

The Puppy Prep Playbook

Your A-to-Z Guide
For An Easy, Happy Life
With Your New Best Friend

By Nick Bandy



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Dedication

For every new puppy owner who wants to raise a happy,
well-behaved dog—without losing their mind in the process.

And for Mun, our little one-eyed, snake-hunting mutt.

We love you.

Introduction

Welcome to the Puppy Prep Playbook!

Congratulations! You're about to embark on one of the greatest adventures of your life—bringing home a puppy.


This is it. Your chance to raise the best dog ever. The one who greets you at the door like you've just returned from a tour in space, keeps your feet warm on the couch, and doesn't chew your expensive new sneakers into a pile of regret.

But let's be real. Puppies are adorable little mischief machines.

They chew, they pee in unexpected places, and they will absolutely test your patience. This guide is here to make sure you don't lose your mind in the process.

We're going to cover everything:

- **How to pick the right breed so you don't end up with a high-energy working dog in a studio apartment.**
- The essential supplies you need before your puppy arrives (spoiler: your furniture's about to become collateral damage if you don't get chew toys).
- **How to puppy-proof your home so it doesn't turn into a disaster zone.**
- What to expect in the first 24 hours, first week, and beyond—including sleep deprivation strategies (for both you and the pup).
- **The common mistakes new puppy owners make (and how to avoid them so you don't accidentally turn your dog into a spoiled brat).**

 **Important Note:** If you're reading this, chances are you're also looking for a responsibly bred puppy. That means you're already making smart decisions—so while you wait, let's make sure you're fully prepared to welcome your new best friend into your home.

By the end of this guide, you'll know exactly what to do, what *not* to do, and how to set yourself (and your puppy) up for success.

Let's go!

Chapter 1

Choosing the Right Puppy for Your Lifestyle

Not Every Puppy is the Right Fit for Every Home

Look, I get it. You saw a fluffy little golden retriever puppy on Instagram, and now you're convinced that's *your* dog.

But here's the deal: that Golden Retriever in the picture? He's probably owned by an ultra-marathoner with unlimited patience and a yard the size of a football field.

Meanwhile, if you work 60-hour weeks and consider "exercise" to be a brisk walk to the fridge, you and Mr. Retriever are going to have some... *differences*.

The biggest mistake new puppy owners make is choosing a dog based on *looks* instead of *lifestyle compatibility*. Let's fix that.

How to Pick the Right Breed (and Not Regret It Later)

Before you pick your pup, ask yourself these crucial questions:

✓ **Energy Level:** Do you want a couch potato or an adventure buddy?

High-energy breeds like border collies and huskies *need* constant physical and mental stimulation.

Otherwise, they'll redecorate your living room with their teeth. If you prefer quiet nights with a book, go for a low-maintenance breed that doesn't require daily marathons.

✓ **Size & Space:** Living in an apartment?

That Great Dane puppy might be cute now, but in six months, he's going to be 150 pounds of "accidentally knocking over your furniture." Make sure your home has enough space for your future dog's full-grown size.

✓ **Shedding & Allergies:** If you're not a fan of vacuuming daily (or breathing through allergy meds), avoid high-shedding breeds like German shepherds or Huskies.

Hypoallergenic breeds like Poodles and Schnauzers are better suited for allergy sufferers.

✓ **Temperament:** Some dogs are independent (read: *stubborn*), while others are clingy and need constant affection.

If you want a dog who happily lounges alone while you work, get a more aloof breed. If you want a pup who follows you *everywhere* (yes, including the bathroom), pick a highly social breed.

✓ **Trainability:** Some breeds live to please (hello, Labradors!). Others... not so much.

If you don't have the patience to negotiate with a tiny, stubborn genius (looking at you, Shiba Inu owners), choose an easier-to-train breed.

✓ **Health & Lifespan:** Some breeds have more genetic health issues than others.


Bulldogs, for example, are adorable but come with a laundry list of potential medical problems. Be realistic about vet bills and long-term care.


The Responsible Breeder Advantage

Here's the reality: a *good* breeder doesn't just hand you a puppy and say, "Good luck!" They help match you with the right breed and temperament for your life.

They'll ask you a bunch of questions, and if they tell you that a certain breed isn't right for you—listen. They're not gatekeeping puppies; they're saving you from making a huge mistake.

