

FREE GUIDE

The Puppy Day Plan

A printable daily schedule for puppies from 8 weeks to 6 months.

BY AGE

Three day plans

8-10 weeks, 10-16 weeks and 4-6 months, hour by hour.

THE TRIGGERS

When to go out

The moments a puppy needs the toilet, so the clock matters less.

THE SIGNS

Nap before biting

How to spot an overtired puppy before the zoomies start.

Print the plan for your puppy's age, put it on the fridge, and everyone in the house knows what happens next: when your puppy sleeps, plays, trains and goes out.

IN THIS GUIDE

- ☐ the four rules every good puppy day follows
- ☐ example days for 8-10 weeks, 10-16 weeks and 4-6 months
- ☐ the moments your puppy needs the toilet, so you're outside before the accident
- ☐ the signs of an overtired puppy, the reason behind a lot of evening biting
- ☐ a plan for working days, at home or out
- ☐ a blank day plan to fill in for your own puppy

Built from veterinary behaviour guidance (AVSAB, AAHA), the American Kennel Club's training advice and the questions thousands of new owners type into search. Every claim is checked, and the sources are on the last page. This guide covers behaviour and routine. For food, vaccines and health, follow your vet.

The four rules of a good puppy day

1. Sleep comes first

Puppies sleep a lot. Popular guides say 18 to 20 hours a day; the few studies that actually measured it found less. So don't count hours. Watch your puppy.

An overtired puppy doesn't slow down. It gets wilder: harder biting, zoomies, stealing things, can't settle. A veterinary article in AAHA's magazine compares it to an overtired toddler. **Most of a good puppy schedule is a nap plan.**

2. The toilet follows events, not the clock

Take your puppy out first thing in the morning, last thing at night, and after every one of these: waking up, eating, drinking, playing, chewing, and time in the crate. For a very young puppy that means every 1 to 2 hours while awake, a dozen trips or more a day (American Kennel Club).

3. Short awake windows, then rest

A starting point many trainers use: about 45 to 60 minutes awake for an 8-10-week-old, then a nap, with the windows growing as your puppy grows. **No study gives an exact number**, so treat the times in this guide as starting points and adjust them to your puppy.

4. Little and often

Training works best in short, happy sessions: 3 to 5 minutes, a few times a day. The AKC suggests keeping puppy sessions to about 5 to 10 minutes. And the first three months of life are the most important time for socialisation (American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior), so plan one new, gentle experience a day.

NAP SIGNS: TIME TO REST, EVEN IF THE SCHEDULE SAYS PLAY

- ☐ bites harder, or won't take a toy instead of your hand
- ☐ zoomies, or can't settle anywhere for long
- ☐ yawning, slowing down, lying down and getting straight back up
- ☐ stealing things, barking at you, chewing what they know they shouldn't

The fix is boring on purpose. A toilet trip, then the crate or pen with a chew, somewhere quiet. Most puppies are asleep within minutes. You haven't punished them; you've given them what they needed.

8-10 weeks: an example day

At this age most of the day is sleep, and **every wake-up starts with a trip outside**. Use the times as a pattern, not a timetable. If your puppy wakes earlier, shift everything.

Time	What happens	Why
6:30	Straight from the crate to the toilet spot	First thing in the morning
6:45	Breakfast, then outside again	Eating gets the gut moving
7:00	Play and a 3-minute training game	Short and fun
7:45	Outside, then a nap in the crate or pen	About an hour awake is plenty
9:30	Wakes: outside first	Every wake-up means a trip out
9:45	One gentle new thing: a sound, a surface, a visitor	The socialisation window
10:30	Outside, then a nap	
12:30	Outside, lunch, outside again	
13:00	Chew time, play, a short training game	
13:45	Outside, then a nap	
15:30	Outside, then sniffing around the garden or yard	Sniffing is calm exercise
16:30	Outside, then a nap	
18:00	Outside, dinner, outside	
18:30	Calm time: a chew, a snuffle mat, cuddles	Evenings wind down, not up
19:30	Outside, then a nap	Heads off the witching hour
21:30	Short, calm time together	
22:30	Last trip outside, into the crate	Last thing at night
Night	One or two calm trips outside are normal	See below

Night trips. Puppies can hold their bladder for roughly as many hours as they are months old (AKC). At 2 months, that's about 2 hours, so a trip or two in the night is normal for now. Keep them dark, quiet and boring: out, toilet, quiet praise, back to bed.

Meals: as many as your vet or breeder advised. The times above only show where they usually fall.

10-16 weeks: an example day

Three things change in these weeks:

- **Awake windows grow** a little, to roughly an hour or slightly more.
- **Night trips usually drop** to one, then often none. Follow your puppy, not a date.
- **Teething begins.** Baby teeth start falling out at around 12 to 16 weeks (AKC), so chewing and mouthing can increase. Have chews ready at every nap and every calm time.

Time	What happens	Why
6:30	Outside straight from the crate	
6:45	Breakfast, outside again	
7:00	Play, then a 5-minute training game	Sit, name, come, settle on a mat
8:00	Outside, then a nap	
10:00	Outside, a short walk or new place (as your vet allows)	New experiences, gently
11:00	Chew time, then outside and a nap	
13:00	Outside, lunch, outside	
13:30	Training game and play	
14:30	Outside, then a nap	
16:30	Outside, sniffing time, a gentle game	
17:30	Outside, dinner, outside	
18:00	Calm time: chew or snuffle mat	
19:00	Outside, then a nap	
21:00	Calm time together, a short play	
22:30	Last trip outside, into the crate	

The honest part: these weeks are often the hardest. Your puppy is bigger, braver and teething, and the novelty has worn off for you. That's normal, and it passes. The schedule is what gets you through it: when the day falls apart, it's usually because a nap was missed.

