

Critical Info for Your Puppy's First Day and Night at Home

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG This is so exciting. You are getting a new puppy or maybe it's somebody you know that's getting a new puppy. It's so exciting. Do you know that when a puppy comes into your home, they are fully capable of learning? The moment they arrive. And that is a double-edged sword because they can pick up all the bad things to do as quickly as they can pick up the good things to do. And that's why it's really super important for you to be intentional about how that puppy goes about life, the moment they step into your house.

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And that's what today's podcast episode is all about. Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. I'm really excited to be talking about puppies because it's kind of one of my favorite things to talk about. But before we dive in, if you're watching this on YouTube, go ahead, give me a big thumbs up if you like puppies. Give me a big thumbs up if you like talking about puppies.

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I'm going to share with you today the things that I would absolutely avoid in the first couple of days when you get a new puppy and the things that you absolutely need to set yourself up so that these are going to happen in that first 24-hour period.

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I mean, there's so many past podcasts that I could refer to that are going to help you. Basically, if you started at podcast number one and just binge watch here on YouTube or binge listen it in your car, probably not as good in your car because you really should be taking notes here. There are so many great podcasts that I've already talked about, that are going to set you up for success.

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I promise you if you listen to these podcasts plus at the end of today's podcast episode, I'm going to give you a way to get into some extra training that I put together for you. All right. So, remind me if I don't tell you about that at the end of the show. All right. So, first of all, you're getting a puppy from a breeder or you're getting a puppy from a rescue. Wo-woo! Rescues!

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Either way, you need to talk to them, you need to get their input from them. Have they had any kind of potty training? Have they had any crate training started? How often are they getting fed and what kind of food are they getting right now? So, you might even want to video that conversation.

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A lot of really good breeders will send you home with a puppy pack that it has it all written down for you. That's even better. But you want to know, what is your starting place, and you can change that food. I would transition to the absolute best quality food that you can afford. It doesn't matter what the puppy has started on. I'm going to say it one more time, the best possible food that you can afford. I promise you that doesn't come from a big box store. It doesn't come from a grocery store.



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It will come from a higher end dog pet store and possibly other outlet, a boutique kind of a place. So, I personally feed all of my dogs raw. They start on raw as soon as they come home. The most important thing is when you look at the ingredients. Be aware dogs don't need corn. They number one ingredient should be a meat source. I personally feed my dogs seven different protein sources. So, we rotate through different protein sources. I just think that's good for the dogs.

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Okay. So, you want to plan when you are going to get this puppy that you will be home, ideally for two to three days at a minimum, that you can help that puppy adjust to the new life in your home. You don't want the puppy to come home and then you say, "Okay, there's the remote to the TV and now I got to go to work. I'll see you."

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Remember I said, puppies can learn bad things just as quick as they can learn good things. Yeah. You don't want that to happen. We're going to be intentional. Right. So, the goal, we want our puppy to be mentally and physically healthy. We want that puppy to grow up with an abundance of confidence and have the best relationship possible with you and other members of the house.

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And so, we going to do that by creating positive associations for that puppy, with the things that we want them to have positive associations with. For example, if you aren't going to be intentional about that, there's another dog in the house, the puppy will have positive associations with following everything that other dog does. And you will be second in line for them to listen to.

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They might get positive associations with chasing rabbits and squirrels and cats and barking at people passing on the street and all sorts of things. We want to be intentional about making things happen for the puppy that's going to have them have their best life possible.

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Now it all starts with you repeating this line over and over and over to yourself. 'My puppy is doing the best he can with the very limited education he has so far in the environment that I've currently put him in.' My puppy is doing the absolute best that he can with that limited education. It's only just begun, in the environment that I've put him in.

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So, any mistakes that happen? "I'm sorry. I mean, I hate to put blame on anybody." But puppies, explore with their mouths. They're going to pick up stuff. They're going to eat stuff. They're going to chew stuff. They're going to bite stuff. It's up to us to set them up for success. And I've got for you five ways, that's going to happen right now.

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Number one, before you get your puppy, I would like to set your puppy up with puppy zones in your home. So, I'll let you know what that looks like in my home. It could be outside where I want the puppy to do their business. I'll have a pen set up. If you have a fenced in backyard. That's great.



