



Puppy Proofing Your Home

Puppy proofing is mostly common sense, but you might not think of some details....

- Pick up trash containers that might contain anything harmful to the puppy.
- Put safety latches on cabinets that have poisonous items -- often under the kitchen and bathroom sinks. Ask for these latches at your hardware store.
- If the puppy will have access to a garage, be sure there is no anti-freeze within reach. It has an attractive smell and taste to dogs and cats.
- Check for electrical cords, such as a dangling one between the wall and a lamp on a table. What about the rats' nest of wires near your computer? You can puppy proof them with rubber bands so they mostly stay on the back of your desk. Duct tape can attach tapes to walls.
- Crawl everywhere in your home, on your hands and knees, and see what you notice! Don't crawl on that thumbtack that's been under the desk for years...
- If you have a fenced yard, terrific! Walk around your fencing and look for any place that your puppy might be able to squeeze through it. See if anything else in the yard needs puppy proofing.
- One way or another, you need to be able to confine your puppy to a more securely puppy-proofed part of the house when you are out. See my [crate-training page](#) for how (and whether) to crate train, and a section on alternatives to crate training.
- Plan your [potty-training](#) arrangements. Where do you want the puppy to do its stuff? How will you clean it up?

<http://www.labrador-resources.com/first.html>

Puppy Pointers: First Weeks First

by [Lexiann Grant](#)

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You've just brought home your new puppy. Where do you start? For the next few days, your life will revolve around puppy's needs and schedule, so begin that first minute by getting him into a regular routine.

As you develop your daily care schedule, remember that young puppies can't control their bladders well and need to be let out about every three to four hours. Normally they'll also need to eliminate following playtime and after drinking or eating.

If the breeder fed and exercised him at certain times, try to implement the same schedule in your home. If changes need to be made, do so gradually to help puppy adapt.

First day

As soon as puppy arrives, show him where his "potty area" will be and allow him time to eliminate and stretch his legs. Next, bring him inside to his crate for some quiet time. While he's in his crate, puppy can look around and start to check out his surroundings. Do not overwhelm puppy immediately with too many new people, pets or strange situations. Talk to puppy and try to sooth any fears he may have.

After a brief nap, let puppy out for a potty break and some supervised playtime and petting. If it's time, feed the puppy, take him out again, then let him go back into his crate. As the day passes, introduce puppy gradually to his new home and family.

Stick to a familiar routine, show him he is welcome and puppy will begin to settle happily into your household.

First night

Some puppies may cry throughout the night because they miss their old home and litter mates. It's best to keep puppy's crate next to your bed for the first week or two. Put a safe chew toy and a familiar smelling towel or blanket from puppy's first home into his crate. If possible, hang your arm over the bed so that puppy can lick your fingers or smell your scent until he falls asleep.

In cases where puppy has to sleep in a room away from you, a night light and a ticking clock or soft music may help him to sleep better.

Most puppies will need to be taken outside during the night, and again early in the morning to eliminate.

First day home alone

When you return to work and puppy has to spend his first day alone, there are some steps to help make it easier for him.

Before you leave, put puppy out for his potty break. Feed him in his crate while you're getting ready. Let him out again to eliminate, then allow some play or exercise time. Return him to his crate with some safe toys before leaving. Give the puppy a bowl of ice to lap instead of water, since you won't be there to let him out.

Leave on a radio for pup while you're gone. If you have an answering machine, call and talk to the puppy during the day.

Someone will need to come home for lunch and let the puppy out to potty. If a family member can't do the job, ask a neighbor or relative, or hire a pet sitter.

When you return home, greet your puppy and resume his normal schedule. Spend some time -- playing, teaching him and being together -- and enjoy each other's company.

Puppy Pointer: Puppy Proofing Your Home

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PUPPY POINTERS: PUPPY PROOF YOUR HOME

by **Lexiann Grant**

Puppies are notoriously adept at getting into trouble, chewing or shredding dangerous objects, or personal belongings that are off limits to tiny teeth. In a matter of minutes, a single, small pup can cause hundreds, even thousands of dollars worth of damage, and seriously injure themselves in the process.