Socialisation. Keep the one-new-thing-a-day habit going. The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior recommends that socialisation starts before vaccinations are complete. Ask your vet which places are safe for your puppy right now.

4-6 months: an example day

The teenage months are starting. Your puppy can stay awake and hold on for longer, and will test every rule you have.

- **Toilet trips:** roughly every 3 to 4 hours in the day, plus the usual triggers: waking, eating, playing.
- **Awake windows:** often around 1.5 to 2 hours, then rest. Over-tired is still the most common reason for wild behaviour.
- **Crate time:** the crate-training handout from the Humane Society of the United States says puppies under 6 months shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time.
- **Teeth:** by about 6 months most puppies have all their adult teeth (AKC). Chewing can stay strong for a while after that, so keep chews around.

Time	What happens	Why
6:45	Outside	
7:00	Breakfast, then a walk with plenty of sniffing	Sniffing tires the brain
8:00	Training game (5-10 minutes), then rest	
10:30	Outside, play	
11:00	Rest with a chew	
12:30	Outside, lunch	
13:00	Calm time or a nap	
15:00	Outside, a short walk or a new place	
16:00	Training game, then rest	
17:30	Outside, dinner	
18:00	Evening walk or play: the last active time	Earlier, not just before bed
19:30	Calm time: chews, cuddles, snuffle mat	
22:30	Last trip outside, bed	

Why the last active time is early evening, not bedtime. A veterinary review covered in AAHA's magazine suggests putting walks and active play earlier in the day, then calmer activities in the evening, so your puppy learns that evenings mean settling. One big burst of exercise just before bed tends to wind a puppy up rather than tire them out.

Working days

Working from home

- **Your calendar is the schedule.** Put calls and focus work in the nap blocks, and toilet trips at the start and end of each block.
- **Keep the crate or pen near you** at first, with a chew in it. Puppies settle better when they can see you.
- **Set a timer for toilet trips.** It's easy to lose an hour in an email and find a puddle.
- **Practise being apart while you're home** (see below), so going out later isn't a shock.

Out of the house

The honest part: a puppy under 6 months can't hold on for a whole working day, and crate time for puppies under 6 months should be no more than about 3 to 4 hours at a time. If you're out for longer, plan for someone to come in the middle of the day.

- **Use a pen, not only a crate,** for longer stretches: a bed at one end and a toilet area (pad or grass tray) at the other, as far from the bed as possible.
- **A midday visit:** a neighbour, a family member or a dog walker, for a toilet trip, a meal if one is due, and some play.
- **Before you leave:** a toilet trip, a play, then a chew in the pen. Leave without a big goodbye.
- **When you come back:** calm hello, straight outside. Excited greetings are when many puppies pee.

Practise alone time from the first week

Start while you're at home. Leave the room for a few seconds, then minutes, and come back before your puppy gets upset. Build to 5, then 15, then 30 minutes over the first weeks. One owner on a UK forum asked their puppy to stay on its bed while they walked in and out of the room, a little longer each time. If your puppy panics when you leave (non-stop howling, drooling, scratching at doors), slow right down and get help early; it's much easier to fix young.

Weekends

Keep the same wake-up time and bedtime. A lie-in on Saturday usually means a 5am start on Monday.

Your puppy’s day plan

Copy the example for your puppy’s age, then adjust it after three or four days: move a nap earlier if you keep seeing nap signs, and add a trip outside if accidents keep happening at the same time of day.

NAME AGE WAKE-UP BEDTIME

Time	What happens	Done
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Tip: put this sheet on the fridge with a pen on a string. Anyone who takes the puppy out ticks the box, so nobody has to ask “has she been out?”

When the day isn't working

What you're seeing	Try this first	The full plan
Accidents a few minutes after coming back in	Stay outside until they finish, and reward the moment they do	Potty Training
Crying in the crate at night	Crate beside your bed; a calm trip out if it's been about as many hours as months of age	Crate & First Nights
Biting that gets worse in the evening	An earlier nap, and calm chews after dinner	Biting & Nipping
Wide awake at 5am	A calm, dull trip outside and back to bed; same wake-up time every day	Crate & First Nights
Pees as soon as you come home	A calm hello, then straight outside	Potty Training
Chewing everything	More chews, and check for a missed nap	Biting & Nipping

See your vet if your puppy suddenly has accidents after being reliable, pees very often or strains, has blood in their urine, or seems unwell or in pain. These aren't training problems, and persistent house soiling can have a medical cause (AKC).

If you're exhausted

"Puppy blues" is one of the things new owners search for most. Broken nights, needle teeth and the feeling that you've made a mistake are common in the first weeks, and they usually ease as the routine settles. Share the night trips if you can. Wanting a break doesn't mean you love your puppy less.

THE FULL GUIDES

Each one is a 14-day plan with a tracker, a "when it isn't working" section built from the problems owners actually run into, and a family sheet for the fridge: **Crate & First Nights, Potty Training, Biting & Nipping.** \$9.99 each, or all three for \$19.99, with a 30-day refund: <https://puppyfieldguide.pages.dev>

Sources. American Kennel Club: "How to Potty Train a Puppy" (updated 31 Jul 2026), "Everything You Need to Know About Crate Training Your Dog" (21 Sep 2026), "How to Stop Puppy Biting" (7 Nov 2025), "Timeline of Puppy Teething", "Dog Training for Busy People", akc.org. American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior: Position Statement on Puppy Socialization (2008) and on Humane Dog Training (2021), avsab.org. AAHA Trends magazine: "How sleep shapes canine behavior" (Colette Kase), aaha.org. "Crate Training Your Dog", Dumb Friends League and the Humane Society of the United States (handout). Owners' experiences paraphrased from public forums. Schedules are examples, not veterinary advice.