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But if it's a massive fenced in backyard, I would section off a little area just for the puppy for the first little while when you get them home, an area that you would like them to do their business with for a lifetime. So that they don't get used to going all over the backyard.

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But even if you don't care if they go all over the backyard, having a small area means they're not going to be digging up your garden and you're able to get to get them to come back into the house. Because I like to put my puppies in a little Ex-Pen when they're outside they do their business and then I can pick them up and bring them in the house.

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It's important, especially at night. We have coyotes around here and I don't want them running all over the property. All right. So, puppy zone number one, outside where you want them to do their business. Puppy zones in the house really depends on how big your house is and where you spend your time. So, I set up puppy zones where I spend my time.

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That means there's a puppy zone in my office. There's a puppy zone in the kitchen. There's a puppy zone where I work out downstairs and there's a puppy zone in my bedroom. Okay, so that puppy zone could mean you are hauling a crate all around or an Ex-Pen from room to room to room. I would really encourage you.

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You know what, let's do this right. Invest in at least two good quality [Ex-Pens](#) or play pens. And I would make sure that they are at least 36 inches or 48 inches tall, depending on the height of your puppy, because your puppy won't be the first one to crawl out and over out of an Ex-Pen. All right. So, you want them to be tall enough that the puppy isn't likely to crawl out and if you see the puppy thinking about it, then you put a lid on it.

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You know, you can just get a big tarp and put clips on the top, but really and truly you want to supervise so that when you see them going to crawl out, you can just get in there and intervene and put their paws down. If they do it a couple of times, just put them in their crate obviously, and make sure you take them outside first, because maybe they're telling you something.

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Okay. So, you want to have puppy zones. That's number one, set them up for success. Those are Ex-Pens. Those could also be baby gates. So, I take full advantage of baby gates. If I'm going to be in the kitchen and I know I can be supervising, I'll have the puppy in the kitchen. We all have baby gates set up at exits so that the puppy stays confined in the kitchen with me.



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I can keep an eye on them. It's safe. I'll have some toys in there that they can be around with me and you know, just learning to use their legs. You want to have them confined by gates or pens and in the bedroom at night, I use a crate. All right. But when you're putting your puppy in a crate, it's got to be a crate big enough that they can turn around freely in it. Don't have them so cramped up. Okay. But also, don't have them so big.

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If you make that crate super big, they're going to learn to go to the bathroom at one end and sleep at the other. So, you don't want that to happen. And I know my puppy's going to grow. I don't want to buy three crates. Just go to the thrift store or look on Facebook marketplace. You're going to find used crates, you know, you don't need to get fancy ones. But the crates that you travel with in the car, I highly recommend the [gunner crates](#) for those. That's all I use in the car. Those things are crazy heavy. So, you don't want those around your house.

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Okay. So that's it. We got puppy zones set up. We know what food we're going to be feeding our puppy and next the all-important schedule. Puppies thrive on a schedule and it really, this is your puppy's, [puppy loop schedule](#). It starts with [sleep](#) and then it's out, and then it's training. And I want to share with you, what I do is feed my puppies three times a day, maybe four times a day, for the first couple of weeks, but three times a day.

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And I break up those meals 75% of it gets fed through training, 25% of it gets fed in a bowl that I put down in their pen or in their crate. Right. So, here's the schedule again, it's sleep, out, training and then the rest of their food, then out. Free time so that they might be in the kitchen with me, or they might just be in their pen, the Ex-Pen.

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Now that Ex-Pen guys, this is super important. I would never leave a puppy in an Ex-Pen and go and shower or something. I would only have that puppy in the E-xPen if I'm in and out of a room and I can kind of see them because they could crawl out, they could you know get hung up somewhere by trying to crawl out so they could go and do their business and have a pee and poop in there. You want to be able to supervise that. Okay.

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It's you know, a little less dangerous if you have no collar on the puppy when they're in their Ex-Pen and you put a lid on it. All right. I wouldn't go out and leave them in there. I always put them in a [crate](#) if I'm leaving the house. Okay. Let me go through this cycle again. Our puppy cycle: sleep, out, training or eating, feeding, out, free time, out, back to sleep. So that's the cycle that when you first get that puppy, you get them on that schedule. And that's the way they're going to thrive. Because they're going to know what to expect.



