



Did you know that many dogs are not comfortable being handled?

Here is a list of things that a dog is often not comfortable with:

- Being patted.
- Being picked up.
- Being bathed.
- Being brushed.
- Having a collar put on.
- Having boots put on.
- Having a coat put on.
- Vet visits.
- Groomer visits.
- Ear/eye/oral medication administered.
- Having nails trimmed.
- Wearing a cone collar (surgery).
- Wearing a muzzle.
- Having a harness put on.

We can do our part to ensure dogs are comfortable with hands-on situations, including routine vet and grooming visits. Dogs that don't get this early work may be more likely to experience discomfort due to stress. Let's help keep pet professionals safe and our dogs as comfortable as possible.

The good news is that you can do some simple exercises to increase the likelihood your puppy will tolerate all the handling type things we humans might want or need to do. So now is the time to start this essential preventative work.

### Tips

1. Be mindful and gentle when you lift your puppy. Avoid looming and grabbing and roughly snatching him off his feet. Give him an information cue, such as '[lift](#)' as you pick him up and feed him a tiny treat.
2. Pay attention to where you pet your dog. Avoid the top of the head. Long, firm, gentle strokes on his back and belly rubs are often popular with a puppy.
3. Use a licky mat when putting on harnesses and other gear will help create a positive association with the equipment, prevents a struggle, and gives you more flexibility since you are not using your hands to keep the puppy still.
4. Practice routine handling exercises regularly. Focus on ears, eyes, mouth, paws and, nails. Gently touch a body part, followed by a tiny, tasty treat. Two people working as a team can be helpful with these handling exercises.
5. Practice lifting the puppy onto a no-skid, elevated surface and doing a few handling exercises along with gentle restraint. A yoga mat on the kitchen table or countertop works well. Reminder: Never leave a puppy unattended on an elevated surface.

See next page for our Handling Training Plan.



Please refer to '[Can Your Puppy Handle It](#)' and [Handling](#) in our [Prevention](#) section for detailed instructions.

**GOAL** - For your puppy to be comfortable as you perform routine handling, grooming and the sometimes necessary administering of ear, eye or oral medication. Your puppy learns that during these exercises if he needs to take a break or stop, he can.

The amount of time you spend on each session will depend on the individual dog. It may be 1 minute or 10 minutes, depending on how your pup is doing and how you feel.



**EQUIPMENT:** no skid mat + soft tasty treats + grooming tools + small bottle (to simulate ear & eye med) + spoon (to simulate scissors)

### Order of Exercises

1. Puppy is on a no-skid mat.
2. Reach towards your puppy = treat.
3. Reach + touch your puppy = treat.
4. Show the tool to your puppy = treat.
5. Reach + touch + tool = treat.

