



## **The Six P's – Prepping for Your New Pup!**

You did it! You have made the wonderful decision to give a deserving pup a new home. You've scoured the site and their social media posts spotlighting SPR's adorable dogs in need. You've dutifully applied. And drum roll...you've just got word that you have been approved (congrats!). You can hardly contain your excitement. All that's left is for you to go and meet your new family member and take him home, right? Not so quick.

My husband regularly quotes one of his high school teacher's favorite mantras, referred to as "The Six Ps." The concept is simple: "Proper, prior planning prevents poor performance." Proper planning ahead of time helps to ensure success. If you think about it, this can be applied to almost all things in life- including effectively preparing to bring your newly adopted SPR pup home.

Your job of being the best pet owner possible doesn't begin once you are leaving SPR with your pup. The day you pick up your new pup should be as stress-free as possible, for all of you. Ideally, pick-up day should include picking up your puppy and taking the dog *directly* home. This is when you will begin to acclimate your dog to his new surroundings, your immediate family, and other pets. That is where "The Six Ps" apply to effectively preparing for your new arrival. If you are properly prepared, everything will already be in place once you walk through the door with your pup. This will allow you the freedom to focus on bonding and creating a schedule for feeding and housebreaking.

### **PUPPY PROOFING:**

Proper puppy-proofing your home could be a full article on its own, but here are some quick safety measures you can take to keep your home intact and your pup safe.

Take a look around your home. What is on your floor or within your dog's reach? Are your kids the "dump and go" type? Do they walk through the

door after school, drop their backpacks on the floor, and take off their shoes before they are off and running in another direction? Though your new dog should be supervised by an adult (at all times when not crated), these items are prime targets for the dog's indiscriminate chewing.

Try to get your family in the habit of putting items away that they might not have had to previously worry about before the new dog arrives. Sometimes, a simple reminder that this is to protect their property (toys, clothing, etc.) and your pup's safety will do. I usually recommend that active families with young kids leave a Rubbermaid container in their entryway. That way, if you cannot master getting everyone to put their stuff away properly, it is at least a safer "dumping ground" for shoes and other items that would normally land in the pup's chewing line of fire.

Do you normally leave the doors in various rooms of your home open? Bathroom trash barrels are another favorite attraction for rogue pups to get into. Bedrooms and other rooms with carpets can become favorite places for pups to seek out potty before they are successfully housebroken. This is especially true if, at any point in time, you had a dog that soiled the carpet. Your new pup will naturally be attracted to those areas, even if a stain is not visible. Start to get everyone in the habit of shutting doors behind them, BEFORE the new pup gets there.

## **FOOD:**

Before pickup day, you will need to purchase an additional bag of the food your dog is currently eating or a new food that you plan to transition your dog to. Slower transitions are usually best to avoid gastric upset. I suggest consulting with your favorite local pet supply (like The Natural Dog in NBPT), about proper transitioning. These smaller specialty stores are more likely to have staff with extensive knowledge of all the foods they offer and can help you find the best fit for your pup.

## **BOWLS:**

Even if you have existing dogs, your new dog will need at least his own food bowl. Try to seek out ceramic or stainless bowls. Avoid plastic bowls that can be chewed and can also be a breeding space for bacteria.

## **A CRATE (or two!)**

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You should have a crate set up before you bring your new addition home. Think strategically about your crate placement. A great location is by the door you will be using to take your new pup outside. Some people find it easier to have more than one crate in their homes. Having a crate in your bedroom where the dog will sleep, as well as near the exits can prove beneficial and make the adjustment easier for young pups who might need to go out more frequently throughout the night.

### **CHEW ITEMS:**

Kongs are one of my favorite “go-tos” to have on hand. Have them stuffed, frozen, and ready to go before the dog arrives. For new dogs who might have a little gastric upset from travel, try stuffing a kong with some yogurt and a bit of kibble and freeze. As they settle in, you can stuff them with a wider variety of fillings. Canned food, cream cheese, and peanut butter are a favorite among many dogs. If you can swing it, buy more than one. They are dishwasher safe, and while your dog is enjoying one, you can have the other one on backup in the freezer.

