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Puppy Training Schedule

Week by Week Guide

The Complete Australian Guide for Your Puppy's First Year

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Bringing a new puppy home is one of the most exciting moments in any Australian household. But between figuring out vaccination schedules, council registration, and when it's actually safe to visit the dog park, it's easy to feel overwhelmed.

This week-by-week puppy training schedule is designed specifically for Australian puppy owners. It covers everything from your pup's first night at home (around 8 weeks old) right through to their first birthday, with Australian vaccination timelines, local legal requirements, breed-specific advice for popular Aussie breeds, and seasonal hazards you need to know about.

★ What makes this guide different?

Every recommendation is tailored to Australia — our C3/C5 vaccination protocol, our microchipping and council registration laws, our unique wildlife hazards (paralysis ticks, snakes, cane toads), and training methods recommended by Australian veterinary professionals. No generic US or UK advice here.

📄 Free Download

Download our free printable Puppy Training Checklist (PDF) at the bottom of this article. Stick it on your fridge and tick off each milestone as your puppy masters it!

⚙️ Before You Begin: Essential Info for Aussie Puppy Owners

✂️ Australian Puppy Vaccination Schedule (C3/C5)

In Australia, puppy vaccinations follow a different protocol from the US or UK. The core vaccine is the C3, which protects against canine parvovirus, canine distemper, and canine hepatitis (adenovirus). Most vets also recommend the C5, which adds protection against canine cough (*Bordetella bronchiseptica* and parainfluenza virus).

Age	Vaccination
6–8 weeks	1st C3 vaccination (usually done by breeder before collection)
10–12 weeks	2nd vaccination — C5 (C3 + kennel cough protection)

14–16 weeks	3rd vaccination — C3 booster (final puppy shot)
6 months (optional)	Additional C3 booster (some vets recommend for extra protection)
12 months	First annual booster (C5) + annual health check

Critical Rule: Public Spaces

Your puppy should NOT visit public parks, beaches, footpaths frequented by unknown dogs, or off-leash areas until 10–14 days after their final vaccination (around 16–18 weeks old). Before then, socialise in controlled settings like puppy school, friends' vaccinated dogs' backyards, and carrying your puppy in public places.

Microchipping & Council Registration

Australian law requires all puppies to be microchipped. The exact age varies by state, but in most states, puppies must be microchipped before 12 weeks of age or before sale/transfer. Council registration is a separate requirement.

State/Territory	Key Requirement
VIC	Microchipped before sale; council registration by 3 months
NSW	Microchipped by 12 weeks; lifetime registration by 6 months
QLD	Microchipped by 12 weeks; council registration by 12 weeks
SA	Microchipped before sale; registered on Dogs and Cats Online
WA	Microchipped by 2 months; council registration by 3 months
TAS / ACT / NT	Check your local council — requirements vary by region

Choosing a Puppy School

Puppy school (also called puppy preschool) is one of the best investments you can make. In Australia, most vet clinics and professional trainers offer 4–6 week puppy school courses for pups aged 8–16 weeks.

What to look for in puppy school

Small class sizes (under 8 puppies), qualified instructors (look for Delta Institute, NDTF, or APDT accreditation), positive reinforcement only (no choke chains, prong collars, or dominance-based methods), and a clean, enclosed training environment.

Your Puppy's Week-by-Week Training Schedule

Below is your complete training timeline from 8 weeks to 12 months. Every puppy develops at their own pace. If your pup hasn't mastered something by the suggested week — keep practising with patience and positivity.

