

### Importance of appropriate activities for a puppy

Until the age of 8 to 10 months your puppy grows intensively. Developing bones are extremely sensitive and overloading your puppy may cause problems with joints and the spine continuing throughout his life. It is therefore very important not to burden him with long walks.

Your puppy should acquire muscles gradually by walking slowly and running freely as he wants. At the beginning you always follow him around because he doesn't know how to walk properly on the leash yet. Always use a harness that doesn't hinder movement.

**The most common signs of fatigue are stopping on a walk, lying down, refusing to walk, intensive pulling, biting the leash, hands or feet, whining, barking.**

An appropriate length of a walk for your puppy after 3 months of age is about 15 minutes. You can add another 5 minutes with each month. At the age of one year, a walk will last between half an hour and one hour. Frequent and short activities (5-6x per day) have a lot more benefits than fewer and longer walks (2-3x per day).



Photo: B. Kozamurnik

### Indicative age comparison:

Puppy		Child
4 weeks	.....	1 year
8 weeks	.....	2 years
3 months	.....	3 years
4 months	.....	4 years



Author: Petra Mohar  
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Psi in Mi, center za sodobno vzgojo psov  
E: [info@psiinmi.si](mailto:info@psiinmi.si)  
W: [www.psiinmi.si](http://www.psiinmi.si)

**Recommended reading:**  
**Julia Robertson (2013):**  
Exercising Your Puppy: A Gentle & Natural Approach  
**Turid Rugaas (2005):**  
On Talking Terms with Dogs: Calming Signals

Recommended by your dog school:

# PUPPIES AND US

A resource for those expecting a new furry family member

[WWW.PSIINMI.SI](http://WWW.PSIINMI.SI)



Photo: P.Höfferle

### Choosing a puppy

If you haven't decided yet where you are going to get your new family member, consider whether you want to buy a puppy from a breeder or adopting one from an animal shelter. If you decide to buy the puppy from a breeder, make sure that the puppies are living in a suitable and clean environment, that their parents are well raised, calm and healthy. Also make sure that the breed is suitable for your lifestyle.

### Getting ready for the puppy

It is very important for the puppy to get to know you before you take him home into an unknown environment. If you can only visit him once, bring objects (towel, blanket, toy, etc.) with you that smell of you and of other animals in your home. For a good breeder, this should not present a problem.

**Three important ingredients of healthy puppy development are mental stimulation, social contact and a possibility of choice.**

Before you bring your puppy home remove all dangerous things and things of value that he can destroy. Prepare everything you will need for him (bed, toys, dishes, harness, leash, etc.). Since dogs explore with their teeth, make sure that he will have a wide variety of materials for chewing at his disposal (fabric, wood, rubber, various toys, etc.).

### When is the right time to take your puppy home?

Although it is usual for puppies to leave their mother at week 8, this is when the first fear period begins and any changes in the puppy's life during this time can leave lasting effects. Most of the puppies will benefit from leaving their litter around 10 weeks of age.

### First days in the new home

Arriving in a new home is very stressful for a puppy. It is therefore important to give your puppy as much

peace and quiet as possible and to let him sleep next to you. Let him explore your home slowly, at his own pace. Later, there will be still plenty of time to learn cues, meet extended family and friends.

Food that he knows from his previous home should be available 4-5 times a day. He should have as much as he can eat in one meal. Withdraw the rest and offer at the next meal. Make sure that he always has fresh water available, preferably in several places. After each meal, take the puppy to a place where he can relieve himself. The same applies every time he wakes up or after playing. Puppies are only physically developed enough after about 9 weeks of age to be able to control elimination, which then takes several months to develop.

### Importance of sleep for puppies

Puppies, like children, are only capable of very limited activity. After each period of excitement they need a period of sleep. In one day they need between 16 to 18 hours of sleep, divided between time to play, eat, eliminate and cuddle.

**For quality sleep puppies need to be in close proximity of their family members, otherwise they can't sleep.**

The lack of sleep leads to fatigue and stress. If your puppy doesn't get enough sleep, he is unable to concentrate, can't learn and experience his environment and that can lead to undesired behaviour in the future (biting, barking, whining etc.).

### What about driving in a car?

Get your puppy used to the car gradually. If you have the option, always have someone with you who can hold him in their arms. Keep the rides short and enjoyable, as puppies are uncomfortable in the car because balance is not fully developed until they are 7 to 9 months old.



### Feeding:

4 – 5x per day, as much as he can eat



### Walking:

At three months of age multiple times for 5 minutes. With every month we can add 5 minutes.



### Sleeping:

Min 16 – 18 hours per day

