

# Top Ten Puppy Essentials

Make life easy by spending a few dollars now and cruise through the puppy months with less stress.

1. **Crates:** i.e., fort, meditation space, den, safe haven, personal retreat space
2. **“Ex-pens,”** Exercise pen: i.e., mobile play space, romp room, fortress, toy coral, pad

Crates and Ex-pens are used as training and safety tools. I have found them to be the fastest, easiest way for most people to train their dog, creating appropriate behaviors and proper house etiquette from the start, so you do not have to correct wrong behaviors. The goal is to provide your dog with a place to play, with freedom, and still be safe. With an Ex-pen, you can offer your dog a contained space with appropriate chew toys teaching them the “right” things to chew. This way, the dog learns while earning larger spaces for the right behavior. An Ex-pen’s versatility can turn it into many different shapes and sizes by opening up and fencing off larger areas, providing a progressive teaching space. It is also a place where dogs can play safely when you cannot give them 100% of your attention—and because an Ex-pen can be moved anywhere, your dog can always be “included.”

Most dogs will love their crate if they are introduced to them in a fun way, or as puppies. A crate is the best place to start your puppy off with a sleep area. If you want a dog to sleep with you in your bed, my suggestion is to wait until they are older and all of their foundational training has been accomplished. You can still enjoy snuggle time with your pup before you sleep and again when you wake up.

3. **Collar with a quick-release buckle & set of identification tags & 6’**

**leash.** Wider collars are more comfortable than thin ones. Immediately update ID tags; or, when visiting friends, tape their number on it. This is your fastest link to be reunited.

4. **A great veterinarian that both you and your dog like and trust.**

Get referrals, then visit at least 2 of the vets unless a lot of your friends say they really appreciate one in particular. Over time, you will be trusting this person with important health decisions.

5. **Comfortable dog bed - for inside crate and spot outside of kitchen**

6. **Plush toys:** at least 5—a few small ones for your pocket, med. for at class, large for home. Removable squeakers will be handy. The best ones don’t have stuffing or removable eyes.

7. **Hard plastic chew toys:** At least 5 of the following: “Alone” toys (toys dog gets to chew when in a crate or when alone—Goodie balls, ships, Kongs™, toys you can stuff with treats, hard plastic chew bones (Nylabones™).

8. **Water bowl** — with water refreshed daily.

9. **Grooming supplies - Nail clipper & Styptic powder, toothbrush, hairbrush.**

The sooner your puppy enjoys grooming, the better. Pick a hairbrush that fits the hair of your dog.

10. **Top-of-the-line, healthy dog food and treats without by-products,**

**corn, wheat, or soy!** Your dog’s health will depend a lot on the quality of food that you feed him. These days, there are many excellent choices.

Need to learn more about these essentials or get a recommendation? Go to [Dancinwoofs.com](http://Dancinwoofs.com)