**Odds and Ends**

**The Ride Home:** The ride home hopefully should go smooth and the puppy will sleep most of the way. Please do NOT place the puppy in a carrier on the way home. The puppy will be very scared and will need to be comforted by you during the rides they go on during their early stages of life. You want them to enjoy the rides and they will feel safe and secure being in your arms. If the puppy can see out the windows of the car when they are awake, they tend to not get sick in the car. The car seat and harness are a great transition once the puppy is big enough to sit alone in the vehicle. Make sure you always keep old towels and paper towels in the car while your puppy is getting comfortable riding in the car.

**No Visits To Infected Areas: Follow this until your puppy is six months of age!** Whether it be the ride home from our home, or to go for visits to the vet, pet stores, the trainer, or travel, you must take as many precautions as you can to make sure your puppy does not contract viruses or bacteria that could be prevented. If you must stop on the way home for the puppy to potty, do not stop at any location you know other dogs have potty’d. No rest areas, McDonald’s, gas stations, or locations right off an exit. Find an area that is either remote or one where you are certain only humans have been.

When taking your puppy to the vet for visits, carry your puppy inside and do not place the puppy on the floor. Take a towel from home and place it on the exam table before you place your puppy on the table. Do not wear shoes to the vet that you will then wear inside your home when you return. Take hand sanitizer in the car with you and use this as soon as you return to the car. I do this every time I go to the vet’s office to this day even knowing my vet takes every precaution to avoid contamination also. Doing this could save your dog’s life!

**Potty Time:** There is a very good article in your puppy packet concerning potty training of your new puppy. If you are very diligent with letting the puppy outside to potty, the less likely this is going to be an ongoing issue with your puppy and you. Every TWO hours during the day the puppy must be taken outside, and you will need to be patient during this time. They must find the exact spot to go! I use even hours all day long, so it is not hard to remember when the puppy was let out the last time. Do not play with the puppy until he/she goes potty. Do not use potty pads anywhere on the inside of your home. This will confuse the puppy that it is indeed ok to potty in the house. Make sure if you cannot keep your eyes on the puppy that they are either in a crate or x-pen. Make sure the entire floor of crate or pen is covered in blankets. They normally do not potty where they sleep unless they haven’t been outside to go recently.

**Feeding:** Your puppy has not been fed today. When you get home, I would try to potty them before going in the house. Play for about 30 minutes and then place puppy in crate with food and water and let puppy alone for 30 mins. to eat. You can do this starting tomorrow morning 3X a day for 3-4 days then you may go to 2X a day. Please always feed your puppy at least a cup of kibble at each feeding. As soon as your puppy/dog is eating all the kibble left in the bowl, it is time to increase the amount you are feeding them. This is for life!

**When your puppy is nine months old, you will then switch the puppy to adult Merrick as they are now done growing and need the nutrients in the adult food and less of the fat that is in the puppy food.**

When your puppy goes through a lull in their growth spurt, this is NOT the time to think your puppy doesn’t enjoy the Merrick anymore and switch kibble. You can continue to feed as you always have, and they will eventually go back to eating as normal. Also, we add quite a lot of “human” food to our dog’s kibble and it has kept them very happy and healthy! We use eggs, boiled chicken, real shredded cheddar cheese, Success Rice, salmon, hamburgers, sweet potatoes, raw and cooked carrots, pumpkin (great source of fiber) and green beans. We also use vanilla yogurt once a week on all the dog’s food to help them keep good intestinal function.

**Grooming and Washing:** Aussies do not need to be bathed often unless they are extremely dirty. If your dog is dirty and wet, the best thing to do if possible is to leave them on a porch or other safe place and let them dry. They will dry and the dirt will fall off. I would recommend a weekly good combing with spray of Mat-Magic before and after the grooming to keep those pesky knots at bay. The only tool I ever use on my dogs is a good comb. If you are using an outside groomer, please use an independent groomer with great reviews. You may tell them to “sanitize” cut your dog but please make sure you tell them to never trim the hair on your dog. This coat protects them in summer as well as winter and can harm them if it is cut back. Feet and ears are the only other hair that needs to be trimmed on your Aussie. NuVet also makes their toenails grow very quickly so regular nail trims are very important for your dog.

**Puppy Classes:** Puppy classes are something I highly recommend you investing in with your Aussie. They are very smart and very manipulating little babies, and this will give you the very best start with training your puppy from ground up. It is also a very safe socialization period for your young puppy that will indeed help them to be very socialized adults as well. If you need help finding a good puppy class in your area, please let me know.

