

Understanding Puppy Bodies and Exercise

The first consideration with puppy exercise is something called "growth plates." Dogs, like people, don't reach their maximum bone density until after puberty.

Long walks and exercise sessions

Puppies don't have the cardiovascular system for endurance. Long walks and exercise sessions increase risk of injury and yield few benefits for puppies, so endurance training is better left until the puppies have grown up.

Stairs

A large study has found that puppies who climbed flights of stairs daily before they were 3 months of age had an increased risk of developing hip dysplasia.

Repetition is an enemy

Probably the biggest cause of growth plate and soft tissue injury is repetitive exercise with a young puppy. So, until he's about 18 months old, long hikes and walks are out.

Jumping off furniture

Jumping off of beds and couches are major causes of spiral fractures in puppies - be constantly on guard until puppies are two years old.

Self-Directed Play

Self-directed play is an overriding rule for any puppy under 18 months old. The majority of his exercise should be free play and exploring, If he shows any fatigue you should let him rest.

Trail Blazing

Kibble trails are a great way to tire out a puppy both mentally and physically. Kibble trails allow puppies to cover a lot of ground in a very natural way.

Exercise that's not appropriate for a puppy's age and development can cause significant and irreversible damage.



WAGGING TAILS PROJECT

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