

How to have a happy dog!

Top Tips:

- 🐾 Introduce your puppy to everyday life as you can.
 - 🐾 Do not overwhelm him – although this is a very important time for him to learn new things it can be tempting to do too much with him.
 - 🐾 Carry him around when away from the house until he has been fully vaccinated.
 - 🐾 Get him used to dogs of all kinds (ensure they are fully vaccinated).
 - 🐾 Let him meet a wide variety of people and children.
 - 🐾 Let him see a variety of other animals.
 - 🐾 Allow him to hear unusual sounds.
 - 🐾 If he shows any worry or concern then remove him from the situation and try again (from a greater distance) later.
 - 🐾 Read on for more tips on socialisation and habituation.
- Socialisation & Habituation – the secret of a Friendly Fido**



Socialisation ensures your puppy is used to people and other animals, so he won't be scared of them in the future. Habituation is teaching your puppy that strange experiences, objects and situations are nothing to be scared of. Here, for convenience, both are referred to as just 'socialisation'.

If you want a happy, friendly dog that you can take anywhere and meet anyone, then socialisation is the key! If a puppy isn't socialised properly from the time that you get him and throughout his first year, serious fear and aggression problems can develop later – **this is very important!**

It's still possible to socialise an older dog, it just may take more time and effort. You may need help from a reputable behaviourist or trainer.

You may help the socialization process by using ADAPTIL - ask your vet about this. It's available as a plug-in, a spray or a collar and it releases pheromones similar to those given off by his mother and may make a puppy or adult dog more able to cope with strange and new experiences.

The earlier the better

It should start even before you get your puppy. Ask your rehoming centre or breeder what experiences your puppy has had up until now. If they have been carrying out the Puppy Plan of Socialisation and Habituation you will receive a copy of exactly what your puppy has experienced so far. If using a breeder, try to make sure that the puppy has been bred and brought up in the breeder's home, as those kept only in kennels will need extra help to cope with everyday human households and activities.

Puppies can be vaccinated from 6-8 weeks old with a final injection at 10 weeks. A breeder may be able to have your puppy vaccinated early, so you can safely start your socialisation as soon as he's settled in with you. Some dogs need to have further vaccines, this is dependent on the risks surrounding the pup, the breed and the local area. Your vet will advise you on the safest time to complete the vaccines and start getting them socialised.

Safety first – vaccinations and diseases

- Although early socialisation is important ensure your puppy isn't exposed to potentially fatal canine diseases.
- Vaccinate as early as possible – please speak to your vet.
- After the first vaccination it may be possible to attend a local puppy party or class, so he can meet other puppies of a similar age in a safe environment. Vet surgeries may run these or know of a good trainer in your area. Visit without your puppy first, so that you are happy with their methods.- there should be supervised and controlled play sessions and not just a free-for-all
- Check with your vet to make sure that your local area is not high-risk for disease. If there's been a local outbreak, be especially careful.
- If he's not fully vaccinated then carry your puppy around to see people, experience traffic noise, public transport, or meet other dogs that you know have been vaccinated. Don't let him touch the ground, especially in areas like the park, where unvaccinated dogs may have been.

How do you do it?

It's simple – let your puppy experience something new and then praise good, calm behaviour:

- Stand with him beside the road and let him watch and listen as cars go by. If he sits with you calmly, tell him he's a good boy and give him a treat. Don't overwhelm him, start with a quiet road with just a few passing vehicles
- Ask a friendly person to speak to and stroke your puppy under the chin gently. If your puppy is quite happy, doesn't nip at the stranger's fingers or bark, then praise him.
- Let him meet a friend's vaccinated, well-behaved adult dog in your garden on a regular basis.
- Supervise and observe how your puppy learns his doggy social skills. Praise him for gentle play and friendliness towards other dogs – remember, it's okay for an older dog to tell a puppy off if he forgets his manners!
- Teach your puppy to be gentle, calm and obedient, even in exciting circumstances – especially around children.

What not to do!

- Don't allow your puppy to become fearful - if he shows a nervous reaction to anything new, remove him from the situation and then try again later at a greater distance.
- Never allow him to jump up at or nip the hands of people he meets. Teach him to sit calmly beside you or in your arms whilst being petted.
- Don't try to expose your puppy to too many new things in one day, or you could do more damage than good. Try no more than 3 new things a day and repeat as often as possible once your puppy is happy with them.

Socialisation list

Get your puppy used to:

People

- Of all ages from babies to elderly people.
- Of all races.
- Of all physical abilities / sizes.
- With beards / wearing glasses / wearing hats / different styles of clothing.
- Running / jogging / skateboarding / cycling etc.
- Carrying umbrellas or walking sticks.

Other animals

- Dogs of all sizes / ages / breed and appearances.
- Cats.
- Rabbits / small pets.
- Sheep / cattle.
- Horses with and without riders.

Your environment – home and outdoors

- Normal household appliances – the vacuum cleaner, washing machine etc.
- Traffic.
- The postman / paperboy / dustbin men etc.
- Travelling in cars, buses and trains etc.
- The veterinary surgery / grooming parlour.
- Unusual noises such as fireworks, babies crying etc. (try to obtain a CD of these and play quietly to your puppy during enjoyable times, such as feeding – slowly increasing the volume over time so that he isn't bothered by them).

If you have any socialisation problems then please do contact us for further advice or ask your vet to put you in touch with a reputable behaviour.

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