If you don't want your puppy's first days eek home to be a series of reprimands, "No. Leave that alone. Get out of there. Drop that. Stop it. No," then puppy-proof your house and yard before he arrives. Think of it as child-proofing your home, except that a puppy is smaller and more active than a baby and can therefore get into more things.

Put up barricades or baby gates across areas where the puppy isn't allowed. Close doors, cabinets, and drawers to rooms or storage spaces where pup could get into trouble. Since a puppy believes that it's okay to chew anything that is within reach, provide plenty of toys to keep him busy. And always, keep a close eye on what puppy is doing, no matter how well you have prepared your home for his arrival.

Here are some precautions you can take to get your home ready and keep puppy safe. Spray a repellent, such as Bitter Apple on objects such as chair legs, that cannot be placed out of harm's way. Pick up, put away, secure, hide or keep puppy away from or out of reach:

- * Small pets such as hamsters and fish tanks;
- * Houseplants, some of which are poisonous, including the dead leaves. Check with your vet or green house before adding new plants;

- * Some children's toys have small parts;
- * Crayons, pens, pencils, paper clips, pins, tacks, staples;
- * Paper shredder;
- * Books, magazines, mail, newspapers, important documents;
- * Money, paper or coin, checks;

- * Electrical cords or wires;
- * Telephone cords, computer cables;
- * Drawstrings from draperies or blinds

- * Television and other remotes controls, VCR tapes;
- * Knick-knacks, figurines, or collectibles, heavy items like lamps that can get pulled own or knocked over;

- * Firewood or debris from fireplaces;
- * Pillows, fabric arm covers, afghans or throws
- * Throw rugs, bathmats
- * Candles, potpourri, air fresheners;

- * Food, candy dishes, food crumbs, bones or discarded cooking items;
- * Ovens, cooktops or hot pans;
- * Puppy's food and treats (can overeate and get ill or bloat)
- * Alcoholic beverages
- * Trash compactor, garbage and trash cans or bags;

- * Paper towels and napkins, clean or dirty;
- * Tissues or toilet paper;
- * Bed and bath linens;

- * Clothing, gloves, hats, shoes, dirty laundry;
- * Jewelry, combs, toothbrushes, hair ribbons or pins
- * Medications, drugs, toiletries, cosmetics;

- * Cleaning items, rags, sponges, household chemicals, detergents;
- * Sporting equipment, hunting or fishing gear, craft-working items;
- * Tools, nails, string, fasteners, glue.

Garages, basements and attics may be filled with so many hazardous objects, that it's best to prevent puppy from entering these rooms at all. After puppy-proofing indoors, do the yard area to which pup will have access.

- * Check fencing for weak or broken areas where puppy could escape. Lock fence gates.
- * Do not let puppy near a swimming pool or pond where he could fall in and drown.

- * Many outdoor plants, flowers and shrubs are poisonous. Plant only in gardens where puppy will not be permitted. Check with a veterinarian or landscaper about what plants to avoid. Also, don't let puppy eat his way through your vegetable garden.

- * Don't use fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides on the ground in puppy's area if possible. If these chemicals must be used, keep the pup off the lawn for at least 48 hours afterwards. Check with your vet before allowing puppy back into a treated yard.

* Leave puppy in the house while working on the lawn. Put away all gardening tools, such as hoses and rakes, when finished using them.

* Keep puppy's potty area clean -- scoop the poop daily!

* Always watch puppy when he is playing outdoors and inside.

When you think you're finished puppy-proofing, go room to room, and look at each and every item. Do you see something you missed before? Are there objects in which puppy could get caught or tangled? that could be pulled down or ripped up? Ask yourself, "If I were a puppy, would this be an interesting place to explore? Would this be fun to chew, shred, carry or hide? " Once you've made your household safe for puppy and your belongings, introduce him to his new environment and watch him happily adapt to his new home.

Tips on Puppy-Proofing Your Home

Before you bring that adorable new puppy into your life, it's important to make sure that your home will be a safe place for him or her to live and grow.

Like young children, puppies are very curious about the world around them. If allowed to, they're likely to get into whatever mischief they can -- just for the sheer fun of discovering something new. Your puppy probably can't wait to investigate everything within his reach.



