



Preparing for Your Puppy!

Below are some helpful hints primarily taken from the AKC website, with a few additions from me! These suggestions will help you get ready so your puppy's big homecoming goes as smoothly as possible!

Puppy Proofing

Puppies are unbelievably curious, but just like toddlers, they don't understand what is safe and what is off limits. Remember, if a puppy can get something in their mouth, they will eat it or chew it! That's why it's essential to puppy proof your home. You'll protect your house, prevent bad habits, and most importantly, keep your puppy safe. Here are some tips for proper puppy proofing:

- Look at your house from your new puppy's point of view. Get on your hands and knees so you don't miss anything at ground level.
- Keep anything dangerous, like cleaning supplies, behind locked cupboard doors or stored up high.
- Tie all electrical cords out of your puppy's reach or place inside chew proof conduits. You can find many options for Dog Cord Protectors on Amazon.
- Put everything valuable away. Knickknacks and cell phones can't be destroyed if they're kept in drawers or on a high shelf.
- Keep shoes in a closed closet. If you don't want something to become a chew toy, prevent your puppy from getting it in the first place.
- Switch to garbage cans with lids. Food smells will attract your puppy, so be sure he can't get into your trash.
- Use barricades like baby gates or [exercise pens](#) to keep your puppy confined to safe areas or out of unsafe ones. By using gates, you don't have to puppy proof the whole house until your dog is ready for that kind of freedom.
- Examine your backyard for hazards. For example, look for holes in the fence, yellow jacket nests, ant hills, [toxic plants](#). All of these things can be dangerous for your puppy.

Go Online Shopping

It's important to have all the necessities like a [crate](#) and chew toys before you bring your puppy home. The following things can start your shopping list:

- Crate. This is an invaluable tool for keeping your puppy safe when you can't supervise him and for simplifying your housetraining routine. Be sure to pick the correct size. If the crate is too

large, your puppy can use one end as a toilet which will set your potty training back. For golden retrievers, the 42" crate is usually recommended. Make sure your crate comes with divider panel that allows you to adjust the size of the crate as your puppy grows.

- Collar, harness and leash. You will need both a collar (for id tags) and a harness (for leash time). Don't forget to put an ID tag on your puppy's collar.
- Puppy food and bowls. If your puppy is a fast eater, I recommend using a [puzzle/slow eater bowl](#) until they get older and a little less frantic about food!
- Exercise pen or baby gates.
- Toys. All dogs love to chew, teething puppies most of all. So a good collection of teething/chew toys along with a variety of other toys are a must for our new puppy. Be sure to pick toys that aren't too small for your puppy to prevent a choking hazard.
- Grooming Tools. It's never too early to start getting your puppy used to nail trims and brushing.
- [Treats](#). Simple [training](#) can start from your puppy's first day at home, so be ready with plenty of tasty rewards.

The Administrative Side of a New Puppy

As fun as it is to play with your new puppy, there are still some administrative tasks to take care of:

- AKC Registration: To register your puppy with the AKC, you will need to name your puppy. Just like us, puppies have two names! One is the official name registered with the AKC and the other name is what you will call your puppy. The call name is totally up to you, but the official name has one rule, it must start with "Golden Honey's", to identify the puppy as part of the Golden Honey family. After that, you can have some fun. The official name registered with the AKC doesn't even have to have the call name in it, so you can really get creative! If you need some help finding the perfect call name, check out the AKC [Dog Name Finder](#). Once the names have been selected, you can register your puppy with the AKC following the instructions provided by Golden Honey.
- Microchip Registration: at your going home appointment or before, the microchip registration will be completed before you leave with your puppy.
- Make sure to set an appointment with your veterinarian within 72 hours of picking up your puppy.
- Select other pet professionals like a groomer or pet sitter. Don't be afraid to visit them first and ask for references. Also, learn the location of your nearest emergency veterinary clinic.

Making Introductions

Your puppy will need time to adjust to his new environment. Plus, it's likely he'll miss his doggy family until he gets used to his human one. Be patient and be careful not to overwhelm him. Consider the following:

- Show your puppy around. Let him know where to find his crate, food, and water bowl, and where he should be going to the bathroom. Let him explore with supervision, but don't give him the run of the house on day one. He can earn freedom as he learns the rules.
- **IMPORTANT:** Supervise introductions to other pets. Don't let your puppy annoy your older dog and be sure cats have an escape route. In the beginning, keep interactions short and sweet.
- Introduce your puppy to new people with care. Too many cuddles all at once can be stressful. Everybody will want to meet your puppy, and it's important for him to meet as many new people as possible. But make sure each experience is pleasant and rewarding.
- [Socialize](#) your puppy. Socializing means introducing your puppy to as many new people, dogs, places, situations and so on as possible. Introduce your puppy to new sounds, surfaces, and toys. Be sure to do this at your puppy's pace. Don't force him. Encourage him and stay positive.

Teaching and Training

Every interaction between you and your puppy has the potential to build your bond and teach something new, and there's no reason you can't get started right away. Here are some other training considerations to keep in mind:

- [Potty train](#) from day one. Your dog needs to know exactly where you expect him to do his business. Prevent accidents so he also learns where not to go. If a mistake happens, clean it up with an enzymatic urine cleaner.
- Set the house rules. For example, decide if your puppy can go on the furniture and who is in charge of mealtimes and [walks](#). To prevent confusing your puppy, make sure your entire family is on board and consistent.
- Teach your new puppy basic behaviors like focus (watch me), sit, and down. With [positive reinforcement-based training](#), you can encourage good manners in even very young puppies. If you're struggling with your new puppy, consider getting help from the [Good Dog Helpline](#).
- Look for a [puppy class](#). Puppy kindergarten helps with both socialization and training. [Search for a training club in your area](#). I always recommend using a local kennel club if you have one near you. They are very cost effective and usually have very dedicated trainers.
- Enroll in the [AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program](#). Your puppy is eligible for the S.T.A.R. Puppy test after completing a basic training class with an AKC Approved CGC Evaluator. The program is designed to get dog owners and their puppies off to a good start and enrollment includes benefits like the AKC Puppy Handbook and a monthly email newsletter full of training tips.
- Set goals for down the road. Training basic manners can lead to all kinds of fun dog activities. An important goal for every dog is the [AKC Canine Good Citizen](#) program. It's a great foundation for dog sports and the gold standard of behavior for dogs in our society.
- I do not recommend sending your puppy away for training. A good dog training class also teaches the owners how to interact with their puppy in a positive and effective way. Honestly, this is one of the most important benefits from training!