

A Scavenger Hunt for Puppies (and adult dogs too)

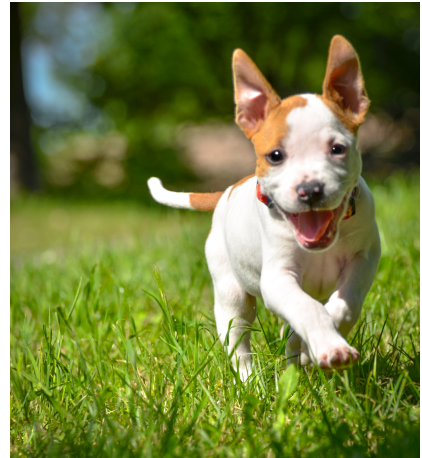
It's always fun when your puppy comes home! Why not add to the fun with a scavenger hunt? Socialization is critical to young puppies, but what should you do? Here's a fun scavenger hunt that will give you ideas on how to spend your time together.

Try to introduce your pup to as many of the things on this list before he is 12 weeks of age. If you really want to excel, do everything on the list multiple times! If you have an older dog, you can still play the scavenger hunt. Just check off how many things your dog has already experienced and then tackle the new items!

But here's the catch. In order for socialization to be effective and helpful to your dog, it has to be fun! So follow these ground rules:

1. Go slowly! Everything has to be done at your dog's pace. If your dog is nervous, backing away, or hiding, then take things very slowly. Don't force your dog to do anything he finds extremely scary.
2. Use Distance! Don't approach new things too quickly. If your dog is scared of something from 5 feet away, it's likely he will be terrified when he's only 1 foot away. Allow your dog to get comfortable from a safe distance first and then move closer as the dog relaxes.
3. Use treats! Mere exposure to things is not socialization. Good socialization involves making positive associations with something new. I do this by giving the dog treats (high value tasty treats like cheese, liver, or chicken) for approaching something novel. I also play fun games with the dog when he is near something new. Treats and toys tell me when the dog might be getting overwhelmed. If your dog won't eat treats or play when he's doing something new, there is a good chance, he's getting nervous. This is your clue to slow down, back up, and start over.
4. Have fun! This is all about having fun for both you and your dog. If you aren't having fun or your dog is worried, then take a break and go tackle another item on the scavenger hunt.

Good luck!



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As you accomplish each item, check it off the scavenger hunt list by annotating whether your dog loved it ☺ or did not enjoy it ☹. For those things the dog did not enjoy, consider ways to help your dog get more comfortable with those items in the future. You may need to find a trainer who can help you!

People – let your dog meet as many different people as possible. Initially, reward your dog for being near the person. If that goes well, then invite the person to give your dog a treat. If your dog is still comfortable, you can ask the person to say hello and pet the dog on the chest or back.



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| • An infant under 6 months | ☺ ☹ | • Someone who is a different ethnicity from you | ☺ ☹ |
| • A child 1-2 years of age | ☺ ☹ | • Police officer in uniform | ☺ ☹ |
| • A group of 1-4 children age 2-5 | ☺ ☹ | • Veterinarian wearing lab coat | ☺ ☹ |
| • Teenage boys | ☺ ☹ | • Military personnel in uniform | ☺ ☹ |
| • Teenage girls | ☺ ☹ | • Delivery person in uniform | ☺ ☹ |
| • Man with a mustache or beard | ☺ ☹ | • Postal worker in uniform | ☺ ☹ |
| • Man/woman with glasses | ☺ ☹ | • Person carrying large packages | ☺ ☹ |
| • Man/woman with a hat | ☺ ☹ | • Someone with crutches or cane | ☺ ☹ |
| • Man with mustache or beard, hat and glasses | ☺ ☹ | • Someone in a wheelchair | ☺ ☹ |
| • Santa Claus | ☺ ☹ | • Someone walking with an unusual, non-steady gait | ☺ ☹ |
| • Fireman in uniform | ☺ ☹ | | |

Places – Take your dog to as many new locations as possible. Start when things are calm, but as your dog gets more comfortable try going when the activity level is higher.

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|------------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| • Shopping center (near the doors) | ☺ ☹ | • Inside a pet friendly store | ☺ ☹ |
| • Parking lot (around parked cars) | ☺ ☹ | • Inside a pet friendly hotel | ☺ ☹ |
| • An elevator | ☺ ☹ | • Veterinarian's office (when there is no check up required) | ☺ ☹ |
| • Neighborhood street | ☺ ☹ | • Open or grill type stairs | ☺ ☹ |
| • Busy street/intersection | ☺ ☹ | • Pool, lake or beach | ☺ ☹ |
| • Crosswalk at a busy intersection | ☺ ☹ | • Crate | ☺ ☹ |
| • Playground with children | ☺ ☹ | • Sports field with kids playing | ☺ ☹ |
| • Bus stop with people | ☺ ☹ | | |
| • Drains on a sidewalk | ☺ ☹ | | |

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Things – Introduce your dog to as many novel objects as possible. If the object moves or makes noise add the noise and/or movement only as your dog gets more relaxed.

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|------------------------------------|-----|---|-----|
| • Shopping cart | 😊 😊 | • Pan dropping on the ground | 😊 😊 |
| • Umbrella | 😊 😊 | • Bicycle | 😊 😊 |
| • Mirror | 😊 😊 | • Scooter | 😊 😊 |
| • Vacuum cleaner | 😊 😊 | • Baby stroller | 😊 😊 |
| • Hair dryer | 😊 😊 | • Motorcycle | 😊 😊 |
| • Bouncing ball | 😊 😊 | • Other animals
(cat, ferret, birds, dogs etc) | 😊 😊 |
| • Large recycle bins on the street | 😊 😊 | • Lawn mower | 😊 😊 |
| • Food mixer | 😊 😊 | • Garage door opening | 😊 😊 |
| • Washing machine | 😊 😊 | | |
| • Dish washer | 😊 😊 | | |