Most puppy owners can share amusing stories of their puppies' exploits. "On the morning after we brought Lacy home, I realized that I hadn't been watching her for a while, and things were awfully quiet," says Donna Beck, owner of a 12-week-old Sheltie. "I looked everywhere for her. Then I stepped into the bedroom, and it was a wonderland of white -- she had found the tissue roll in the bathroom, and dragged the entire roll's worth all out into the bedroom, trampling and winding it all around. There she was, her tongue hanging out, happily in the middle of the pile. All I could do was laugh!"

But sometimes puppies get into mischief that's more risky than amusing, and this adventuresome spirit can spell danger. That's why AKC Family Dog magazine, published by the American Kennel Club (www.akc.org), recommends that you "puppy-proof" your home and yard -- ideally before your new bundle of joy moves in -- by making sure that all potential poisons and dangers are out of reach.

One way to do this is by walking through your house and thinking about everything from the puppy's point of view. (It helps if you actually get down on your hands and knees to check things out!) Look for things on the floor, on low tables, or otherwise within reach. Inspect cabinets and closets that the puppy can get into. Try to prevent as many emergencies as possible.

Keep in mind that whereas a human child uses hands and fingers to investigate, a puppy's natural instinct is to use its mouth and teeth to explore new things. He'll be tempted to bite and chew on any object he can get into his mouth, and maybe even swallow it. Your puppy doesn't know any better, so he's not being naughty -- he's just doing what comes naturally.

Here are a few of the hazards you should be particularly aware of, according to the AKC:

- Electrical cords. Tuck all cords where your puppy can't get to them. Perhaps you can use duct tape to secure them out of harm's way. A shock can be fatal, so keep a watchful eye lest your pup should have the urge to chew.

- Swallowable objects. Pick up and put away any objects your puppy can reach that are small enough for him to swallow. It obviously could be bad for your puppy to get a hold of and swallow any object with sharp parts, such as a pin or razor blade. Such things could cause serious injury to his digestive tract. But even an object that is smooth, soft or made of non-toxic material -- such as a ping-pong ball -- can be harmful if swallowed, because it can get stuck in the intestines and cause blockage.
- Garbage. Household garbage is one of the most common sources of things that can make a puppy sick. Spoiled food, sharp lids and discarded toxic materials are just a few of the risks that can lurk inside. And with its tempting smell of food scraps, the kitchen waste can is sure to be of interest. Use one with a lid that closes securely, or put the can in an inaccessible place when you're not home and "on guard." Remember that your puppy will be eager to investigate wastebaskets in other rooms of the house as well.
- Medicines. Make sure that all medicines are stored high above your puppy's reach, and never leave individual pills or containers on low, accessible surfaces, even for a moment. They can be swallowed in an instant. Even gobbling down too many vitamins can make a puppy sick.
- Poisons and household chemicals. See that no containers of cleansers, polishes, poisons or other dangerous chemicals have been left in puppy-level, easy-to-open cabinets. (Child-safety latches can help.) Some to look for are oven cleaners, floor products and waxes, bathroom cleansers, makeup items, paint removers, plant fertilizers or sprays, laundry products, insect traps or sprays and rodent poisons. Cigarettes and felt-tip pens can be toxic, too.
- Poisonous plants. Not all plants are pet-friendly. Many can be harmful to your dog. Toxic indoor plants include cactus, dumbcane, mistletoe, philodendron and poinsettia. Outdoors, keep your pup away from plants such as azalea, boxwood, cherry seeds, daffodil blooms, honeysuckle, horse chestnut, holly, lily of the valley, morning glory, rhododendron, rhubarb, skunk cabbage, tulip bulbs and wild mushroom.

Once you've thoroughly puppy-proofed your home, the final key to ensuring that your puppy stays safe and sound is to have a watchful eye over him. Just as you wouldn't let a toddler wander through the house unsupervised, keep tabs on your young puppy. Consider setting up a "safe room" for him where he can't get into trouble during those times while you're not watching him, rather than leaving him to roam the entire house.

By preparing your home ahead of time for that inquisitive, adventurous new family member, and keeping careful watch over him once he arrives, you'll help ensure that he'll grow up to be your happy, healthy companion for years to come.

For more tips on raising your puppy, visit the American Kennel Club's Web site,