And because responsible breeders care about their dogs, they usually have waitlists. That's a *good* thing. It means they're putting health and temperament first, not just cranking out puppies for cash.

 **Action Step:** Research 3-5 breeds that interest you. Compare their energy levels, size, grooming needs, and temperament. Make sure they actually fit your lifestyle—because once that puppy is in your home, it's a *forever* commitment, not a trial run.

 **Next up:** What you need to buy before bringing your new puppy home—because no, an old towel and a food bowl from Lazada aren't going to cut it.

Chapter 2

Must-Have Puppy Supplies Checklist

Don't Be That Person Running to the Pet Store at 10 PM

Bringing home a puppy without the right supplies is like trying to assemble IKEA furniture without instructions—frustrating, messy, and almost guaranteed to end in disaster.

The last thing you want is to be frantically Googling “what do puppies eat?” while your new furry overlord chews on your couch leg.

So, let's get you fully stocked *before* your puppy arrives.



The Ultimate Puppy Shopping List

✓ **High-Quality Puppy Food** – No, the cheapest bag at the grocery store won't cut it. Look for a brand with real meat as the first ingredient, no fillers like corn or soy, and formulated *specifically* for puppies. Ask your breeder or vet for recommendations.

✓ **Stainless Steel Food & Water Bowls** – Plastic bowls? Big mistake. They scratch easily, trapping bacteria, and some puppies chew on them. Go stainless steel—it's durable, easy to clean, and won't turn into a chew toy.

✓ **Crate (Size-Appropriate with a Divider)** – Whether you love or hate the idea of crating, it's hands-down the best way to potty train and give your pup a safe space. Get one with a divider so it “grows” with your puppy.

✓ **Comfy Dog Bed** – Puppies sleep *a lot* (we're talking 18+ hours a day). Get a bed that's cozy but supportive for growing joints. If you think your pup might be a shredder, start with a cheaper one until they outgrow their “destroy everything” phase.

✅ **Collar, Leash & ID Tags** – Get an adjustable collar (because your puppy will grow *fast*), a sturdy leash, and an ID tag with your contact info. Even if your pup is microchipped, an ID tag makes it easier for a good Samaritan to return them if they wander off.

✅ **Chew Toys & Training Treats** – Puppies *will* chew. The only question is *what*. Give them good options (durable chew toys, puppy-safe bones) or they'll pick your furniture, shoes, or fingers. Training treats should be small, soft, and irresistible.

✅ **Puppy Pads or Artificial Grass Patch** – If you're house training indoors, stock up on puppy pads or an artificial grass patch. Even if you plan on outdoor training, pads are useful for nighttime accidents.

✅ **Safe Cleaning Supplies** – Puppies = accidents. Be prepared with an **enzymatic cleaner** (not just regular household cleaners) to break down odors and prevent repeat offenses. Trust me, your nose will thank you.

✅ **Grooming Tools** – A brush, puppy-safe shampoo, nail clippers, and dog-friendly toothbrush & toothpaste. Start brushing their teeth early, unless you enjoy expensive vet bills later.

✅ **First Aid Kit** – At minimum, have antiseptic wipes, bandages, and your vet's contact info on hand. Puppies have an uncanny ability to get into trouble.

Choosing the Right Puppy Food

You wouldn't feed a newborn baby fast food, so don't do the equivalent for your puppy. Look for **high-protein, grain-free (if needed), and vet-recommended brands**. Avoid anything loaded with artificial flavors, colors, or mystery meat by-products.

📌 **Action Step:** Order or buy these essentials **at least 2 weeks before your puppy arrives** so you're fully prepared. Your future self will thank you when you're not scrambling at midnight because you forgot puppy food.

👉 **Next up:** Puppy-proofing your home (aka saving your belongings from total destruction).


Chapter 3


Puppy-Proofing: Because Your Puppy Will Try to Destroy Everything


Think of your puppy as a tiny, furry toddler with a talent for chaos. Anything that can be chewed, knocked over, swallowed, or peed on *will* be chewed, knocked over, swallowed, or peed on.


Your mission? Puppy-proof your home before they turn it into their personal demolition site.


How to Make Your Home Puppy-Safe


 **Secure Electrical Cords** – Puppies *love* chewing cords. Not only is this an expensive habit (RIP to your phone charger), but it's also dangerous. Use cord covers or tuck them out of reach.

