

easel pet tips



Bring Home a New Puppy

Bringing a new puppy home is a thrilling experience, but if you don't have everything in place upon its arrival, the experience can turn from happy to harrowing.

New Puppy Checklist

We've assembled a checklist of items you may already have on hand, and a few to purchase ahead of time.

- **An appropriate-sized crate or kennel** – For housebreaking, traveling or training, these pet homes give your dog a feeling of security and a quiet retreat when he needs a nap. Ideally, the crate will have three “walls,” with a front gate your dog can see through. It's important to find a crate that's just the right size for your puppy. If the crate has too much room, the puppy is likely to have an “accident” inside of it. But the crate should not be so small that he doesn't have room to sit up or stretch out. Add some bedding, like old sheets, T-shirts, or towels, so puppy has something soft to sleep on, and be sure to leave him a few chew toys. Foldable wire crates are best for inside the house and divider panels let you make the space smaller to prevent your dog from soiling. Molded plastic kennels are required for airplane travel and are safest for riding in the car.



- **Wire playpen** – We recommend these wire panels, which can be configured to any size or shape you might need. They can also be used to block doorways to rooms you'd like to keep off-limits.
- **Wee-Wee Pads** – These are essential for puppies not fully immunized and not yet allowed outside. They may also be a permanent solution for apartment dwellers or others who find outdoor housetraining impractical.
- **A variety of chews and toys** – A new puppy will chew anything in his path: your shoes, furniture, DVDs. Make sure you have a good variety of toys to chew instead, and always offer a toy when you catch him chewing a non-toy. Bring out just a few chew toys at a time from the toy box to prevent boredom. We recommend starting with a variety, as different breeds and individual puppies gravitate toward different things. It will take some trial and error to figure out what your dog likes best. Start with a multipack of puppy bones, squeak toys, furry toys, and rubber balls.
- **Food and water bowls** – This is obvious, as puppies need to eat about three times a day and require a bowl of fresh water nearby most of the time. Stainless steel or ceramic are best, with a stand or non-skid rubber base to avoid sliding or getting kicked over. Try to avoid plastic, which can harbor bacteria.
- **Leash and collar** – Even if your puppy is not fully immunized and therefore not ready to go outside, you can introduce him to his leash and collar, and get him accustomed to wearing it. Adjustable collars are best for growing puppies who change size rapidly. A 6-foot nylon



or leather leash is the standard for obedience class. A retractable leash allows your pup room to explore, but still maintains some control. Small dogs often prefer a harness, and a Wonder Walker body halter is a great option for all sizes and ages of dogs.

- **Nature's Miracle or other enzyme cleaner** – Even the best-trained puppy will have an indoor accident at some point, and it should be cleaned up within seconds, when possible. The difference between enzyme cleansers and your regular household spray is that the enzymes will eliminate odors that only your dog can smell, reducing any reminder that he's gone potty in any particular part of your house. Also, avoid any cleaning agent that contains ammonia — the chemical smells just like pee to a dog, and dogs love "going" where they've "gone" before.
- **Bitter Apple Spray** – After puppy-proofing your home, there may still be a few items you can't just place out of puppy's reach, like the corners of your furniture. Bitter Apple Spray can be applied to most household items. It's scentless for humans, but tastes nasty to dogs, and keeps their curious mouths away.
- **Nail trimmer and styptic powder** – Start trimming your dog's nails weekly when they are young to get them used to it. Have styptic powder on hand to stop any bleeding if you nip the blood vessel that runs through nail—just dip the end of the nail into the bottle.
- **Shampoo** – Choose a gentle formula that won't strip the coat's natural oils.

Starting Your Puppy Off Right

Here are some quick tips on the steps to training and maintaining an obedient and balanced dog from the start. A puppy needs nutritious food and a safe, warm place to live, but another equally powerful and important biological necessity is the need for a strong pack leader.