**Going To The Vet:** Going to the vet for the first time can sometimes be overwhelming. Even if you have had a vet you love and trust, please be very careful to follow the medical sheet and your MDR1 and vaccine schedule to the letter. We have lost two puppies now, one for over vaccinating the puppy and the other due to the vet not following the recommended heartworm and tick medicine for the puppy. Do not be intimidated by any canine health professional. It is your responsibility to care for your Aussie and to keep them safe. Following the recommendations we have given you will ensure your puppy/dog will remain healthy during your vaccine schedule. You may always call us if your vet would like to give your puppy something that is not recommended by us.

**Sleeping At Night:** Your puppy will of course sleep better at night, in the crate, if they are getting adequate exercise during the day. The last potty break should be immediately before bedtime. Your puppy may wake you 1-2 times in the middle of the night to potty by crying or stirring in their kennel. Make sure your crate is placed where you will be able to hear the puppy cry. Take the puppy outside to potty, give praise, and immediately go back to kennel and bed. If your puppy wakes you more than 2X at night, please call me so we can adjust water schedule. If your puppy is crying in the crate for long periods of time, take time during the day to put the puppy in the crate with a bully stick for shorter periods of time, as you shower or make dinner, so the puppy does not always associate being in the crate with long periods of confinement. Your puppy should not go months with still needing night time potty breaks, so please call me if this does continue.

**Keep your MDR1 list in all your vehicles!**

**Make your first aid tote! You will use it!**

**Order the Spectogard. It will save you many trips to the vet for that $19.99!**

**Make sure you keep puppy/dog on heartworm and NuVet for life!**

**Call me any time you have an issue!**

**It is NEVER the puppy/dog’s fault! Ever!**

**Advice for Puppy Parents**

To raise a well-adjusted dog, there are some things you should start doing with your puppy as soon as you bring him home, so that he is well on his way by 16 weeks. These are tips on what you can do right away, but also don’t forget to check the resources at the end.

**Puppy Kindergarten**

Even if your puppy hasn’t completed all his vaccinations, it’s important that he meet other dogs and people, and that these be good experiences. Starting Puppy Kindergarten that uses positive methods, as early as possible, can help prevent all sorts of problems later. It allows for socialization in a safe, controlled environment.  You will learn how to read your puppy’s body language, so you know when he is excited, anxious, merely tolerant or has had enough. Puppies are like sponges that learn the skills you train easily, and this training helps you teach your puppy what you want him to do, instead of correcting him all the time.  In Puppy Kindergarten, common puppy problems and solutions are discussed.  And perhaps most important, you and your puppy can build a relationship built on trust right from the start. For more information on why starting early is so important, go to the [position statement on puppies](https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Puppy_Socialization_Position_Statement_Download_-_10-3-14.pdf) by the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior.

**Socialization**

Get together with friends who have healthy, vaccinated dogs. Have people over – all ages, races, with and without beards, with and without hats and coats, etc. As your puppy gets older, have him on various floor surfaces, in an elevator, around traffic and bicycles. You get the idea. If you have a fearful or timid puppy, don’t force him into a situation that makes him uncomfortable. Whether your puppy hides or lunges, don’t yell, punish or yank at his leash. Think of it as a signal that you’ll need to help him develop good associations with whatever he reacted badly to. So, next time, give him pea-sized treats in rapid succession the entire time that he is around what frightens him. Socialization can only have the desired effect if your puppy has GOOD experiences; bad experiences can create fears and anxiety. **So, supervise your pup closely and don’t put him in situations where another dog, stranger or child could bite, scare or harass him.**

**Bite Inhibition**

Puppies have sharp teeth, and they nip. It’s natural. But if you don’t teach bite inhibition now, it could be a problem later when his bite could really hurt someone. Puppies primarily bite to get our attention; they want us to interact with them. So, we need to make sure that we aren’t inadvertently rewarding nipping. If attention is the goal, then your attention is the reward. While some people will suggest that you yelp or say “ouch,” it’s important to realize that this doesn’t work very well for many puppies. Most hear that noise and think: “Great! Now we’re playing! Game on!” If you yell, you have unwittingly joined in the fun.

When your puppy nips, keep your cool. Don’t look at your puppy, don’t talk to your puppy, and don’t yell at your puppy. You have a few other options. You can calmly get a toy or BULLY STICK, put it in his mouth, and engage in appropriate play. This says to your puppy: “No, you may not bite my hands (or feet or arms…), but you can chew on this and I’ll give you my attention.” If no toy is nearby, you will want to simply get up and quietly walk away from your puppy to find a toy. Sometimes just walking away by itself will send a clear message.

**Resource Guarding**

Some dogs growl or bite when things are taken away from them (toys, food bowls, bones) or when you get in “their” space (on the bed or sofa).  They should learn not to guard resources as puppies, so it doesn’t crop up later. When you feed your puppy, go by after a few minutes and put a really good food (maybe chicken) in the bowl.  After a while, pick up the bowl before he is finished eating, put chicken in, and return it to him.  He will get the idea that if you take something from him, he can expect something even better coming back.  If your puppy grabs something you don’t want him to have, don’t chase him.  If you do, it’s a game.  Instead, trade him for something even better while teaching him the words, “drop it”.  I want my shoe, but you can have this yummy chicken.

