



Raising multiple puppies in the same home can be challenging, but with the right preparation, it can be a rewarding experience. In this guide we'll identify what you should consider before adopting multiples puppies and offer tips on how to provide the best possible experience for both you and your pets.

There is a common assumption that having two puppies will make it easier to care for them because they'll "have each other." However, the reality is that raising two puppies actually requires extra work from you, as you'll need to manage them both as individuals and as a pair, which can sometimes feel like double the work.

Before bringing two puppies home, we recommend talking to a trainer to get an idea of how much time will be required from you, what their needs will be both individually and as a pair, how their environment should be set up and socialization tips to ensure you're off to a good start.

Lifestyle Considerations

Although two puppies can offer some companionship to one another, but this is not a substitute for exercise, socialization, play, training, enrichment and other things that are crucial for their overall well-being. Each puppy will require individual attention and resources, *and* it will be necessary to train them to develop the ability to tolerate being separated from each other.

Raising two puppies who spend all their time together without providing them quality individual socialization and training can lead to concerns like:

- Poor socialization - leading to fear.
- Not learning how to play appropriately with other dogs.
- Separation anxiety from each other.
- Difficulty in getting the individual attention they need.

While it is possible to successfully raise two puppies at once, it has additional challenges and can be a bigger time investment than you think. If you want to have two dogs in your home, an alternative to two puppies at once can be raising one puppy, then introducing another puppy or dog once they're older.

Training Fundamentals

Socialization

Socialization is important for puppies. Socialization means introducing puppies to a variety of new people, animals and experiences when they are young, in a controlled and positive way. This helps puppies to understand these experiences are safe and helps them grow into confident adults. While it may appear that having two puppies will provide them with the opportunity to naturally socialize each other, this is not actually the case. A puppy of the same age can be a convenient playmate, but does

not adequately fulfill their socialization needs. You can find more information about puppy socialization from the guide available on our website.

We recommend socializing each puppy individually without the other present for the following reasons:

- You can focus on one puppy at a time.
- They can practice being apart from each other.
- Observing their individual responses when separated will allow you to gain a better understanding of how they feel and address their specific needs more effectively.
- Their individual social skills with other dogs will develop, helping them learn how to play with a variety of dogs on their own, rather than only with the other puppy.
- They'll likely be able to focus better, without the distraction of the other puppy.

Independence

Constantly having two puppies together can lead to distress when they are separated. Since your puppies won't always be together, it's important to teach them to be comfortable and confident when they are separated from each other. The following tips will help your puppies gain independence:

- Ensure each dog has their own resources. Sharing beds, crates, food bowls, toys and other resources may lead to conflict.
 - Sharing resources can cause tension you might not detect, such as subtle competition for food if they're eating from the same bowl.
- Give each puppy their own space and try not to place their resources close together. We recommend having them sleep in their own beds - in different rooms if possible - and eating far apart from each other. Having physical space between each other can teach the puppies to be relaxed and do normal things alone, and can lessen stress or aggression around their resources.
- Spend dedicated time with each puppy individually, such as on walks, playing and training. This gives them quality time with you to bond, and time apart.
- When they're together reward them for responding to you or taking breaks from each other. Encouraging each puppy to focus on things besides each other will make getting their attention easier when needed. This can be difficult to do if they're strongly focused on each other. Similarly, providing opportunities for taking breaks from each other or interacting with other things individually, promotes independence, exposes them to other things and can make getting their attention easier.

It can be daunting teaching two puppies proper socialization and how to have "alone time!" If you're having trouble or would like some guidance, contact a trainer to help you.

Growth & Development

As puppies grow into adolescents, they change both physically and socially. Continued individual training, exercise, play and enrichment is important to keep both puppies fulfilled and happy. It's important to note as they grow up, their affinity and behaviour towards other dogs, including each other, can change. You may find that they even have conflict with each other unlike before, or play very roughly with each other, which can lead to further conflict or fights. You might think they'll "just grow out of it," but their conflicts may worsen if you don't intervene.

We recommend taking pre-emptive steps to manage their interactions and help their relationship through their adolescent phase by:

- Teaching them a recall cue, and a cue like "go to bed," where they go to and settle in a specific place. This lets you guide them to a spot and away from each other if you notice signs of a conflict starting.
- Making sure they have their own things like toys, crate, bed and food bowls.
- If they are fighting, showing aggression towards each other or playing so intensely that it's leading to or almost leading towards fights, we recommend keeping them separated and contacting a trainer.

We recommend contacting a trainer if you notice their relationship changing. A trainer can help determine why these changes may be happening and give you preventative and training tips.

Always Keep in Mind

- 🐾 While two puppies can play with each other, having another puppy is not a replacement for meeting their exercise, socialization, training or other essential needs.
- 🐾 If you're considering raising two puppies at once, make sure you have the time, supplies and patience to give each puppy individual attention and to individually train them.
- 🐾 Each puppy should receive their own activities like exercise, play, enrichment and training sessions, and individual resources such as their own bed, crate, toys and food bowls.
- 🐾 Contacting a trainer for tips and guidance before raising two puppies at once can help you with strategies to socialize them properly, can easily spend time apart and prevent or address any aggression between them that may develop.
- 🐾 Two puppies at once is a lot of work! Consider adopting one, then adding another puppy after your first puppy has matured.

Did You Know?

You can also ask us behaviour questions by emailing:

askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com

It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 40% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. Please [Donate](#).