Puppy Training Checklist

A puppy training checklist for owners covering house-training, crate, commands and socialization.

Set up for success

- [ ] Choose a quiet, consistent spot for training sessions.
- [ ] Stock up on small, soft, high-value training treats.
- [ ] Pick a marker word or clicker to signal correct behavior.
- [ ] Agree on house rules so everyone is consistent.
- [ ] Set a daily routine for meals, potty, play and rest.
- [ ] Keep early sessions short, around 3 to 5 minutes.

House-training

- [ ] Take your puppy out first thing, after meals, naps and play.
- [ ] Choose one outdoor potty spot and return to it each time.
- [ ] Reward immediately the moment your puppy goes outside.
- [ ] Supervise closely indoors and watch for sniffing or circling.
- [ ] Clean accidents with an enzymatic cleaner to remove odor.
- [ ] Avoid punishing accidents, which can create fear and setbacks.
  Frequent accidents can signal a health issue worth checking with your veterinarian.

Crate training

- [ ] Size the crate so your puppy can stand, turn and lie down.
- [ ] Make the crate cozy with a bed and a safe chew toy.
- [ ] Feed meals near or inside the crate to build a positive link.
- [ ] Start with short closed-door periods and build up slowly.
- [ ] Use the crate for naps and quiet time, never as punishment.
- [ ] Take your puppy out for a potty break right after crate time.

Basic commands

- [ ] Teach name recognition so your puppy looks at you when called.
- [ ] Practice sit using a lure and reward when the rear touches down.
- [ ] Build a reliable recall with happy tones and great rewards.
- [ ] Introduce down, stay and leave it in short steps.
- [ ] Reward calm behavior and gentle, polite greetings.
- [ ] Phase out treats gradually as commands become reliable.

Socialization

- [ ] Introduce new sounds, surfaces and household objects gently.
- [ ] Let your puppy meet calm, vaccinated dogs in safe settings.
- [ ] Expose your puppy to friendly people of different ages.

- [ ] Practice gentle handling of paws, ears and mouth for vet and grooming.
- [ ] Keep every new experience positive and reward calm responses.
- [ ] Avoid overwhelming situations and let your puppy retreat if needed.

  Ask your veterinarian about safe socialization timing before vaccinations are complete.

Leash skills

- [ ] Let your puppy wear a flat collar or harness indoors first.
- [ ] Attach a light leash and let your puppy drag it under supervision.
- [ ] Reward your puppy for walking near you without pulling.
- [ ] Stop walking when the leash tightens, and resume when it loosens.
- [ ] Practice short, upbeat walks before long outings.
- [ ] Bring treats and water for positive walks in new places.
- [ ] Important: This is general information, not professional advice. Consult a professional trainer for behavior issues and your veterinarian for any health concerns with your puppy.