

# KENNEL CLUB ASSURED BREEDER SCHEME NEW PUPPY OWNER ADVICE SHEET

## KEEP YOUR DOG HEALTHY AND HAPPY EXERCISE REGULARLY

An important part of a dog's life is exercise. Indeed exercise times and feeding times are often the most exciting parts of a dog's day, and your puppy will grow to keenly anticipate them.

### **Small beginnings**

Puppies need much less exercise than fully-grown dogs. If you over-exercise a growing puppy, you can quickly overtire it, and more importantly damage its developing joints, which may cause early arthritis. A good rule of thumb is a ratio of five minutes exercise per month of age (up to twice a day), until the puppy is fully grown, i.e. 15 minutes when three months old, 20 minutes when four months old etc. Once it is fully grown, your dog can go out for much longer.

It is important that puppies and dogs go out for exercise every day in a safe and secure area, or they may become frustrated. Time spent in the garden (however large) is no substitute for exploring new environments, and socialising with other dogs. When you go out, make sure your puppy is trained to recall, so that you are confident the puppy will return to you when called (see the accompanying sheet on 'Training your Puppy').

You should never exercise your puppy on a full stomach as this may contribute to bloat or stomach dilation which can sometimes prove fatal.

All dogs require regular exercise to remain fit and prevent them from becoming overweight, which may also lead to health problems. You should remember however, that exercise needs to be introduced gradually, and that a young puppy will not have the same exercise requirement as an adult dog.

- 0-12 weeks. Until a puppy has completed its course of vaccinations, there is a risk of infection. Therefore, it is usually better that exercise is restricted to within the confines of your garden. Exercise in the garden also provides an excellent opportunity to start early training, and to get your puppy used to wearing a collar. Make sure your puppy has a number of safe toys, and always accompany them in the garden. This way, you can engage your puppy in suitable levels of activity, and start to reward good toileting behaviour, which can usually provide all the puppy's exercise needs during this time. If the opportunity arises, take your puppy to other safe environments where there is no risk, and it is able to mix with other animals and people, such as private gardens where only vaccinated dogs have access. Socialising at an early age is a vital part of your dog's development.
- 3 - 4 months; 15 – 20 minutes per day. Ideally this should be split across two walks, perhaps morning and evening. Lead walking is possibly the most important at this age as it will help train your puppy, but some free running should also be included.
- 4 months to 6 months; 20 – 30 minutes per day. Ideally, this should again be split across two walks, perhaps morning and evening.

- 6- 9 months; 30-45 minutes per day. Ideally, try to split exercise across 2 walks of 15 – 20 minutes duration.
- 9 -12 months; 45 -60 minutes per day ideally split across 2 walks of 20 – 30 minutes duration.
- 1 year plus. After the age of 12 months a dog is considered an adult and should be capable of walks lasting 30-60 minutes per day.

The duration and frequency of exercise should remain consistent and any increases should be gradual. For the majority of dogs, exercise is an important part of their life and so they will take as much as you can give. A dog will also enjoy play, whether with you or on its own, and so toys play an important part in a dog's life.

Dependant on breed and temperament and mobility, a dog will normally be capable of walking to the same capability as its owner, however as a dog becomes older, exercise should be reduced and your dog should be allowed to walk at its own pace.

The Kennel Club aims to promote the health, happiness and general wellbeing of all dogs, and to provide you with an invaluable resource for every aspect of life with your dog.

To find out more, visit us today at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk).