

- **REGULARLY EXERCISE**

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 joint.. 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

You should never exercise your puppy on a full stomach as this may contribute to bloat or stomach dilation

All dogs require regular exercise to remain fit and prevent them from becoming overweight, which may 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. 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, (but never before vaccinations are complete)

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.