



## 10 TIPS FOR SOCIALISING YOUR PUPPY

### **Tip One: Vaccination vs socialisation**

Young pups are extra susceptible to diseases before their immune systems are fully effective. However, keeping your puppy isolated until all their vaccinations are done, can also have a major effect on your puppy's general happiness and quality of life. Therefore, it's important to find the balance between socialisation and vaccination. Consider compromising by starting to socialise your puppy to different humans first, keeping your puppy happy and avoiding the risk of infection for your puppy. If necessary, carry your puppy to avoid any unwanted contact with other dogs or areas before they have completed all their vaccinations.

**Tip Two:** When introducing your puppy to dogs when he or she is younger than 16 weeks old, start by introducing them to "safe" dogs. "Safe" refers to dogs that you know have a good temperament, are well socialised and have been fully vaccinated.

**Tip Three:** Find a safe and familiar environment for your puppy, like the backyard when you feel like your puppy is ready to meet a new dog.

**Tip Four:** Start slowly at first. Gradually increase the new encounters and experiences as your puppy gets older and gains more confidence. Try not to overwhelm your puppy. Let them approach something out of their own accord, instead of bombarding them. When introducing new people to your puppy, let them crouch down and have the puppy approach them.

**Tip Five:** Children have a different way of interacting with dogs than adults do. It's important that your puppy gets used to this kind of interaction. You will also learn a lot about your puppy's temperament when they are in contact with kids, as it requires patience and gentleness from both sides. It's important for your dog to experience and get used to children from a young age, so he will know how to behave around them in the future as an older, bigger dog.

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**Tip Six:** Remember to keep an eye on your puppy. If things get too much, remove them from the stressful space or situation. Your puppy is relying on you to keep him safe and stick up for him or her when things get a bit overwhelming.

**Tip Seven:** Although there will be times where they are nothing but balls of energy, puppies also tire very easily and spend most of their puppyhood sleeping, which is when they grow the most. Be sure to keep new encounters and experiences short enough, so your puppy doesn't tire out.

**Tip Eight:** Your puppy will give definite signs in his or her body language when they are happy or anxious. Be sure to get familiar with the cues, so you know how to respond to different situations appropriately. If your pup is anxious, he will try to look smaller and avoid eye contact. They will often hold their tail low and keep their ears back. When you see these signals, get your puppy away from the situation or space that is making them worry. Alternatively, a happy puppy will look confident and happier as their tail, or sometimes the whole body starts wagging.

**Tip Nine:** Try your best to refrain from using treats and snacks to help them with socialising. This will lead your puppy to associate new people and encounters with food, which isn't ideal. You want your dog to experience and enjoy moments for what they are and not because he merely wants another snack.

**Tip Ten:** Your puppy will learn how to act appropriately around dogs by following their instincts as well as mimicking the behaviour of other well-behaved older dogs. Give your puppy some time to discover and trust his own natural instincts. Your puppy will soon learn the social cues of the pack and his natural instincts will take over as he learns how to communicate appropriately with other dogs. Most adult dogs will also soon let the puppy know when they are too much or will tolerate a little bit of playful nibbling and annoyance.