



ULTIMATE
PUPPY



Getting Started

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Wow! A New Puppy!

This is a great time. You have just brought a new dog into the fold of your family. Even if you live alone, now that you have a warm, breathing four-legged furry critter, you are a team!

Ultimate Puppy is specifically designed to guide you through the critical stages of [your puppy's development](#). There is a strong emphasis on how to [socialize](#) your pup and do [preventative-styled exercises](#). We've also provided you with detailed information on how to develop and maintain an effective and healthy relationship. Ultimate Puppy offers all the necessary information, exercises, and games you will need to start raising your puppy properly.

An Awakening

The past two decades have seen an incredible revolution in dog rearing. Considerable change has taken place and it is an exciting time to raise a dog. **There is now [concrete evidence](#) that investing the right kind of input and guidance in a dog during the first half year of his life has a significant positive impact on the future livelihood of that dog.**

Our goal is to bring to light the importance of the first 16 weeks of a dog's life and to show how you can benefit from investing in the early socialization and rearing of your puppy.

We also take into account that times have changed. Most of us are considerably time-challenged. We address that constraint in two different ways. Ultimate Puppy has been created to allow easy, modular access to all the important training components. It also reflects the specific needs of a dog that is left alone a considerable amount of time. In short, this site is for you and your dog.



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Specifically Designed to Socialize Dogs

The concept of socializing dogs has gained momentum. Trainers of guide dogs for the seeing impaired have been using socialization for years. Having a dog that can cope in a complex environment is a crucial component of the success of their program. The guide dog is tested after his socialization period to ensure he has learned how to be a well-behaved citizen before he continues on in the training program. The same holds true for all working dogs.

Dog trainers, veterinarians, breeders, humane societies, and insurance companies alike have begun to recognize the benefit of early puppy socialization and exposure to our complex world.

This training program was specifically designed for folks with new puppies. Once the critical period (See [Your Puppy's Development](#)) of the puppy's development has passed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to socialize a dog to certain relationships, situations, and stimuli.

The omission of an active socialization program in a puppy's early life can in some cases mean the difference between the life and death of that dog. **Several million dogs are euthanized each year due to behavioural problems. Most of these problems are preventable.** This translates to the number one killer of dogs. In other cases, living with a dog that has not been socialized can be a very stressful situation for both the dog and his family.

Simply put, the objective of socializing a puppy is to help him handle all that life may bring his way. When circumstances cause a dog to feel stressed, this can lead to growling and biting. It may cause other anxious behaviors or even health problems for your dog. Through [proper socialization](#), the chances are increased that a dog will do well in any situation.

Prevention Versus Cure: Don't Wait For Six Months To Roll By!

[Preventative training](#) is the key. Avoid troublesome situations, rather than having to do damage control later on. A tiny puppy with no established habits is easier to work with than an adult dog with well-rehearsed behaviors you want to change.

This is the time to do preventative exercises. Ensure your dog does not feel the need to guard things, people, and places. It is the time to work with him to make sure he is comfortable being handled and staying home alone.

Make [socialization](#) and [preventative work](#) your priority!



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The Nature of the Beast

You are in the process of establishing a new relationship with a dog (not another person). It is important that you understand what makes your dog tick. How Do Dogs See the World?

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Many behaviors that we want from our dog on a regular basis are unnatural for the dog.

Many behaviors that we perceive as problematic are natural for the dog.

They don't know the difference between 'right' and 'wrong'; they are amoral.

Dogs are concerned with two things: what is safe and what is dangerous.

Dogs don't do things out of spite or jealousy. It is dangerous for us to impart human values on them.

Dogs are predators; they want to chase, catch, and chew. They need to sniff and forage.

Dogs are not born with a desire to please us.

A tiny puppy with no bad habits is far easier to work with than a big out-of-control dog.

Life Skills

Being able to do such things as walking on a [loose leash](#), [sit](#), [down](#), [stand](#), [stay](#), and [coming](#) when called are essential for a dog to respond to in order to live safely and harmoniously in our lives.

[This program](#) will also guide you through teaching your puppy these basic requests.