Weeks 1–2 (Age: 8–10 Weeks) — Settling In

Your puppy has just left their mum and littermates. This is a huge transition. Your number one priority is making your puppy feel safe, establishing a routine, and beginning toilet training.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
Toilet Training	Take your puppy outside to the same spot every 30–60 minutes while awake, and immediately after eating, drinking, playing, or waking from a nap. Praise and treat when they go outside.	An 8-week-old puppy can hold their bladder for roughly 1 hour. Set a timer on your phone.
Crate Training	Introduce the crate as a positive space. Feed meals inside, scatter treats, and leave the door open initially. Build up to closing the door for 5–10 minutes.	Place the crate in your bedroom at night. This reduces overnight crying dramatically.
Name Recognition	Say your puppy's name in a happy tone. When they look at you, immediately reward with a treat. Repeat 10–15 times per day.	Never use their name negatively (e.g. "Max, NO!"). You want their name to always predict good things.
Handling	Gently touch paws, ears, mouth, and tail while giving treats. This prepares them for vet visits and grooming.	Keep sessions to 1–2 minutes. Go slower with higher-value treats if puppy pulls away.
Socialisation	Introduce household sounds (vacuum, washing machine). Let puppy explore different surfaces (tiles, carpet, grass). Have 2–3 calm visitors meet them.	Keep all experiences positive. If your puppy seems scared, create distance and reward calm behaviour.

AU Aussie Tip: First Vet Visit

Book your puppy's first vet check within 48–72 hours of bringing them home. Your vet will confirm their microchip is working, check overall health, discuss the vaccination schedule, and recommend a worming and flea/tick prevention plan for your region.

Weeks 3–4 (Age: 10–12 Weeks) — Building Foundations

By now your puppy should be settling into a routine. Start basic obedience commands and enrol in puppy school. The second vaccination (C5) is due.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
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Sit	Hold a treat above your puppy's nose and slowly move it back over their head. As their bottom hits the ground, say "Sit", mark with "Yes!" and treat. Practise 5–10 reps, 3 times daily.	Keep sessions under 5 minutes. Always end on a success.
Recall	In a hallway, crouch down and call your puppy's name + "Come!" in an excited voice. Reward heavily when they arrive. Never call your puppy for something unpleasant.	Use high-value treats (cooked chicken, cheese). Make coming to you the best thing that happens all day.
Bite Inhibition	When your puppy bites too hard, yelp or say "Ouch!" and stop playing for 10–15 seconds. Resume play. Redirect biting onto chew toys.	Mouthing is completely normal at this age. The goal is to teach gentle mouth pressure.
Toilet Training	Continue frequent outdoor breaks. Your puppy may now manage 1–2 hours. Add a verbal cue like "Go toilet" as they start to go.	Keep a log of accident times to spot patterns.
Puppy School	Enrol in a puppy preschool class. Classes typically run weekly for 4–6 weeks covering socialisation, basic commands, and handling.	Start as early as 8–10 weeks. All puppies should have at least their first vaccination.

Vaccination Reminder: 2nd Shot Due

Your puppy's second vaccination (C5, including canine cough protection) is typically due between 10–12 weeks. Many puppy schools and doggy daycares require at least two vaccinations before attendance.

Weeks 5–8 (Age: 12–16 Weeks) — Critical Socialisation Window

This is the single most important developmental period in your puppy's life. The socialisation window closes around 14–16 weeks, so safe, positive exposure to new experiences is critical. Your final puppy vaccination is due now.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
Socialisation Blitz	Expose your puppy to 3–5 new experiences per week: different people, sounds, surfaces, objects, and environments. Carry puppy to cafes, hardware stores, school pick-ups.	Use "Observe and Treat": let puppy watch from a safe distance while you feed treats. Never force interactions.
Stay	Once "Sit" is reliable, introduce a short "Stay". Ask for sit, hold palm out, pause 1–2 seconds, mark and treat. Build to 5–10 seconds.	Only increase one difficulty factor at a time (duration, distance, or distractions).
Leave It	Hold a treat in your closed fist. When puppy stops pawing, mark	This command could save your puppy's life in Australia (cane toads, snakes, toxic plants).

	and reward from your other hand. Add the cue once they understand.	
Lead Walking	Let puppy drag a lightweight lead around the house (supervised). Then take a few steps in the backyard. Reward walking near your side.	Don't worry about perfect heel yet. Goal: lead attached = good things happen.
Car Travel	Short trips (5–10 min) to positive destinations. Secure in crash-tested crate or dog seatbelt harness.	Feed a small meal 30 min before (not right before). Talk to your vet if puppy gets carsick.