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They're going to know when to go to the bathroom and where. So that first week you're going to take them out to the bathroom probably every 10 minutes to make sure they really understand where they need to go. And I would leave them out there for maybe two or three minutes. And ideally in that little pen, if you see them start to go to the bathroom, you could use the magic potty word.

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I use the word "potty". So as soon as I start to see them eliminate, I'll say "potty, potty, potty". If I see them having a poop then I use the term, "get busy, get busy". It's a phrase. It's not a term really is it. "Get busy". So why do we condition these words? Because then when they grow up, they will pee and poop on cue when we ask. Mind blow. Right.

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When your puppy is, you know, you've done your training, they've had some free time, you might then take them for a brief walk, five minutes really. You don't want to have it go too crazy. And I would just go around in your backyard. Please don't take your new puppy, you've only had home for a day, out walking down the block or around at the park. The first week, it's just about getting them to be confident and comfortable in your home.

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You're going to have them sleep, puppies need to sleep a lot. So, after all of that cycle, put them back in and they're probably going to sleep till noon. Right. My schedule in the morning is I get up at five. I take my puppy out for a pee and I put them right back in their crate. And then I do my morning routine and about seven o'clock that cycle starts. Okay. Number three, a tired puppy is a happy puppy. So, you want to make sure that the puppy gets a little bit of play with you and a little bit of play by themselves in their pen and some stimulation.

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So, it could be, if you go to my puppy games, I have [five puppy games that's here on YouTube](#). There's some videos where I show you five puppy games that I play. Those are great ones to exhaust the puppy, both use their nose and yeah, use their brain. Mental stimulation is a great thing to exhaust a puppy.

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I also have podcast number 18 is for [puppy games for bite inhibition](#). Those would be great for you. And don't forget, episode number 48 on [potty training](#). All right. So, use all of the brief games. So, when I play with my puppies, this is really important, there's certain toys that I will use with the puppy. So, this is a great one. It's got a bungee, it's got a little squeaky in it, go to [4MyMerles.com](#), this one's even got our DogsThat branding on it. They don't have any Shaped by Dogs there. Maybe that's going to be the next one for them.

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So, I like a little bit of a tug with the puppies. These are ones that are interactive with me. My puppies love this one with a fleece on it. It's funny, a lot of the puppies like to pull on the handle and I end up holding this end. Those are puppy toys that I use with me. Now, if I'm putting them in the pen by themselves, I love West Paw toys. So, this is a [toppl](#) that, see I've got some of the raw food in there that I would give that to my puppy. That will be part of their meal.



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So, if I don't have time to do a lot of training, I freeze this, I put some good cookies on the top and then that's the meal. But West Paw makes a lot of really great toys. So, this one, you can put some cookies in, and they roll it around and then they can get the cookies out.

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This is a great one because it's great for them chewing on and they can tug with you or maybe with another dog, if you have other dogs eventually, not yet with that puppy. So West Paw, I love their toys because we don't want our puppies chewing on hard toys because their teeth are not meant for really chewing. We got to wait until they're teething and then we can graduate to better toys. So, toys with you, I would never leave these with a puppy in their pen by themselves.

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I would have this sort of toy, little stuffy with the puppy in the pen when I can supervise with them. But I would never leave them alone with some of these because they could chew stuff off and swallow it. You don't want that. These are the only kind of toys I would leave with them. They can't destroy them.

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Now socializing plans. Dr. Ian Dunbar says with our puppies we want to aim for the puppy to meet 50 men, 50 women, [50 children](#) a week as they're growing up. Now we're in COVID when we're recording this, this makes it more difficult, but the most important thing, I wouldn't start any of that until the puppy's been with you at least three days.

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They need to know who's safe and doing what I've already suggested is going to give them an easy way to go. "I go to you when I'm worried." "I don't when you're socializing". I should do another podcast on socializing. You don't want to say, "Oh, here, you're a man. Can you take my puppy?" Read your puppy. So, when the puppy first sees the person, give them some cookies right with you, do they look apprehensive? They don't have to go and meet that person right away. Wait until they're happy. If they go up to the person, that's great. You pick that puppy up and let the person hold them.

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Right. So, puppy socializing. Now, puppy socializing with other puppies, you want to do that also with a very intentional way. Don't just let them go up and meet other dogs because some dogs aren't nice with puppies. And likewise, when I get my puppies here, I don't let them socialize with my own dogs for at least a week, maybe longer.