We have all heard the 'bad' dog stories: dogs that bark non-stop, dogs that bite, dogs that soil in the house, dogs that chew prized possessions, dogs that pull hard on the leash, dogs that don't come when called! Dogs are predictable. It is no big secret: they will grow up and do the things that dogs naturally do. Without our intervention, dogs are not all that domestic!

How Dogs Learn



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Dogs learn from their experiences, be they good or bad. If, after a certain behavior, something good happens, they are likely to repeat that behavior. Conversely, if something unpleasant occurs after the behavior, they are less likely to repeat it. The Motivation Factor

Considering that dogs are not born with a desire to please us and that they learn faster and retain more of what they have learned if the situation is a pleasant one, how do we motivate our puppies to work and play with us?

The strongest motivator for most dogs is food, although there are some dogs that would prefer a game of retrieve to a bit of liver.

Other strong motivators for dogs are games and toys and playtime with other dogs. Look at a motivator as something that your dog wants; you will use this to reinforce your puppy for things you like him to do when you ask. Remember dogs don't do things for free, positive reinforcement is the way to go. (See [How Dogs Learn](#) for more information on this topic.)

Believe It or Not

Many people believe that dogs are born with a desire to please us. This would mean that from the minute the puppy recognizes us as his companion, he is immediately filled with a desire to do everything he can to make us happy.

If you think about it, there is really no organism that comes into this world wanting to please anything else. It just so happens that children respond to praise, attention, and affection, but every parent knows that there are times when the last thing their child is thinking about is pleasing them.

If dogs want to please us, why do they chew up our furniture, our shoes? Why do they soil on our carpets? Why do they take off out the back gate and ignore our calls and pleas to come back? Why do they growl and snap at us when we reach for their toy, their food bowl, or when we usher them off the couch? Do these behaviors describe a dog who "wants to please us"?

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We tend to project our own human values and emotions (this is called anthropomorphizing) onto our dogs because it makes us feel better. When we are sad, they look at us with their big brown eyes and we think they understand. It comforts us. They listen to everything we have to say and never respond with a negative word. No wonder we easily fall victim to these false notions of dogs and their motives. We love our dogs and want them to be happy. But in truth, these misconceptions are unfair and dangerous. You owe it to your new puppy to understand what really makes him tick.

When you have a dog that stays in the garden even when the back gate is wide open, that chews on the things that you provide him with and nothing else, that does his business outside in the chosen location, and is neutral about you touching his food or toys, this is not a dog who is living to please you. This is a dog that has had the benefit of the important early input, that you have responsibly put in place.

Equipment List

The list below is provided as a guide. We encourage people to educate themselves, explore and understand the many different pieces of dog equipment, their uses, their advantages, and disadvantages.

Treats

We advocate [working with food and explain in detail how this works](#) in the [How Dogs Learn](#) section.

Treat Pouch

If you would prefer not to put dog food in your pockets, a treat pouch comes in handy and can be hooked on to your waistband for easy access to the food.

A Lightweight Collar and Harness

Lightweight means less weight for the puppy to haul around! Pick a collar that fits; you should be able to place two fingers under the collar when it is fastened.

Be sure to remove the collar from the puppy when he is in his crate. This is done as a safety precaution.



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Positive Introductions

If it is the first time the pup will be wearing a collar or harness try this; show him the gear, next, offer a delicious treat. Do this about 10 times before you even put it on. This will help create a positive association with the gear. Do this with all of the different equipment he will need to get use to. Once you get the gear on him you can play a game that he enjoys to help make the experience positive and get his mind off of fussing (see [Games](#)).

Many puppies will scratch or paw, or sit and yawn (stress) when you place the collar, harness or leash on them. If you see your puppy doing this distract him with some tasty treats.

A Proper Fit

Fasten the collar so you can fit two fingers between his neck and the collar. It should not be tight, but it should not be so loose that the pup can scratch it off or that comes off over his head with tension from the leash. The same goes for a harness. All gear should be fit correctly and this will be an ongoing concern as the pup continues to grow.

Harness

There are a variety of harnesses on the market. A harness with a place to attach the leash in both the front and the back is something worth exploring. It can be a welcome aid in teaching an exuberant puppy not to pull when you are walking together. If you are interested in trying a harness, a good pet supply store will help you fit the correct size on your pup and allow you to take it for a test drive.

