in the same room so you can comfort them when they wake up looking for that puppy pile.

This is a short term measure that will create a secure attachment from the get go and will help speed up sleep training.

## **What should the sleep space look like?**

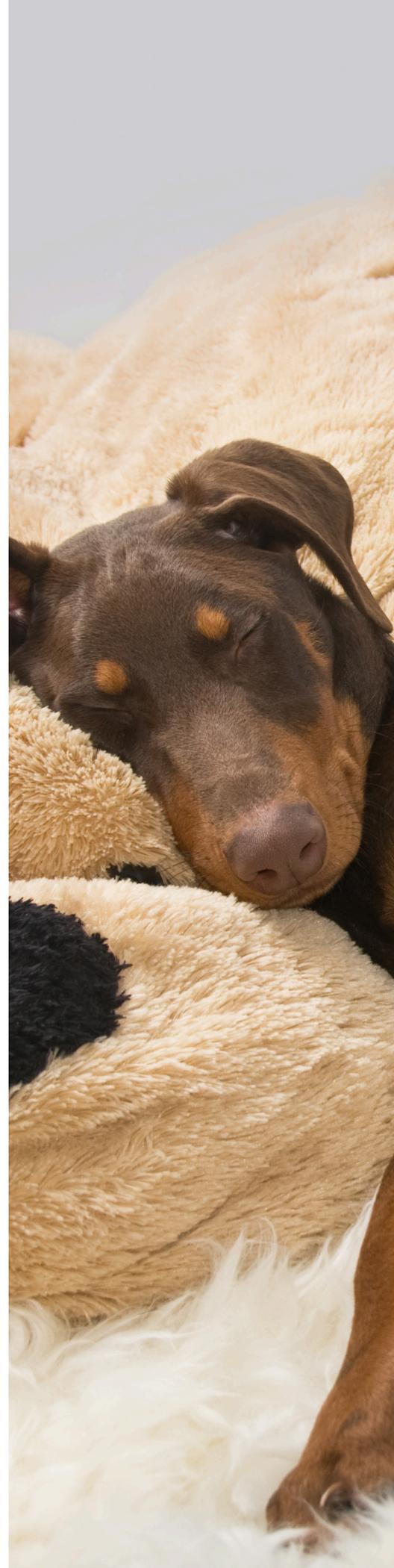
It's important that puppies and dogs can change position and move around at night. They need a crate or pen that is big enough to hold a soft bed for them to snuggle up on as well as a hard wipeable surface.

All dogs should be able to stand up fully and turn around easily in their crates.

## **What do I do if they wake up?**

Calmly and quietly offer them your hand as reassurance. If they can't settle they may need to go to the toilet so, as calmly as you can, pop a lead on them and take them to the garden. When you come back sit quietly with them until they go back to sleep, try to be as boring and uninteresting as possible

**Top Tip:** Never leave them to 'cry it out' this method leaves puppies feeling alone, anxious, and scared and can lead to problems later in life.





# Socialisation

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## **What is it?**

Socialisation is incredibly important, but it needs to be done carefully. Contrary to popular belief, socialisation is not about meeting every person and every dog. It's about learning about the world, getting used to different sights, sounds, smells and noises.

In our rush to introduce them to everything we can run the risk of over-exposing and over-whelming puppies which can be detrimental. When puppies are in that all important socialisation window, (around 8-16 weeks) a single negative experience can be more powerful than 100 good experiences.

Think carefully about the people and dogs you do introduce your puppy too in this period, will the humans follow instructions and do those other dogs actually want to say hi to your very bouncy puppy?

## **Start Early**

Socialisation doesn't have to wait until puppies have been fully vaccinated. There are lots of things we can do without putting them at risk. Socialisation can take place in your house, in your garden, or even from the boot of your car!

# Puppy's first outings

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## **Forget what you think you know about dog walks!**

For the first few months forget about distance. Because they're still growing, physical exercise should be limited so as not to put too much strain on their growth plates. Walks for puppies should be about taking in the world, playing games with you, and having positive experiences outside in the world.

Very often young puppies won't want to walk right away, if that's the case, give them time, let them take in the world and set off walking when they're ready.

## **Pre-vaccination**

- Take them for a 'walk' in your arms
- Find different textures and surfaces for them to walk over and explore at home
- Drive to the park to watch the world from the safety of your car boot
- Introduce them to different sounds, like fireworks, using youtube playlists
- Take them for a happy vet visit
- Visit older, vaccinated dogs in their garden



**Top Tip: Avoid high impact games like fetch.** Fetch puts a lot of strain on joints. The quick turns, stops and starts can cause long lasting damage to puppies joints when they're still growing. Even for adult dogs, fetch is best played in moderation.

# Shopping List

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These are our absolute must haves for making life with your pup a little easier!

## ● Chews, Chews and more chews

Flick back to our page on chewing for suggestions

## ● Baby gates/ play pens

Puppies are masters of mischief, making sure they only have access to safe places when you can't supervise them minimises that mischief.

## ● Enrichment feeders

Feeding your pup with enrichment toys gives their brains a work out, it can help teach them problem solving skills, build frustration tolerance and can help calm them down when they've gotten a bit wild!

## ● A well fitted Y-shaped harness

Our favourite harness is the Perfect-Fit Harness as it's easily adjustable and comes in three parts which you can replace as they grow instead of buying a whole new harness every few months.

Puppies have very delicate necks so we recommend they are walked on a harness and rather than a collar, especially while they are learning how to walk without pulling.

## ● Fixed length leads

We prefer to use a fixed length lead, about 1.5 - 2.5 meters long for street walks or walks in busier areas.

Long lines are great for giving your puppy more freedom to explore in open spaces, and are great for practising recall. We like long lines between 3 and 5 meters for puppies

We don't recommend extendable leads for puppies for a number of reasons. If dropped they can spook puppies which escalates quickly when the puppy can't get away from the plastic handle 'chasing' them. They also offer very little control and can cause nasty injuries if they get tangled.