

How should I exercise my puppy?

Providing puppies with the opportunity to exercise is a very important aspect of their care. Apart from providing various health benefits, exercising may also provide a good opportunity for your puppy to socialise with other puppies and dogs which is vital for their behavioural development.

On the lead:

- Whilst on the lead you should walk your puppy at a **walking pace**. It is also advisable to take your puppy for **short walks** only. If your puppy sits down or lies down during their walk it is important to allow them some time to rest and to wait until they choose to start walking again. If they appear too tired to continue on, it is advisable to stop the walk and head home.
- Avoiding over-exercising and over-exertion is especially important whilst your puppy is growing. Over-exercising puppies can adversely impact upon their musculoskeletal development and this is of particular concern in large and giant breed puppies.

Off the lead (running freely):

- When a puppy is off-lead in a safe environment such as your backyard or a designated dog park they may be allowed to run freely. In this situation they are generally able to regulate their own pace and the amount of exercise they receive because when they get tired, they can choose to sit down or lie down and rest before getting up again. When off the lead, it is important to avoid excessive ball or frisbee throwing and catching which may over-exercise your pup.

You should **avoid forced exercise** such as:

- jogging or running with puppies
- excessive frisbee or ball throwing and catching
- running a puppy alongside a bicycle (In some states such as NSW, the RTA road rules state that a bicycle rider must not lead an animal, including by tethering, while the vehicle is moving)
- fast paced walks
- very long walks

Dogs should not be exercised immediately before or after eating as it can cause problems such as bloat, particularly in deep-chested dogs.

Please check with your vet when your puppy can safely go to the park in relation to their vaccination status. Please note that some of the large and giant dog breeds may continue to grow up until 18-24 months of age.

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