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So, for example, Feature I know who's 14, she doesn't hate puppies, but she hasn't really liked them. So, I keep Feature out of the picture for probably the first couple of weeks. They'd get to meet through Ex-Pens and baby gates and stuff like that. And the fifth thing is what is your plan for training going forward?



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What I would like you to do is.... I'm going to put in the show notes here a list of some great podcasts. I think you should listen to them all, but I'm going to put a list of the ones I think are really pertinent for you getting your new puppy. Go through all of those first, or you could do this right now and then have all of it together. If you know you are committed to have the best relationship possible with your new puppy. You are committed to have this puppy be confident and that you believe that puppies and dogs are doing the best they can with the education we're giving them so that it's up to us to do it. Then I've got that this little training program that I've set up that I'm going to gift you.

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I'm going to get to that in one second. But first I'm going to tell you the five things I want you not to do with your new puppy. Number one never scold the puppy and please don't blame them. They don't know. They're babies, all right. So, don't scold them and don't get mad and it's going to be hard. You're going to feel overwhelmed at times but try not to get frustrated, go to your happy place. Think what you're grateful for. Get yourself out of it. You don't want to do a lot of exercise with the puppies when they're babies.

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I had a friend with his five-month-old Goldendoodle was taking it jogging with him. Oh, nay nay. Right. To quote John Pinette. Do not. Puppies, they need time to mature and their bones to get strong and their muscles to get strong. So short walks, I think the golden rule is add five minutes longer for every month they are old. And I avoid stairs. Avoid stairs until probably, I mean, if they're maybe five or six months old at the earliest. Right.

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So, I just carry my puppy up and downstairs or avoid them altogether. If you've got a Great Dane, that could be quite the carry real quick. All right. Avoid long stretches where the puppy is alone. Obviously overnight, they're going to be in their crate. And during the day, if you have to work long hours, please have somebody come in and walk your puppy at lunch and to spend some quality time interacting with that puppy.

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And don't have your expectations too high. Don't put too much trust in a wee baby. They don't come pre-programmed knowing how to do things. Right. Don't overwhelm them. Don't overwhelm them with expectations. They don't need to meet every one of your family members on the first day or the first couple of days that they're here.

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They don't need to meet all the people in the neighborhood. Let them build that confidence and gradually interact, introduce them to the rest of the people in your life. Okay. That training I have for you. We have all the free training here on the podcast. Amazing stuff that I put out for free. And then you write us at wag@dogsthat.com with the subject line 'I am committed'. That tells me you do want to raise the puppy to be as confident as possible.



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And my team will just send you a link that you can join into. It's a short 15-minute videos that gives you clear understanding of what to do going forward while you're training your puppy, moving on to the future. I hope eventually you and I get to work together in maybe one of my Recaller programs or Homeschool the Dog, but for now there's a lot of free stuff.

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Take advantage of that. Get it all, you know, before you get your puppy, go through it now so that you know what to expect when that puppy comes to your home. And hey, let me be the first to say "Congratulations. Oh, you're so lucky." I love puppies. I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[Ex-Pen: Rover Modular Pet Enclosures](#)

[Ex-Pen: Midwest Plastic 8 Panel](#)

[Ex-Pen: Midwest Folding Metal](#)

[Gunner Crate Crash Test](#)

[Blog Post: A Day in the Life of a Susan Garrett Puppy](#)

[Video: 5 Games for Puppies](#)

[4MyMerles Creations Toys](#)

[West Paw Toppl Treat Toys](#)

[Podcast Episode 10: What to Know Before Getting a Puppy or Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 17: Help! How do I STOP Puppy Biting?!](#)

[Podcast Episode 18: 4 Puppy and Dog Training Games for Acquired Bite Inhibition](#)

[Podcast Episode 26: Pro Dog Training Tips to Get Your Puppy to Sleep All Night](#)

[Podcast Episode 30: Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages](#)

[Podcast Episode 32: 20 Easy Ways to Exercise Your Dog at Home](#)

[Podcast Episode 41: Get a Behaved Dog by Celebrating Milestones!](#)

[Podcast Episode 44: Using Coincidences and Positive Associations in Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 48: Potty Train Your Puppy in a Week \(Easy 3 Step Process\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 58: How to Create Kid Friendly Dogs and Dog Friendly Kids](#)



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About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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