

How to Be an Awesome First-Time Pet Parent

If you're about to become a pet parent for the first time, you're probably experiencing a flood of emotions with a side of anxiety. While some aspects of being a pet owner will be better left up to trial and error, there are a few things that you should do to prepare for the arrival of your four-legged friend. We share some tips here to help you be an awesome first-time pet parent.

Pet-Proof Your Home

You've probably heard of baby-proofing homes, and it's just as important that you [pet-proof](#) your home before you bring home your new addition. There are some things in homes that are dangerous to pets, and you're about to find out just how many things a curious puppy can get into. The best course of action is to do a sweep of your home; go room by room and put things that are toxic, such as cleaning supplies and medications, out



of your puppy's reach. Look for things that are small enough for him to choke on and put them out of his reach, too.

Be prepared for your new puppy to chew – a lot. Your end tables, couches, chairs, pillows, comforters, shoes, and just about everything else at puppy level are in jeopardy of being chomped on, so put everything in its place. Don't forget that electrical cords are

tempting for puppies, so you should put protective coverings on them or tape them down if they are in sight. It's also a good idea to put child locks on your cupboards and cabinets, especially those containing those hazardous cleaning supplies.

One other way to pet-proof your home is to fill it with toys that your puppy should chew on. If you set boundaries right away and teach him which items are his to play with, it will save you a lot of money in the long run. [Teething puppies](#) need rubber toys that soothe their gums. High-quality thick rope toys also help puppies through the teething phase; just be sure he can't pull off any fibers and swallow them, which will make him very ill.

Get Your Puppy Ready for Trips to the Veterinarian

Going to the vet is essential for the health of your puppy, and you want to [make trips](#) to the vet as easy as possible. To make sure this is the case, get your puppy acclimated to riding in the car as much as possible. Don't make trips to the vet the only time he rides in the car, or he will never want to get in again. Visit friends, go to a park, or take him to meet his

grandparents. Praise your puppy for good car rides when he gets in the car, while you're driving, when you get to your destination, and when you get home to help him love riding in the car and to eliminate travel fears.

It's also a good idea to take your puppy to meet the vet for an informal visit before he has to get shots. Make sure he knows the vet is a safe place to visit before he gets poked and prodded. He may not love the vet after his first real appointment, but it will help him feel calm if he meets the vet and gets to know the staff early on.

Socialize Your Puppy Early

By exposing your puppy to people, animals, and places early on, you will help him adjust well and be less likely to be aggressive or fearful as he gets older. Touch his body parts, take his food from him, and encourage him to explore and investigate different environments. Take him to the park, help friends, neighbors, and loved ones pet and play with him, and expose him to a variety of toys, games, and other stimuli. With proper [socialization](#), your puppy will interact with others appropriately throughout his lifetime.

Another way to help socialize your puppy is to hire a [dog walker](#). Your puppy will learn to obey commands from other people and will have more practice walking on a leash and greeting other people and animals properly if he is walked as much as possible. Just be sure to contact the dog walker's references and observe the first few interactions between your puppy and the dog walker to make sure you've chosen the right person to help you care for your puppy.

Being a pet parent will bring immense joy to your life. You will laugh, play, and exercise with your puppy and soon be unable to remember what life was like without him. Following our tips will help you be completely prepared to be an awesome first-time puppy parent.

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