

# Tips for a Pup’s First Days in Your Home

## Welcoming the Pup Home

* Bringing your new pup home for the first time is an exciting event! However, this new environment coupled with separation from litter mates, can be quite overwhelming for your new pup. As such, please resist the temptation to show him/her off immediately to friends and family. The move to your home is a major change for a young pup and can be quite stressful without the addition of further company.
* All pups need active supervision when they first arrive in a new home. This means your eyes and attention are focused on the pup whenever he is out of his crate or Sleeping Quarters.
* Ensure that the pup learns the house rules from an early age and behaves in an appropriate calm and relaxed manner whilst inside the home. Consistency is key. Do not allow the pup to jump onto lounges, beds or chairs.

### Introducing the Pup to Your Pets

* When introducing your new pup to a family dog;
  + Choose a neutral place. Introduce the pup to your dog(s) in your yard before you bring the pup into the house.
  + If you have multiple dogs, introduce one dog at a time. Multiple adult dogs can be overwhelming for a pup.
  + Have the meeting off leash if possible. This will allow both pup and dog to move towards or away from each other depending on how comfortable they feel.
  + Move around and interact with them, rather than staying still and watching. This will encourage them to explore together.
  + Always watch both your pup and dog's [Body Language](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/socialisation/canine-body-language/) to be sure they are comfortable with one another. If the adult dog is not in a [Calm Emotional State](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/socialisation/emotional-states/), call the pup away. If the pup looks concerned, call the dog away and give the pup time to process. If both are in a Calm Emotional State, let them greet and allow the pup to choose where he is comfortable. Keep watching their body language and if either one begins to get aroused, take a break.
* Teach your pup to be respectful of your other pets.
  + Pups should not chase cats, rabbits, chickens or other pets. Please ensure that your pets can escape from the pup. For cats, that means giving them a chance to jump over a gate or up onto something the pup cannot reach - avoid putting your cat in the position of having to defend herself, as cats can hurt pups by scratching them, particularly in the eyes. For other pets, keep them in a cage or behind a baby gate until you know your pup can be calm around them, and even then, never leave them free and unsupervised together.
  + To prevent other pets from being chased you can initially keep the pup on a leash. Having your pup on a leash gives you an emergency brake if your pup tries to chase your other pets. As always, reward the behaviour you want - praise/pet/reward being calm and remaining attentive to you.

## Feeding

* Our Guide Dog pups are fed AdvanceTM kibble, which has been formulated to provide the pup with the necessary nutrition to ensure healthy development.
* Please follow the feeding guide that you will receive in your pup’s manual. Initially your pup will most likely be on 3 to 4 feeds a day. As the pup grows, the frequency of feeding will reduce.
* If you feel your pup is putting on too much weight, or if the pup appears too thin, speak to your Puppy Development Advisor (PDA). Your PDA will assess the pup’s weight and body condition at each meeting. They will assist you in ensuring that the pup is a suitable weight. In general, it is best to keep pups lean, as excess weight puts unnecessary strain on growing bones and joints. It can also interfere with their ability to breed and fitness for working as a Guide Dog.
* AdvanceTM kibble can also be used as training treats. Alternatively, please see our [Approved Treats List](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Approved-Treats-list-2020-accessible.docx) for other suitable options. Please note that any treats given to the pup for toilet training or obedience, should be taken out of their daily food ration, and not given in addition to.

### How to Feed Your Pup

* Tip the measured amount of kibble into the food bowl and add a little water before feeding.
* Pick up the food bowl and wait for your pup to offer a [Sit](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/dog-skills/sit/) on his own.
* Once your pup Sits, quickly lower the food bowl down while he holds the Sit position for 1-2 seconds. If the pup pops out of the Sit, straighten up (keeping the food bowl in your hand), wait for him to Sit, and then lower the food bowl more quickly so he can succeed at holding the Sit position.
* As the bowl touches the floor, say “[Free](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/glossary/#F)” to release the pup from his Sit.
* As your pup develops better self-control, increase the length of time you wait before you lower his bowl to the floor and say “Free”.
* Once the pup has finished eating, remove the bowl. The pup should not be allowed to play with, or carry around, his food (or water) bowl.

## Sleeping

It is important that a good night time routine is established for the pup from day one.

### Preparation of Sleeping Quarters

* The most common location for a pup’s [Sleeping Quarters](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/house-manners/sleeping-quarters/) is the laundry or sometimes a bathroom (preferably not one that is frequently used). These areas are tiled, allowing toileting accidents to be easily cleaned, and are not frequently occupied, allowing a quiet place for the pup to have undisturbed rest.
* Ensure that the Sleeping Quarters have been “puppy-proofed” (see [Puppy Proofing Your Home](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/house-manners/puppy-proofing-home/)), are well ventilated, but free from any drafts, and comfortable bedding provided.
* Any water bowls should be removed once the pup has toileted and is in his Sleeping Quarters. However, if it is an extremely hot day or evening, or the pup is under veterinary care, please provide water.
* The door to the room must be left open and a baby gate or barrier used to block the entrance. This will prevent the pup from becoming distressed due to being fully enclosed within a small area.
* If you have other pets in the home it is preferable to sleep them separately. This will aid our future Guide Dog by allowing him to build his confidence and independence, and prevent him from becoming too dependent on another animal.

### Using the Sleeping Quarters

* Make sure the pup has eliminated and had adequate exercise before putting him into the Sleeping Quarters.
* Lead the pup to the Sleeping Quarters and place a few pieces of kibble onto his bed while he is watching. This will prompt the pup to go into his Sleeping Quarters and onto his bed.
* Say “Bed”, smile, and praise the pup as he moves onto his bed. Close the gate or barrier when the pup is in, and leave the pup to rest.
* For the first few nights, the pup may vocalise (bark or whimper) while adjusting to its new routine. It is essential that you do not go immediately to the pup while it is doing this as it can teach the pup very bad habits that are hard to break. Given you have already ‘puppy-proofed’ the resting quarters, and have just toileted the pup, the pup is not in danger of any form, it is vocalising for attention.
* After 10 minutes, if the pup has not stopped vocalising, enter the Sleeping Quarters and proceed to the pup’s bed where you can offer tactile praise and verbal “Shooshing” to provide the pup comfort. Once the pup has settled, leave the area. If the pup commences vocalising again, repeat the procedure. There should be a decrease in the amount of vocalising as your pup becomes accustomed to his surrounds.
* Beware of sneaking quietly to the door to check on the pup as dogs have extremely good noses, so it will know that you are there!
* If the pup has been sleeping for a few hours prior to its bedtime, sometimes it can be hard for the pup to go straight back to sleep. It is a good idea to wake the pup up a little earlier for a short play session prior to its final toilet for the night. This way the pup is tired and ready to go to sleep again when you put it into its resting quarters.
* In the morning, as soon as you rise, let the pup out to toilet. As soon as the pup hears movement, they will wake, start moving, and need to toilet. If you take some time before attending to the pup, it will often have already toileted in the Sleeping Quarters. Once the pup has been toileted, give it access to water again.

## Toilet Training

**The quickest way to toilet train a pup is to prevent accidents occurring. The more they get it right (by eliminating in the correct area), and are rewarded for their success, the quicker they learn.**

* In the first few weeks, take your pup out every hour whilst awake and playing. In addition, key times when a pup usually needs to toilet are:
  + First thing in the morning, when waking from a nap, or just before putting the pup to bed.
  + Shortly after eating or drinking water.
  + When excited.
* Signals that a pup might need to eliminate may include wandering away from sleeping, eating, or playing areas, sniffing and circling, beginning to squat, going to the door or whining, or restlessness that does not seem to have any specific purpose or cause.
* Choose an area that you would like your pup to use for eliminating.
* Take your pup outside to an area you would like your pup to use for eliminating. If it is too far away for a young pup, you may need to carry him at first. This will prevent the pup from eliminating before you reach the designated area.
* To encourage your pup to eliminate, pace yourself in the chosen area, allowing the pup to circle around to find a toileting spot.
* Only when the pup actually starts to eliminate on the ground, say “Quick Quick”, associating the cue with the act of elimination. Give the pup ample time to finish elimination.
* Praise quietly, but generously when the pup eliminates. Take care not to be too excited, as the pup may startle and stop eliminating halfway through. The more the pup feels that he has done the right thing, the more likely he is to repeat this behaviour.
* Please note that we would like you to go outside with the pup when toileting him so that you can observe whether or not the pup has eliminated. This includes during wet weather, with many pups (even older ones), needing extra encouragement to step on to wet grass!

## Exercise and Play

* Pups need daily mental stimulation as well as play and physical exercise. Your goal as a Puppy Raiser is to provide multiple daily sessions of exercise and play – typically pups need 1 to 2 hours a day.
* Remember that young pups tire quickly, so adjust the length of the walk to its age and physical development. Always ensure that the pup is kept on the leash when outside your yard, unless there is a fenced-in and secure run. Never take the pup outside your property without a collar and Guide Dog ID tag.
* When initially starting to walk with your pup, use [Follow Me](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/relationship-skills/follow-me/)on a long leash where appropriate. Allow your pup to explore on a loose leash at a relaxed and comfortable pace. Reward all [Check Ins](http://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/relationship-skills/check-in/) with [Use of You](http://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/relationship-skills/use-of-you/) and food rewards appropriate for the step the pup is up to at the time.

