

Many of us like to use a one piece, fabric, "slip-type" lead (see the Mes Amis kennel leads advertised on Everything Golden for one example) These leads are convenient because they are one piece. The fabric also prevents clumping and/or breakage of the coat around the neck area. If you prefer a separate collar and leash, then I recommend a collar with a quick release tab. Again, you can see a sample at Mes Amis or consult your local pet store for appropriate selections for your chosen breed.

TOYS

Your pup needs appropriate toys to provide stimulation and a release of energy. Be sure the toys you choose are age appropriate and safe for your puppy. Avoid stuffed animals with eyes and noses made of hard glass beads, etc. If in doubt, consult a local pet store.

Toys can be useful in teaching some pups to occupy themselves, but remember too that playing *with* your pup helps promote a bond between you and your puppy. Playing with the pup also helps you become the "Alpha dog" and set limits... You need to be in control of all games and decide when the game is to end. (More on this topic in a follow up article.)

Puppies do not need a roomful of toys at one time. They will choose to play with only one or two favorites and tend to ignore and/or become bored if too many toys are provided. Rather, place just 2-3 toys on the floor at one time. Then, after a day or two, you can put some toys up for a later time and present "new" stimulating toys for the pup.

CHEW TOYS

As precious as your new pup can be, those sharp little teeth can hurt! Puppies use their mouths to explore their new environment. Even though most pups will not start to lose their puppy teeth until approximately four months of age, often the gums can be swollen and sore. Chew toys can satisfy the chewing instinct and relieve gum discomfort. They can also provide a reprieve and some quiet time for you.

Again, your local pet store can help you select appropriate chew toys. Remember to choose only those made in the United States. (Some foreign countries use arsenic in rawhides, etc) You will also need to use some common sense in providing chew toys. Some pups handle rawhides, pig ears, etc. very well; others may exhibit some stomach symptoms (particularly diarrhea) if given too many chew toys.

To stimulate interest in chew toys, I like to vary the type and "flavor" of chew objects. Again, I provide these at specific times rather than leaving them on the floor for constant access. I have found that my pups are more eager to spend time with appropriate chew toys when they are presented only 2-3 times a day.

CRATE TRAINING

I firmly believe a crate can provide safety and well-being for a puppy. A crate also helps instill good habits in your dog's behavior. Crates can be helpful in housetraining (more on this in an upcoming article) as a dog will not usually soil an area in which he must sleep and live. A crate provides safety from the garbage, household cleaners and electrical cords. Chewing of the sofa, carpets, tables, etc can be prevented by using a crate when you are away from home. A crate is a safe means of transporting your pup in your car or van. It is a safe retreat for your pup, a place where he can go when tired or to retreat from visitors or young children in the home. And, since most veterinarians and boarding facilities make extensive use of crates, it's a kindness to your pup and the people caring for him to prepare him for these times.

A crate should be large enough for the adult dog to turn around and lie down. If not familiar with crates, consult your breeder for type and brand selections appropriate for your chosen breed. Until the pup reaches adult size, a portion of the crate can be blocked off to prevent the pup from soiling one area and moving to another to sleep.

A dog CAN learn to accept a crate. Getting your pup accustomed to the crate should be a slow and pleasant process. NEVER use the crate as punishment. (This can cause resentment) NEVER *leave the dog unattended in the crate with any type of collar on his neck!* (If the collar catches on anything in the crate while you are absent, the consequences can be fatal!) I also do NOT leave rawhides or chews in the crate as the pup could possibly