

Exercising Your Puppy

Puppy Exercise: Keeping Your Furry Friend Happy and Healthy

Understanding Your Puppy's Needs

When it comes to exercise, puppies aren't quite like their adult counterparts. While adult dogs might thrive on long walks and vigorous play sessions, little pups actually require less exercise—and too much can be harmful. That said, socialisation is just as vital as physical activity, especially before they're fully vaccinated. Carrying your puppy around in public spaces can help them soak in the sights and sounds of the world while staying safe from potential diseases.

And don't forget about mental stimulation! Engaging your puppy's mind is a great way to build confidence and tire out those energetic little legs.



When Can I Walk My Puppy?

Puppies are particularly vulnerable to illnesses before their immune systems are fully developed. They usually get some protection from their mothers if she's been vaccinated, but they won't receive their first vaccination until they're about six to nine weeks old, with the second shot coming three weeks later. They'll be fully protected just a week after their final vaccination.

It's crucial to strike a balance between keeping your puppy safe from diseases and ensuring they have a rich social life. Keeping them isolated until they're 13 weeks old could have lasting effects on their ability to cope with the world. Here's a simple set of guidelines to help you navigate this tricky period:

Do's:

- Take your puppy to non-doggy areas to help them experience the world.
- Carry them when needed to avoid contact with unknown dogs or potentially contaminated spots.

Don'ts:

- Don't let them mingle with dogs whose vaccination status you don't know.
- Avoid parks or other places where other dogs might have left messes.

This is all about letting your puppy explore their environment safely while keeping them healthy!

Fun Ways to Exercise Before Vaccination



While your puppy isn't quite ready to explore the great outdoors, there are still plenty of ways to keep them entertained and exercised at home. A puppy-proofed garden can be a fantastic space for them to romp around. If you don't have a garden, pick a room in your home where they can run and play—just make sure it's away from the cozy spots where you want them to relax later.

Here are some fun ideas for playtime:

- **Interactive Feeding:** Stuff their meals into a Kong or use a food-dispensing toy to make mealtime exciting!

- **Playtime Games:** Engage in games like tug-of-war, hide and seek, or fetching. Just remember to keep the sessions short and stop if your puppy starts to tire.

Mental Stimulation and Socialisation

Mental exercise is just as important as physical play for your puppy. Their brains are like sponges, soaking up everything they encounter. Now's a great time to introduce them to everyday experiences:

- **Car Rides:** Get them used to the car by hopping in and out, rewarding them with treats to create a positive association.
- **Neighbourhood Walks:** Carry them around your local area to help them acclimate to the sights, sounds, and smells of their future home.
- **Basic Training:** Start teaching them basic commands like "sit," "lie down," and "stay."

It's essential to keep interactions short and positive, allowing your puppy to take naps when needed. They'll appreciate a quiet space to recharge, too!

Taking Your Puppy for Their First Walk

Once your puppy has had their final vaccination, they're ready for their first adventure outside! Before you set off, ensure they're comfortable wearing their collar, harness, and lead. Opt for a standard lead instead of a retractable one to maintain better control, especially when your puppy is learning how to walk on a lead.

Have some tasty treats on hand to reward good behaviour or distract them if needed. Plan a simple route and be prepared to go at your puppy's pace—this is a brand-new experience for them!

When you encounter other dogs, decide how you want to handle those interactions beforehand. Friendly dogs can be great for socialisation, but it's okay to keep your

distance from overly energetic pups. If you'd prefer to skip the introduction, calmly



turn around and walk the other way.

And remember, it's perfectly fine to say no to people who want to pet your puppy if you feel it's not the right time. Always prioritise your puppy's comfort and well-being!

How Often Should I Walk My Puppy?

Puppy exercise needs vary based on age, breed, and overall health. Younger puppies generally require less exercise. A helpful rule of thumb is to allow five minutes of walking for each month of age. So, for a four-month-old pup, a couple of 20-minute walks would be ideal each day.

Puppies are naturally curious and will enjoy leisurely sniffing around the park just as much as structured walks. Plus, mental play and training sessions are just as important as physical exercise!

When planning your puppy's exercise, always consider the weather. Puppies can easily overheat or get too cold, so adjust their routine accordingly, especially for flat-faced breeds that are more susceptible to heatstroke.



Puppy Exercise FAQs

- **Can I take my puppy jogging?** It's best to avoid jogging with young pups. Their bones and joints are still developing, and the strain can lead to long-term issues.
- **Can I enroll my puppy in agility classes?** Agility is fantastic for adult dogs, but the physical demands aren't suitable for puppies. Most agility clubs will only accept dogs over 18 months, though some may offer introductory classes for older puppies.
- **What about large or giant breeds?** The same five-minute rule applies, but larger breeds often take longer to mature, so check with your vet for specific guidance.

With a little patience and care, you can ensure your puppy grows up happy and healthy while enjoying their exercise journey!