**Touch**

You will need to touch your puppy all over his body, including in his mouth and between his toes. Puppies can get used to being touched all over, which makes it a lot easier for the vet or groomer or when you give him pills or brush his teeth.  It’s much easier to work on it now than to have a touch sensitive dog later.  You don’t want him to whip around to snap or bite just because he was touched where he doesn’t like it.

Eight Mistakes My puppy Parents Have Made

Ah, the pitter patter sound of new puppy paws. Couple that with the oh-so-sweet scent a new puppy emits, and top it off with the gentle sounds of puppy snores. These are the moments dog moms and dads love about having a new pooch to call their own.

Doing right by our dogs is of utmost importance, but there are several common mistakes new pet parents make when a puppy enters their life. Here are eight common mistakes and tips for correcting those behaviors:

## ****Car Rides to the Veterinarian****

If the only time a puppy knows the car is when it takes him to the veterinarian for scary things like shots or strangers prying and poking, this unknowingly sets up travel fears. Thwart this behavior by nipping it in the bud early on. Take your pooch in the car for visits other than the vet. Go to a park, a pet supply store, a friend’s house, or a doggy play date. Praise your pup for being a good boy and do the same thing when you arrive home.

## ****Ignoring The Paws****

Many dogs develop an aversion to having their nails clipped and/or having someone (i.e. a groomer) touch or handle their paws. By touching your puppy’s paws early on, acclimating him to a brush, and using positive reinforcement in association with these behaviors, you teach the pooch a valuable lesson: Paw touching and handling is awesome.

## ****Being a Loner****

When I got my very first puppy as an adult, I didn’t spend a lot of time around other pets. She entered my life in December, so the weather was chilly and walks were infrequent. When spring time came, my pooch was less than social, so we had to work on that. Puppies who are introduced to a variety of dogs and situations early on tend to be better socialized and learn to play well with others as they mature.

## ****Table Scrapping****

Yes, puppies are adorable. Yes, big brown dog eyes can mesmerize you to babble like a toddler. Resist the urge to feed a dog table scraps or “people food” of any kind. This is one of the hardest habits to break. I know because my last dog was a beggar and she never “unlearned” this behavior. Puppies learn behaviors early on that can lead to bigger issues later. The bottom line is that people food is generally unhealthy for dogs and can cause a whole host of digestive issues.

## ****Wanting Them to Learn Fast****

Most puppies leave their litter-mates at eight weeks of age. The first several weeks with a new puppy means a huge adjustment. Do not get frustrated with your new pooch. Puppies don’t stay young for long and a dog matures quickly. Imagine you are the puppy and suddenly everything you know from your siblings to your mom are gone. I’d cry, too! Learn patience and if you aren’t a patient person, then a puppy is simply not the right choice for you.

## ****Incorrect Reactions****

House-training a dog and teaching him to do his potty business outside is perhaps the biggest challenge most new pet parents face. Never ever scold a dog for peeing inside the house long after the fact. After a long day of work, returning home to a soiled rug is no fun. Yelling or shouting at your puppy isn’t pleasant for him, either. Your pooch only understands that you came home and got loud. He’s long forgotten about that wet mess he made. Again, patience and correct expectations are essential.

## ****Spanking****

Sadly, I’ve witnessed this behavior in public and have confronted pet parents over the years. Putting your hand(s) on a dog as a form of punishment is not only wrong but also very harmful to your relationship with the dog. In her book, “It’s Me or the Dog,” positive reinforcement dog trainer, Victoria Stillwell, writes, “When you hit a dog, you teach him to fear you, break his trust, and you weaken his confidence. Insecure dogs are the ones who are more likely to lash out in an aggressive display.” Bullies hit people and pets. Take a class with your dog that teaches positive reinforcement. Hitting is for punching bags, not for pets.

## ****Long Periods Alone****

Dogs are pack animals, plain and simple. Crate training is an option for many but so is doggy daycare and pet sitting services. Puppies should not be allowed free reign of the house, as this allows wandering eyes and minds to get into trouble. Have a friend, relative, or trusted colleague check on your dog and allow potty breaks and interaction throughout the day. Never use a crate as a punishment. The puppy should view his crate as a safe haven away from the hectic world. It is truly his place to get away. Never leave a puppy alone for extended periods of time.

One of the greatest rewards in being a new puppy parent is helping him grow into a canine good citizen. Knowing what to expect and doing right by and for your new friend will lead to a lifetime of special memories and moments shared together.