

Puppy Exercise Appropriate to Age

Why It's So Important to Limit Exercise Until Your Puppy Is Fully Grown

It's very important not to over exercise your puppy because his bones are still growing and are very susceptible to injury and long term damage. Puppies and young dogs have growth plates, soft areas at the ends of the long bones. Until the growth plates harden at around 18 months old, they are susceptible to injury. Injuries to a growth plate may not heal properly and can result in a deformed or shortened limb and will be more prone to further injuries when he grows up.

Please consult your vet and refer to the [Puppy Culture](https://www.puppyculture.com) website for full details:

<https://www.puppyculture.com/appropriate-exercise.html>

Puppy Exercise Chart for 8 weeks to 2 years: <https://www.puppyculture.com/exercise-chart.html>

Rule of Thumb for Lead Walking

It's safe to walk your puppy for **5 minutes per month of age**, no more than twice per day.

For example, you can walk a 3 month old puppy for 15 minutes twice a day.

Let your puppy set the pace and allow him to stop as often as he likes.

8-12 Weeks

Continuous walking maximum of 16 meters (50 feet) to 65 meters (200 feet) at a time.

Let the puppy decide when to start and stop.

Keep formal training to under 2 minutes per session but can do multiple sessions per day.

Informal sniff and stroll up to 10 to 15 minutes only.

No directed running, but puppy can choose to run as much as he likes while playing.

No jumping above wrist height. No stairs.

Roll and drag toys along the ground, don't toss them in the air as this will encourage puppy to jump.

12-16 Weeks

Continuous walking maximum of 100 feet (35 m) to 200 feet (65 m) at a time by 16 weeks.

Let the puppy decide when to start and stop.

Keep formal training to under 2 minutes per session but can do multiple sessions per day.

Informal sniff and stroll up to 20 minutes only.

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4 - 6 Months

Gradually increase continuous walking up to maximum of 200 feet (70 m) to 400 feet (130 m) at a time by 6 months.

Let the puppy decide when to start and stop.

Keep formal training to under 2 minutes per session but can do multiple sessions per day.

Informal sniff and stroll up to 45 minutes by 6 months but keep pace slow with lots of sniff and exploring breaks.

No directed running, but puppy can choose to run as much as he likes while playing.

No jumping above wrist height. No stairs.

Roll and drag toys along the ground, don't toss them in the air as this will encourage puppy to jump.

6 - 12 Months

Gradually increase continuous walking up to 20 to 30 minutes on a fairly level, natural surface by the time puppy is one year old, but only if the puppy volunteers to go that far. Keep walks on concrete and pavement shorter.

Informal sniff and stroll up to 60 minutes by one year old but keep pace slow with lots of sniff and exploring breaks. Let the puppy decide when to start and stop.

No directed running, but puppy can choose to run as much as he likes while playing.

Jumps can be gradually increased to half way to elbow height. Be careful not to let puppy jump on or off furniture.

Stairs are still hazardous. Indoor stairs should be carpeted and outdoor stairs should have non-skid surfaces.

Keep formal training to under 6 minutes per session but can do multiple sessions per day.

Roll and drag toys along the ground, don't toss them in the air as this will encourage puppy to jump.

More Information

The #1 and #2 common injury factors for puppies - it's not just about hips and elbows.

<https://www.dogworksfitness.com/single-post/2017/12/28/The-1-and-2-common-injury-factors-for-puppies---and-its-not-just-about-hips-and-elbows>