 **Lock Up Household Cleaners & Medications** – If it's toxic to a human, it's probably *extra* toxic to a puppy. Keep all cleaning supplies, medications, and human food locked up or stored high.

 **Keep Shoes, Clothes & Small Objects Out of Reach** – If you don't want your favorite sneakers turned into confetti, put them away. Ditto for socks, jewelry, and anything small enough to be swallowed.

 **Secure Trash Cans & Food Storage** – A puppy getting into the trash is *never* a good time. Use trash cans with locking lids, and keep human food (especially chocolate, grapes, and anything toxic) far out of reach.

 **Block Off Unsafe Areas** – Use baby gates or playpens to keep your puppy away from danger zones (stairs, certain rooms, or anywhere filled with things they *really* shouldn't chew).


 **Educate the Family** – If you have kids, roommates, or a forgetful spouse, make sure *everyone* is on the same page. Puppies don't understand that some things are "off-limits" unless *everyone* enforces the rules.


Setting Up a Puppy-Friendly Space

Instead of letting your puppy roam free like a tiny, unsupervised tornado, set up a **safe zone** where they can relax, sleep, and chew *approved* things. This should include:

- ✓ A **crate** (to help with potty training and provide a safe den).
- ✓ A **dog bed** (unless you're okay with them napping on your couch).
- ✓ Chew toys & enrichment items (to save your furniture from destruction).
- ✓ Food & water bowls in an easily accessible spot.

The goal is to give your puppy a safe space to adjust while minimizing destruction. Trust me, your furniture will thank you.

 **Action Step:** Get down on your hands and knees (yes, really) and look around from your puppy's perspective. Remove anything they could chew, swallow, or destroy. If it looks like something a curious, teething puppy would enjoy chewing—secure it, move it, or say goodbye to it forever.

 **Next up:** The First 24 Hours – What to Expect (Hint: Sleep deprivation is coming).

Chapter 4

The First 24 Hours – What to Expect

Brace Yourself: Your Puppy's First Day is...A Lot

Bringing home a puppy is kind of like bringing home a tiny, adorable typhoon—equal parts thrilling and *completely overwhelming*.


One minute, they're exploring their new surroundings, the next, they're peeing on your floor and chewing on your furniture like it's an all-you-can-eat buffet.


The first 24 hours are crucial. This is your puppy's *biggest* transition—from their littermates and familiar surroundings to a strange new place (aka your home). Some puppies settle in quickly. Others take longer.


Either way, the more *you* prepare, the easier this transition will be for *everyone*.


Bringing Your Puppy Home: The Big Day


Here's how to make your puppy's first day as stress-free as possible:


 **Keep It Chill** – No welcome home parties, no parade of neighbors, and *definitely* no overwhelming introductions to every human and pet in your life. Your puppy is already experiencing major change—don't add to their stress.

 **First Stop: The Potty Spot** – Before you even step inside, take your puppy to their designated potty area. Praise them if they go. If not, no big deal—just keep this routine going throughout the day.

 **Let Them Explore—At Their Own Pace** – Instead of plopping your puppy in the middle of the house and saying, “Welcome home, buddy!” guide them through one room at a time. Too much space too soon can be overwhelming (and lead to potty accidents).

 **Introduce Family Members One at a Time** – Everyone is excited, but don't swarm the puppy. Have family members sit calmly and let the puppy approach *them*. Keep voices soft and movements gentle.


 **Offer Food & Water—But Don't Panic if They Don't Eat** – Some puppies dive into their first meal, while others are too nervous to eat. Give them time. If they skip one meal but are otherwise acting normal, don't worry.


 **Establish the Crate Right Away** – If you're crate training, introduce the crate as a *positive* space from Day One. Toss in treats, let your puppy explore it at their own pace, and never *force* them inside.


The First Night Survival Guide


This is where things get *real*. Many puppies cry at night because they're used to sleeping with their littermates. And guess what? You're *not* their littermate.


How to survive:

 **Keep the Crate Close** – Place their crate in your bedroom or somewhere nearby. This helps them feel less alone and reassures them that *you're still there*.

 **Use a Comfort Item** – If possible, get a blanket or toy that smells like their mom/littermates. This can help ease the transition.

 **Calm, Quiet Potty Breaks** – Yes, your puppy will need to go out in the middle of the night. When they do, keep it *boring*. No playing, no excitement—just potty and back to bed.

 **Ignore Crying (Unless It's a Potty Emergency)** – If your puppy whines for attention, don't give in. Otherwise, they'll quickly learn that crying = getting what they want. But if they *actually* need to go outside, take them out and keep it low-key.

 **Action Step:** Plan your puppy's first-day schedule **in advance**—potty breaks, feeding times, crate introductions, and play sessions—so you can focus on bonding instead of running around in panic mode.

 **Next up:** The First Week – Routines & Training Foundations (Yes, You Need a Plan).

Chapter 5

The First Week: Routines & Training Foundations

Your Puppy's First Week: Chaos, Pee, and Setting the Rules

You survived the first 24 hours. Congrats! Your puppy has officially tested your patience, stolen your heart, and possibly your socks.


Now it's time to set some structure before they start thinking *they* run the house. (Spoiler: They will *absolutely* try.)


Puppies don't just *like* routine—they *need* it. Without a clear schedule, your new best friend will turn into a tiny, unhinged, four-legged dictator who pees wherever they want, chews whatever they want, and ignores you entirely.


Let's not let that happen.


The Key to Success: Structure & Routine


Here's what your puppy's daily schedule should look like:

 **Feeding Times** – Feed at the same times every day to regulate digestion and *predict* potty breaks (this saves your floors).

 **Potty Breaks** – Take them outside **immediately** after waking up, eating, drinking, and playing. Yes, that means *a lot* of trips outside.


 **Nap Times** – Puppies sleep 18+ hours a day. If your pup is zooming around like a caffeinated maniac, they're probably *overtired*. Help them settle down with crate time or a quiet corner.


 **Short Training Sessions** – Keep training sessions **short** (5-10 minutes) and fun. Puppies have the attention span of a goldfish—so reward good behavior and keep it light.


 **Play & Socialization** – Expose your pup to new sights, sounds, and experiences *now*. The more they experience **before 16 weeks**, the more confident they'll be as adults.

Potty Training 101 (or How to Save Your Floors)

If you follow *one* rule this week, make it this: **Consistency is everything** when it comes to potty training.

 **Take them out frequently.** First thing in the morning, after meals, after naps, after playtime, and right before bed. (Basically, if you're wondering, "Should I take the puppy out?" The answer is yes.)


 **Use positive reinforcement.** When they go potty outside, **celebrate like they just won an Olympic medal**—treats, praise, over-the-top enthusiasm.


 **Stick to a potty zone.** Take them to the *same* spot every time so they associate it with "bathroom business."

But Here's the Thing:

Potty training isn't *just* about timing. What do you do when your puppy still has accidents? What if they refuse to go outside? And how do you prevent **middle-of-the-night potty disasters**?

This is just a starting point. If you want the **full, foolproof potty training plan** (including a predictable schedule, troubleshooting accidents, and getting your pup fully house-trained fast), you'll love our **step-by-step guide inside our *Good Dog* training blueprint**.

 **Action Step:** Start a **puppy journal** to track feeding times, potty breaks, and progress. This helps you spot patterns, avoid accidents, and predict your pup's schedule like a pro.

 **Next up:** Common Puppy Mistakes (And How to Avoid Ruining Your Dog).

Chapter 6

Common Puppy Mistakes (and How to Avoid Them!)


Why Some Puppies Become Well-Behaved Dogs... and Others Become Little Monsters


Puppies don't come with an "off" switch. They have no idea what's "good" or "bad" behavior—they just know what **works** to get attention, food, or fun. The way you handle the first few months **determines everything** about their future behavior.

Here's the good news: Most puppy problems are completely preventable. But if you don't set the right habits now, you'll be dealing with **jumping, chewing, barking, and accidents** for years.


Let's look at the **biggest mistakes new owners make—and what you can do to fix them.**

Mistake #1: Inconsistent Training

 **Why it's a problem:** Your puppy is a **master at finding loopholes**. If you let them jump on guests *sometimes* but correct them *other times*, they'll just keep testing you.

 **Quick Fix:** Set clear, **consistent** rules from day one. If something won't be okay when they're full-grown, don't allow it now.

Mistake #2: Socializing Too Late

 **Why it's a problem:** Puppies go through a **critical socialization period** before **16 weeks**. If they don't get the right exposure now, they may grow up to be **fearful, anxious, or reactive**.

