

What You Can do to Properly Socialize Your New Puppy

The first few weeks your new puppy is in your home are essential in the socialization process. Start a good routine of eating, sleeping, playing, and outdoor exercise. Remember that most puppies go through a period in which they lose some of their self-confidence between seven and ten weeks of age. Trust comes harder for them, and things that we would expect them to be comfortable with suddenly elicit anxiety or fear. Before they would boldly charge into a new situation, they now seem apprehensive; this could be anything from loud noises, new people, play that is a little too rough, going to a new place, etc. Do not overreact. Your puppy will mature through this and be simply fine if you do your part. You do not want to become overly protective and isolate your pup from the outside world. It is better during this two to three-week period for you to increase the range of his/her experiences by small steps, not giant leaps, and bounds.

Most of us know that we need to socialize our pups. But did you know that socialization needs to start early and that it is critical to socialize your puppy before it has the full set of Parvovirus and Distemper vaccines? So how can you safely socialize a pup before he is fully vaccinated?

1. Invite friends, family to your home. Children, adults, men, women, the UPS driver, the gardeners—have your pups see and experience these people in and around your home.
2. Take your pup to a friend's house. Just going into a new environment will offer your puppy lots of new experiences.
3. Introduce your pup to healthy, vaccinated, and puppy friendly dogs. Your pup doesn't have to play with everyone (though it is great if he does), just having them around is essential.
4. Be sure your pup meets your cat and other animals that he will need to be comfortable around too. Gentle exposure can help your puppy learn that they are not something scary!
5. Take your pup on a walk in a stroller, wagon, or sling. Just don't allow it to walk in a place that there might be other animal's urine or feces if before fully vaccinated.
6. Take your pup for car rides. Help him get used to the motion on short rides to the store or even just around the block.
7. Stop by your vet's office and get your pup weighed. Take along plenty of treats to make it a super great experience.
8. Visit a store or café. Carry your pup in and let it take in the sights and smells.
9. Expose your pup to regular household activities. The vacuum, the rake, TV, and blow dryer. Gently expose your puppy while he is enjoying a stuffed Kong or another great chew.
10. Consider taking a puppy class. A well-run puppy class takes precautions to help protect against diseases and will help you socialize your pups to things outside of your home while your puppy is also getting some foundation training.