Light Weight Leash

Get a leash of the proper length, generally 6 feet. When you hold it at (your) belly-button level, it should hang down a few inches past where it is connected to your puppy's collar or harness. There should be some slack in the leash while you are holding it in this position, but without the leash dragging on the ground.



NO!



OK



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Be sure that the buckles and snaps don't weigh the pup down excessively. We recommend a snap that opens by pushing down with the thumb as opposed to pushing in. The snaps that open by pushing in can pinch the pup's feet or toes if they step on the snap in a certain way.

Be sure that your leashes, long lines, collars and harnesses are all in good condition. It is smart to have an extra collar and leash. If the equipment gets worn or chewed, be sure to replace it.

Before you do any major amount of leading the pup around by the leash, attach it and let him just drag it around to get a feel for the weight and the strangeness of it. Like the collar, he will adapt quickly but it is important that you add treats to the experience of getting gear on and that you are patient and thoughtful as he learns to be comfortable with all this 'stuff' you want him to wear.

Crate

Please refer to [House Training](#) for more information about the importance and benefits of crating your pup. There is no downside!



Although they are the least appealing to look at, metal wire crates are the most effective. They allow good air ventilation, can be easily cleaned, and allow the dog to look around. At times, if you would like to give the pup some added coziness, you can drape a blanket or old towel around part of the crate.

The crate should be big enough for the puppy to stand up, turn around, and lie down in. If you wish to get a crate that the puppy will grow into during the months that you employ it, use something to make the crate smaller while the puppy is young. Make sure it is not something the puppy could chew and hurt himself with. You can make a large crate smaller by using large plastic storage containers. When the puppy begins to outgrow, remove the material.



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Toys

There are some recommended toys that are important for your puppy. We suggest you use something you can fill with food such as a food ball, or hollow bone. A squeaky stuffed toy is very useful to get your pup's attention. These enrichment tools have been specifically suggested to either assist you in the training of your puppy, or to help keep the pup occupied when he is on his own.

Like food, the use of toys is a potent way to motivate your puppy. They are also essential for certain games. Not all are created equal in your puppy's mind. You will need to experiment with to see which ones your puppy prefers.

Keep them in a toy-box, bring them out for puppy play-time, use them and then put them away afterwards. Mix things up. A variety of toys is best. It helps keep things unpredictable and keeps the puppy interested.

Toys we Love

- [Tricky Treat Ball](#)
- [Toppl Treat Toy](#) by West Paw
- Treat dispensing toys — to stuff with biscuit-type treats
- [Hol-ee Roller](#) (dog ball)
- Long Plush toys – with a "squeaky" feature

Goals

When raising and living with a dog, we all share some common goals.

- Dog that are happy and healthy!
- Dogs that are properly house trained.
- Dogs that come when they are called.
- Dogs that do not chew our prized possessions.
- Dogs that can go for a walk or run with us and not be frightened by city sounds and sights.
- Dogs that are able to stay on their own while we are away at work making a living, without tearing the house to shreds.
- Dogs that do not bite anyone and that play nicely with other dogs.
- Dogs that are able to live harmoniously in our homes and our communities.



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A Word about Gender

For simplicity, we refer to all puppies as he or him – this is in no way intended to insult all the female puppies out there!

If There are Two Dogs in the Home

Should there happen to be more than one dog in the home, it is imperative that you work with your puppy independently of the other dog(s), even if that other dog is a puppy. The two dogs should be socialized separately and trained separately. There are two main reasons for this. The ideal situation is for your dogs to bond strongly with you. If the two dogs spend too much time together, particularly if they are litter mates, they stand a chance of bonding more with each other than with you.



Also, if two puppies are socialized together, one may be inhibited during this process in the presence of the other pup. This could undermine a lot of your hard work and nullify the puppy's socialization. Having two dogs in the home can work out fine with a bit of thought and planning.

Rest assured that your puppies will have plenty of time to hang out together and become great pals!

Have Fun and Get Silly

Although our goals are of an important nature, the main reason we adopt dogs is to enhance our lives. As you go through all the exercises on this site remember to relax, have fun, and get silly! Don't forget, dogs love to play!