









# FIT FOR LIFE™ PUPPY EXERCISE GUIDELINES

Scientifically sound guidelines to ensure your puppy gets the right kind and amount of exercise to develop its brain and body for a lifetime of good health and FUN!

	 BALANCE & PROPRIOCEPTION	 SKILL TRAINING	 FLEXIBILITY & STRETCHING	 STRENGTH	 ENDURANCE	 GOOD FOR THE SOUL	
	Develops awareness of where the body parts are in space. Important to avoid injuries and improve performance.	Teaches the components of the activities and sports that your dog will do during its lifetime.	Allows for full range of motion of all muscles and joints in the body.	Uses resistance exercises to build muscular strength, which improves performance and decreases injuries.	Uses aerobic conditioning to enable your dog to run/swim long distances.	Enables your dog to experience its environment, do what it enjoys, and strengthen its bond with you.	
3 TO 7 WEEKS	<b>EARLY SENSITIVE PERIOD</b> <i>Key time in development of a pup's body, brain and nervous systems.</i>	Introduce pups to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playing on a variety of surfaces, such as tile, carpet, wood</li><li>• Playing on uneven surfaces</li><li>• Gentle handling and grooming</li><li>• Playing in a bottle pool</li><li>• Short outdoor experiences</li></ul>	Teach pups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to learn</li><li>• How to play with other puppies and people</li><li>• About the world</li></ul>	NONE	NONE	NONE	Starting at 5 ½ weeks of age, Take <i>Adventure Walks</i> , ideally off-leash or on a loose longline, of 5-15 minutes at the pup's pace including small terrain changes.
⊘ • Repetitive, concussive activities • Weave pole training • Endurance training ⊘							
8 TO 16 WEEKS	<b>LATE SENSITIVE PERIOD</b> <i>Key time in development of a pup's body, brain, nervous systems and social skills.</i>	Several times a week do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playtime on low puppy agility or parkour equipment, and <i>Wobble Boards</i></li><li>• Walks over changes in surfaces, such as grass, sand, gravel and pavement</li><li>• <i>Adventure Walks</i> per this period's Good for the Soul guidance</li></ul>	• Continue to teach your pup: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to learn</li><li>• How to play with other puppies and people</li><li>• About the world</li></ul> • Canine Good Citizen exercises such as Walk Nicely on Leash, Sit, Stand, Down and Come	Start teaching your pup active stretching, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Downward Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Cat Pose</i></li></ul>	NONE	NONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i>, ideally off-leash or on a loose longline, of 15-30 minutes at the pup's pace, including terrain changes like hills, ditches, streams and logs.*</li><li>• Gently introduce short, 5-minute wading sessions.</li></ul>
⊘ • Repetitive, concussive activities • Weave pole training • Endurance training ⊘							
17 WEEKS TO 6 MONTHS	<b>JUVENILE PERIOD</b> <i>Your pup's brain and body are still evolving although development slows and growth increases during this period.</i>	Several times a week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i> per this period's Good for the Soul guidance</li><li>• Practice walking forward and backward over changes in surfaces, such as grass, sand, gravel &amp; pavement</li><li>• Continue playtime on low puppy agility or parkour equipment and <i>Wobble Boards</i>.</li><li>• Teach:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Ladder Work</i></li><li>• <i>Walk the Plank</i></li><li>• <i>Truckin' Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Pick-Up Sticks</i></li></ul></li></ul>	• Canine Good Citizen exercises such as Sit, Stand, Down and Come	Continue teaching your pup active stretching, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Downward Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Cat Pose</i></li><li>• <i>Crescent Moon</i></li></ul>	NONE	NONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i>, ideally off-leash or on a loose longline, of 45-60 minutes at the pup's pace, including larger terrain changes like hills, ditches, streams and logs.</li><li>• Wading and swimming for 5-10 minutes at a time</li></ul>
⊘ • Repetitive, concussive activities • Weave pole training • Endurance training ⊘							
6 MONTHS TO GROWTH PLATE CLOSURE**	<b>ADOLESCENCE</b> <i>Your pup is a teenager so its brain and body are undergoing many changes. Now is the time to start strength training but avoid endurance training.</i>	Several times a week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i> per this period's Good for the Soul guidance</li><li>• Continue to advance<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Wobble Boards</i></li><li>• <i>Ladder Work</i></li><li>• <i>Walk the Plank</i></li><li>• <i>Truckin' Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Pick-Up Sticks</i></li></ul></li></ul>	• Advanced Canine Good Citizen exercises	Continue with active stretching, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Downward Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Cat Pose</i></li><li>• <i>Crescent Moon</i></li></ul>	Begin teaching core, front and rear strength exercises, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Rocket Dog 1 &amp; 2</i></li><li>• <i>Wave</i></li><li>• Other <i>Fit for Life™</i> exercises</li></ul>	NONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i>, ideally off-leash or on a loose longline, of 45-60 minutes at the pup's pace, including larger terrain changes like hills, ditches, streams and logs.</li><li>• Wading and swimming for 10-15 minutes at a time.</li></ul>
⊘ • Repetitive, concussive activities • Weave pole training • Endurance training ⊘							
POST-GROWTH PLATE CLOSURE	<b>YOUNG ADULTHOOD</b> <i>Your pup is a dog now and can begin adult fitness training, including endurance training.</i>	Several times a week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i> per this period's Good for the Soul guidance</li><li>• Continue to advance<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Wobble Boards</i></li><li>• <i>Ladder Work</i></li><li>• <i>Walk the Plank</i></li><li>• <i>Truckin' Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Pick-Up Sticks</i></li></ul></li></ul>	• Advanced Canine Good Citizen exercises	Do active stretching regularly, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Downward Dog</i></li><li>• <i>Cat Pose</i></li><li>• <i>Crescent Moon</i></li></ul>	Continue to advance core, front and rear strength exercises, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Rocket Dog 3</i></li><li>• <i>Handstands</i></li><li>• Other <i>Fit for Life™</i> exercises</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin endurance training, starting slowly and building gradually</li><li>• Trotting continuously for at least 20 min no more than every other day</li><li>• Swimming continuously for at least 15 min</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take <i>Adventure Walks</i>, ideally off-leash or on a loose longline, at the dog's pace, including all safe terrain, for an hour or more.</li><li>• Hikes for several hours, depending upon weather.</li><li>• Wading and swimming for 10-15 minutes at a time</li></ul>

\* On-leash walks on short leashes are more training than exercise. Often puppies and young dogs find them boring and some refuse to participate. If you must use on-leash walks for exercise, seek out places your pup finds interesting to explore together and use a long leash so the pup can move at its own pace.

\*\* The growth plates of intact dogs of all sizes and breeds close by about 14 months of age. The growth plates of spayed or neutered dogs do not close until 18 to 22 months of age, depending on how early the dog was spayed or neutered and on the dog's adult size. To confirm that your dog's growth plates have closed, you can have a veterinarian take a lateral radiograph of the stifle and check the growth plate at the tibial tuberosity, which is the last growth plate to close.