

YOUR FREE PUPPY GUIDE

Your Puppy's First 7 Days

A calm, kind, force-free start - so the first week sets your puppy up for a happy, well-behaved life. From Shropshire's first award-winning puppy academy.

A free guide, with love from Shrewsbury & Telford

WELCOME

Breathe – you've got this

The first week shapes how your puppy sees the world. Go gently. Everything here is built on the same idea we teach in class: **reward the good, never punish the new**. A calm, kind start beats a rushed, busy one every time.

Before they come home: puppy-proof the space

- ✓ Pick one calm room as their base. Smaller is kinder than the run of the house.
- ✓ Lift cables, shoes, houseplants and anything chewable out of reach.
- ✓ Set up a cosy crate or pen with soft bedding - their safe den, never a punishment.
- ✓ Use a baby gate so they can see the household without being overwhelmed.
- ✓ Agree the house rules as a family *before* day one (sofa or not, who feeds, who walks).

Your day-one kit

- ✓ A well-fitted harness and a normal (non-extending) lead
- ✓ Flat collar with an ID tag (a legal requirement in the UK in public)
- ✓ Food and water bowls, plus the food they're already used to
- ✓ Plenty of small, tasty training treats
- ✓ Two or three safe chews and a couple of toys
- ✓ Puppy pads, an enzymatic cleaner, and a lot of patience

The golden rule for week one

Less is more. A quiet first week - few visitors, short positive experiences, lots of sleep - builds a confident dog far faster than a whirlwind of excitement.

DAYS 1 TO 3

The first nights & toilet training

Settling the first few nights

Your puppy has just left everything they know. A little crying is normal. Sleep them near you at first - beside your bed is perfect - so they're not alone in the dark. Each night, you can gently move them closer to where you want them to settle long term.

- ✓ A warm, snug den with a worn t-shirt that smells of home
- ✓ Last toilet trip right before bed, no excitement after
- ✓ Quietly reassure, but try not to lift them out every single whimper

Toilet training, the kind way

Puppies thrive on routine and reward. There is no place for telling off - if there's an accident, it just means we missed the moment.

- ✓ **Take them out often:** after waking, after eating, after play, and every hour or so.
- ✓ **Go with them** and the second they finish, reward calmly with a treat and quiet praise.
- ✓ **Use a cue** like "be quick" so they learn to go on request.
- ✓ **Accidents:** say nothing, clean with an enzymatic cleaner (not bleach), and watch closer next time.

Never tell off for toileting

Punishing an accident teaches a puppy to hide where they go - it does not teach them to hold on. Reward the right place instead, and it clicks within weeks.

DAYS 3 TO 7

Mouthing, biting & meeting the world

Those needle teeth (it's completely normal)

Puppies explore with their mouths and they're teething - biting is information-gathering, not bad behaviour. The goal is to teach that teeth on skin ends the fun, and to give a better outlet.

- ✓ When teeth touch skin, calmly stop the game and redirect onto a chew or toy.
- ✓ Keep a tuggy or chew within reach so there's always a "yes" option.
- ✓ Over-tired puppies bite more - if it ramps up, it's usually nap time.
- ✓ Never smack the nose or hold the mouth shut. It breaks trust and makes it worse.

Socialisation in the vaccination window

The weeks up to about 16 weeks are golden for building a confident dog - but it's about **quality, not a frantic checklist**. Before they're fully vaccinated, carry them or use a puppy sling so they can watch the world safely.

- ✓ Let them *observe* traffic, buggies, bins, umbrellas and crowds from your arms.
- ✓ Introduce home sounds gently: the Hoover, doorbell, hairdryer, washing machine.
- ✓ Calm, vaccinated, friendly adult dogs only - not a free-for-all at the park.
- ✓ Always let your puppy choose to approach. If they hang back, that's a "no", and that's fine.

One good experience beats ten rushed ones

If your puppy looks worried, you've gone a step too far - add distance and make it easy. Confidence is built on lots of small wins, never on "flooding" them to cope.

START TODAY

3 games to play this week

This is the heart of how we train - dogs learn fastest when they're having fun. Two minutes each, a few times a day, is plenty for a baby puppy.

1 The Name Game

Say your puppy's name once in a happy voice. The instant they look at you, mark it with a cheerful "yes!" and give a treat. Repeat in different rooms. You're teaching that their name always means "good things are coming" - the foundation of recall.

2 Find It

Toss a treat a short way and say "find it". As they trot after it, you've got an easy reset, a sniffing outlet (brilliant for calming), and a way to reward calm choices. Sniffing is genuinely tiring in the best way - far better than zoomies.

3 Settle on a Mat

Pop down a mat or towel. Any time your puppy steps on it or relaxes near it, quietly drop a treat onto it. No commands needed - they'll start to choose the mat to switch off. This one game makes cafes, visitors and calm evenings so much easier later.

Keep it short and sweet

End every game while your puppy still wants more. Happy, brief sessions build a dog who loves to learn with you.

GOOD TO KNOW

When to call your vet

- ! Repeated vomiting or diarrhoea, or refusing food and water
- ! Lethargy, a swollen tummy, or crying when touched
- ! Any sudden change in behaviour - pain often looks like "naughtiness"
- ! Anything that simply doesn't feel right. You know your puppy - trust it.

When in doubt, a quick call to your vet is always the right move.

What happens next?

You've made a brilliant start. The single best thing you can do now is get into a good puppy class early - while that socialisation window is open - with people who'll support you every step of the way.

Come and join the pack

Small, friendly, force-free classes in Shrewsbury & Telford - plus 1:1 help, an online Academy, and a community that has your back. Spaces fill quickly, so it's worth getting in touch now.

Call: 07860 343594 **Online:** puppyandfriends.co.uk

Wishing you and your new best friend a wonderful start,

The team at Puppy & Friends Academy