### Exercise Tolerance

* Pups have soft bones. Therefore, over-exercising can damage joints and create health problems for them. A guideline to the exercise tolerance for pups at different ages can be seen in the table below.

| **Pup Age (months)** | **Duration of Walk (minutes)** |
| --- | --- |
| 2 – 3 | 5 – 10 |
| 3 – 4 | 10 – 15 |
| 4 – 5 | 15 – 20 |
| 5 – 8 | 20 – 30 |
| 8 – 12+ | 30 – 60 |

* Pups can be walked more than once a day; it is wonderful exposure for them, and provides both mental stimulation and physical exercise. However, common sense should be used when deciding when to walk a pup, ensuring that the pup has had sufficient rest between walks, the weather is suitable, and that ground surfaces are of a suitable temperature for a pup to walk on.

## Safety

* Before bringing your new pup home, it is important to “puppy-proof” your house and yard to make sure that any dangerous objects are out of reach or removed. This includes any chemicals, hazardous plants, or sharp objects that can be lethal to the pup if chewed. Any valuable items should be secured well out of reach of the pup.
* Pups investigate with their mouths, so it is important, especially at this early stage, to always supervise the pup when exploring in your home. Please also observe the pup when they are in your yard, as many pups eat leaves, sticks or other debris that can lead to stomach upsets, or even more serious health issues. If unable to provide active supervision, please place the pup into a safe area such as their [Sleeping Quarters](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/house-manners/sleeping-quarters/) or crate (see [Crate Acceptance](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/house-manners/crate-acceptance/) and Restrictions).

### Stairs

* Starting at a young age, a pup needs to learn how to move his body up and down stairs. Usually a pup will start with a hopping motion, moving two front feet and then two back feet, but eventually he will become coordinated to walk smoothly up and down stairs. Pups need to feel comfortable on stairs, remaining calm and attentive, walking at the speed of their handler.
* Begin teaching by going up the stairs, because pups are more coordinated going up. If it is a long flight of stairs, carry your pup to the second or third step from the top. Gradually increase the number of steps your pup ascends. When working on going down stairs, if it is a long flight of stairs, carry the pup to the second or third step from the bottom.
* Allow your pup to go up and down the stairs at his own pace, and to walk anywhere he wants to on the stairs (unsure pups often stay near the edges of stairs). Walk along with your pup, and provide appropriate praise. Use a [long line](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/glossary/#L) in case your pup wants to continue up or down the entire flight of stairs. This prevents the leash from getting tight.
* There are a number of helpful videos outlining the Steps in teaching your pup confidence around [Stairs](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/socialisation/stairs/) on Puppy Central.

## Problem Behaviours

### Jumping

* A pup will jump up when it is excited or seeks attention. You need to teach the pup that jumping is not acceptable.
* The most important thing to do with a pup that jumps is not to reinforce the behaviour. In other words ignore the pup when it jumps. This means not even making eye contact or using hands to push the pup away, as this is still attention. When the pup has four paws on the floor then you need to pay the pup attention. With repetition the pup will learn the correct way to get your attention. You can also ask the pup to do an alternate behaviour that is incompatible with jumping like [Sit](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/step/dog-skills/sit/), and that way you can reward the pup for doing something positive.

### Mouthing and Chewing

* Mouthing/Chewing on you or household items is also to be discouraged. If you find the pup has picked up something that it should not have, remove the object from its mouth and encourage Toy Seeking behaviour (redirect the pup to one of his own toys). Make sure you put the object out of reach.
* If you catch the pup at the moment it is about to pick up something it should not, interrupt the pup in a deep voice by saying “no” or “uh-uh”, and then distract it by giving it something else to play with. If you do not give the pup an alternative to play with, it will most likely return to the undesirable activity you wanted it to stop. You can use this method for redirecting mouthing on people too.

### Vocalising

* Vocalising in young pups is normal and this is how they have learnt to communicate with their mother and siblings. However, it is up to you to teach the pup that this is not how we want the pup to communicate with us! People may find it cute when pups “talk” to them. This whimpering and whining can quite quickly develop into barking and howling to seek attention. It is best to address this problem early on before it becomes a habit.

The key to success is to remember that vocalisation increases with reinforcement (so by you attending to the pup, whether it be in a soft or firm voice), and it decreases without reinforcement (by ignoring the vocalising). For example, if the pup is vocalising to come inside the house, ignore the pup and wait for a short break in the noise. When the pup is quiet, reward the pup by giving it attention, or in this case, opening the door and letting the pup inside the house. This way the pup learns it will be rewarded for being quiet and calm, and ignored when it is noisy. Please do not raise your voice in an attempt to stop the pup from vocalising; pups will perceive this as you joining in on the conversation with them!