- **Be the Pack Leader** – Puppies are naturally hard-wired to follow a pack leader. A pack leader is, by definition, strong, stable, and consistent. Puppies sense our confidence levels and will take control if they perceive us as weak. When this happens, bad behaviors, such as excessive barking, chewing, leash-pulling, or anxiety, will

develop. The most important thing you can do is become your puppy's pack leader. This role doesn't begin when your dog is six months old or when he's bad; it should be maintained throughout the entire dog training experience. For your new puppy to grow into a healthy, balanced dog, you must demonstrate leadership from day one!



- **Housebreaking** – All dogs become conditioned never to eliminate in their dens. From two to four months of age, most pups pick up on the concept of housebreaking quite easily since it is part of their natural programming. In the early days of housebreaking you want to make sure the puppy has a place to relieve herself where she feels safe; a place that seems and smells familiar. First thing every morning, bring your puppy outside to the same general area. It is important to remain consistent throughout the process so your puppy can learn the habit. Once your new puppy has successfully gone outside, it is important to reward the good behavior. It doesn't have to be a big, loud celebration, but a simple quiet approval or a treat can get the message across of a job well done. And be sure not to punish your puppy for an accident or do anything to create a negative association with her bodily functions. Stay calm and assertive and quietly remove the puppy to the place where you want him to go.
- **Dog Walking** – Please find SAFE ways to exercise your puppy too! As your puppy's pack leader, you must help to expend their energy in a productive way. For all dogs, this means a daily walk. Walking in front of your new puppy allows you to be seen as the pack leader. Conversely, if your dog controls you on the walk, he's the pack leader. You should be the first one out the door and the first one in. Your puppy should be beside or behind you during the walk. Also talk to your veterinarian about the risk of long-term bone development problems, parvovirus, and other health issues before implementing an exercise routine.

- **Visit to the Veterinarian** – One of the cornerstones of good health for your puppy is regular veterinary care. It is crucial that your puppy maintains a nutritional diet and exercise routine to stay healthy and balanced. While a lot goes into keeping your puppy in good health, it all begins with the first visit to the vet. Ideally you want to find out which veterinarian you plan on using before you get your puppy. Ask your friends that are dog owners which veterinarians they recommend. If possible, visit the clinic beforehand and look around, is the waiting area clean, is the staff courteous and helpful? Look for the veterinarian's diploma to see when they graduated. Veterinarians that graduated a long time ago may have a lot of experience but may not be as up to date on medical knowledge and technology as recent graduates while recent graduates have a lot of the latest information but may not have a lot of hands on experience. Find out if the office hours will fit your schedule and if they handle emergencies after hours. Many practices have multiple vets, it is best to stick with

one veterinarian who knows your pet well so ask the staff if you will be able to request an appointment with a specific veterinarian. Picking a vet is a personal choice, try to find one that is relaxed, really listens to you, thoughtfully answers your questions and generally puts you at ease. If your first veterinarian makes you uncomfortable in any way keep looking until you find one that is a good fit for you and your puppy. Expect to spend several hundred dollars a year minimum for routine veterinary care and set aside one to two thousand dollars for emergencies.



- **Puppy proofing** – While it is important to see your veterinarian regularly for wellness you want to avoid emergencies as much as possible. Take a good look around your home to see the potential hazards to an inquisitive puppy. Consider toxins such as household plants and cleaning supplies and keep them out of reach. Use baby gates to block off access to stairs to prevent falls and to limit access to rooms that are not “puppy safe” such as the basement or workshop. Small objects such as change, jewelry, hair ties should also be kept out of reach lest they be swallowed. Take garbage out regularly and consider using garbage pails with heavy lids that the puppy can't open. Screen off the fireplace if you have one. Again the best way to keep your puppy out of trouble is to never leave him unsupervised and to use a crate when he cannot be watched.



Additional resources (click on links for more info)

<http://3lostdogs.com/43-tips-for-new-puppy-owners>

http://www.ehow.com/way_5257242_new-puppy-tips.html

<http://www.petinsurance.com/healthzone/pet-articles/new-pets/Top-10-Tips-About-Your-New-Puppy.aspx>

<http://pets.webmd.com/dogs/guide/bringing-home-new-puppy>