✓ **Quick Fix:** Introduce them to **new sounds, people, and places daily**—but do it in a way that feels **safe and positive**.

🚫 **Mistake #3: Overfeeding Treats**

🐾 **Why it's a problem:** Puppies **love** treats—but if you overuse them, you'll end up with a dog who **only listens when you have food in your hand**.

✓ **Quick Fix:** Keep treats **tiny** (pea-sized) and **mix in praise and petting** so they learn to work for more than just food.

🚫 **Mistake #4: Skipping Crate Training**

🐾 **Why it's a problem:** A crate isn't "mean." It's a **safe space**—and skipping it can lead to **separation anxiety, destruction, and sleepless nights**.

✓ **Quick Fix:** Feed your puppy in their crate, toss in treats, and make it a **positive place** from day one.

🚫 **Mistake #5: Not Stimulating Their Brain**


🐾 **Why it's a problem:** Puppies don't just need physical exercise—they need **mental stimulation** too. Without it, you'll end up with a **bored, destructive** dog.

✓ **Quick Fix:** Try puzzle toys, simple training games, and new experiences daily.

But What If...

- Your puppy **only listens when you have food**?
- They **cry all night in the crate** (and you don't know if it's a potty emergency or a test)?
- You're trying to socialize them, but they **seem scared of everything**?
- You feel like **you're doing everything right, but bad habits are still forming**?

If any of these sound familiar, you're not alone. Puppies don't come with instruction manuals—but we've got the next best thing.

 **Good Dog, our puppy training course** walks you through step-by-step solutions so you can raise a well-behaved, happy dog—without second-guessing yourself.

 **Up Next:** Your puppy's first year (and beyond).

Chapter 7

Next Steps: Raising a Happy, Healthy Puppy

Your Puppy's First Year: What's Next?

You've survived the first week.

Your puppy is (hopefully) sleeping through the night, peeing in the *right* places most of the time, and hasn't completely destroyed your furniture.

But now comes the long game—turning this adorable ball of energy into a well-behaved, happy dog.

Raising a great dog isn't just about surviving puppyhood—it's about *intentionally* shaping their behavior, confidence, and overall happiness. Here's how to set them up for lifelong success.

What Comes Next?

✓ **Leash Training & Basic Commands** – The sooner you start leash training, the better. A 10-pound puppy pulling on a leash is cute. A 70-pound adult dog dragging you down the street?

Not so much. Start with short, positive leash walks and basic obedience commands like “sit,” “stay,” and “come.”

✓ **Vet Visits & Vaccinations** – Your puppy's first vet visit should happen within the first few days of bringing them home. Keep up with their **vaccination schedule, flea/tick prevention, and regular health check-ups.**

✓ **Continued Socialization** – Socialization doesn't stop after 16 weeks. Keep introducing your puppy to **new people, dogs, places, and experiences.** A well-socialized puppy grows into a confident, well-adjusted adult dog.

✓ **Early Grooming Routines** – Whether you have a short-haired pup or a fluff ball, start **handling their paws, ears, and mouth early** so they get used to nail trims, baths, and vet checkups. Trust me, your future self will thank you.

✓ **Building Confidence Through Training** – Continue training in short, **fun** sessions. The goal? Build trust, prevent behavioral issues, and turn your puppy into a dog you actually *enjoy* living with.

📌 **Action Step:** Set reminders for vet check-ups and training milestones.

From Happy Puppy to Happy Dog

🎉 **Congratulations!** You're now fully prepared to bring home your new best friend. But let's be honest—puppy parenthood is just getting started.

💡 Want more expert guidance? We offer in-depth courses on training, behavior, and puppy care to help you every step of the way.

Raising a great dog isn't about guessing your way through it—it's about having the right plan, the right advice, and the right support. That's where we come in.

📢 As a member of our **Puppy Insider Community**, you'll get:

- 🐶 Exclusive puppy-raising tips delivered straight to your inbox
- 🐶 Expert advice on training, socialization, and behavior
- 🐶 First access to resources that help you raise a well-behaved, happy dog

And because you're now part of our community, you'll be the first to know when we release new training guides and courses designed to make your life easier.

📌 **Stay tuned for your first tip—it's on its way!**