Marrow bones and bully sticks can all provide hours of chewing pleasure for teething dogs as well. Introduce these a bit more slowly, allowing your dog to chew on them for shorter periods. This can help your dog build up tolerance to the richer chews if they have more sensitive tummies. Go slow. Stay away from cooked bones and never give your dog rawhide. Again, this is where well-trained staff at your local pet specialty store (versus big box stores) can help you find the correct and safe products for your dog.

### **TOYS:**

You will likely want to go crazy buying your new dog a plethora of toys. That is part of the fun! Starting with a few toys of different styles, before filling a whole toy box is a great idea. With all the great toys on the market, you will quickly learn what your pup favors and what they shred in just a moment. There is no use in having 20 stuffed toys if your dog has shredded three in the first few hours of being home. After a few days, you’ll have a better idea of what toys will be best for your dog and you can stock up on those.

**Important Note:** No matter what your dog favors in the toy department, be sure you are not leaving any soft toys, or those with squeakers in them, in their crates. Stuffing, squeakers, plastic eyeballs, etc. can be extremely

dangerous if ingested. Instead, those frozen stuffed Kongs are great for crate time!

## **COLLAR, HARNESS, SEAT BELT and LEASH:**

To safely bring your pup home from our quarantine facility or foster home, we now provide your pup with a martingale collar. We request you bring a harness that can be fitted to your pup, a seat belt leash for the car, and a six-foot, non-retractable leash. *These can be purchased through SPR for pick up with your adopted dog.*

## **A TRUSTED VET**

Your new dog will have been checked by the SPR veterinarian before being released from quarantine into your home or a foster home. Whether you are adopting a puppy or an adult dog, all animals can be susceptible to illness or injury, and having a plan in place for vetting is essential. If you are adopting a puppy, they are very much like babies and are vulnerable to illness. Exposures to viruses happen along the way – from the ride home in your car to meeting a possible resident dog, or what they even encounter on your own property. You should already have a vet in mind (if you do not have an existing vet) and have an appointment scheduled within seven days of your pup's arrival. You will be given the medical records for your dog from SPR and these will help you and your vet devise a plan for the next series of vaccines (if needed), heartworm preventive, along with flea and tick management. Vets are extremely busy around the holidays due to requirements for boarding facilities and dog licenses, so plan ahead!

## **TRAINING**

To ensure that your dog or puppy becomes a well-mannered canine citizen, enroll your adopted pup in a Puppy Kindergarten class or Basic Manners class, followed by at least one, upper-level obedience class. Before your pup arrives, start asking friends, family, and the SPR crew for suggestions for dog trainers near you, and SPR's list of recommendations is always available on their [website](#). Early obedience training is the best way to create a solid relationship between you and your new pup. As trainers, we start our own pups in class at eight weeks old and if you are adopting a puppy, we recommend that you do so as soon as possible. If you are

adopting an adolescent or adult dog, after giving your pooch [two weeks to transition](#) into your home and bond with your family, they can begin training right away. It is easier to prevent most behaviors from becoming bad habits than it is to remedially change them.

You are about to embark on a wonderful journey with your new life-long companion. The Six Ps can assist you in starting your new life with your pup off on the best paw.

– **Becky Pelletier, Pawsitive Steps LLC**

*In addition to Becky's Six Ps – Sweet Paws Rescue also strongly suggests a couple of additional “peace of mind” efforts. Health insurance for your new pup is affordable and protects you from the financial burdens and decisions from the unexpected. For example, we commonly see obstructions from ingestion of foreign objects when a pup decides to chew something it shouldn't. Diagnostics, surgery, and hospitalization can run, on average, between \$3,000 - \$6,000 and insurance may cover a majority of that. A quick Google of “best dog insurance plans” will produce the latest results. For 2018 we found this to be a great comparison resource: <https://tinyurl.com/yaedpuq5>*

*Additionally, whether during your pup's transition into your home on arrival day or two years into ownership when they decide to follow their nose into the woods, a GPS unit can curb the panic and heartache if they unexpectedly go missing. These small units clip right to a collar and provide an immediate location for your pup through an app on your cell phone. There are many options available now and reasonably priced, but at SPR we really love the service offered by Whistle.*

– **The Team at SPR**