Vaccination: Final Puppy Shot — Green Light Coming!

The third and final puppy vaccination (C3 booster) is due between 14–16 weeks. After this, wait 10–14 days for full immunity. Then your puppy can explore public parks, beaches, and off-leash areas. This is the milestone you've been waiting for!

Month 4–5 (Age: 16–20 Weeks) — Exploring the World

If your puppy has had their final vaccination and the 10–14 day waiting period has passed, they can now explore the wider world. Consistency in training becomes even more important.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
Public Walks	Start with 15–20 minute walks in quiet areas. Use the 5-minute rule: 5 minutes per month of age, up to twice daily.	Avoid forced exercise on hard surfaces for large breeds — joints still developing.
Dog Park Intro	Visit during quiet times first. Keep on-lead near the fence to observe. Only enter off-leash area if puppy seems confident.	Leave immediately if puppy is overwhelmed or bullied. One bad experience can cause lasting fear.
Recall Outdoors	Practise on a long line (5–10m) in the backyard. Use high-value treats. Never chase your puppy — run the other way instead.	A reliable recall is the #1 most important command for Australian off-leash parks and beaches.
Down	From sit, lure nose down to ground with a treat, then slowly draw forward. Mark and reward when they lie down.	If bum pops up, you're luring too far forward too fast. Go slower.
Grooming Routine	Begin regular brushing, nail handling, ear checks, and tooth brushing. Pair everything with high-value treats.	Start with 30-second sessions. Professional groomers recommend starting by 16 weeks.

Month 5–6 (Age: 20–24 Weeks) — Adolescence Arrives

Welcome to the “teenager” phase. Around 5–6 months, many puppies go through a fear period and may suddenly seem scared of previously familiar things. You’ll notice increased independence and selective hearing. This is all completely normal.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
Proofing Commands	Practise sit, stay, come, and down in increasingly distracting environments: front yard, quiet park, outside a cafe. Use a long line for recall.	If your puppy “forgets” a command, go back to an easier environment. This isn’t regression — it’s adolescence.
Wait / Impulse Control	Teach waiting before meals, doorways, and car exits. Ask for sit, say “Wait”, pause, release with “OK!”	Essential for a well-mannered adult dog.
Desexing Discussion	Talk to your vet about appropriate timing. Current guidance varies by breed and size. Many vets recommend waiting until physical maturity for large breeds.	Desexing often qualifies you for a reduced council registration fee.
Teething	Baby teeth fall out between 4–6 months. Provide appropriate chews: frozen Kongs, rubber toys, vet-approved raw bones.	Avoid hard antlers/hooves that can crack adult teeth.
Fear Period	If puppy is suddenly afraid, calmly create distance and reward brave behaviour. Don’t force exposure.	Typically lasts 1–3 weeks. Patience and gentle positive exposure is key.

Desexing in Australia

Recommendations vary by breed and state. Victoria recommends before 6 months unless your vet advises otherwise. Large and giant breeds may benefit from waiting until 12–18 months for joint development. Always discuss timing with your vet. Desexing typically reduces your council registration fee significantly.

Month 6–9 — The Teenage Phase

Adolescence is in full swing. Your puppy may seem to have forgotten everything, pull on the lead, and become obsessed with other dogs. Don’t despair — consistency and patience are your best tools.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
Lead Walking	If puppy pulls, stop immediately. Wait for slack, mark and reward, continue. Change direction frequently.	Consider a front-clip harness. Never use choke or prong collars.
Reliable Recall	Continue on a long line in various environments. Train an emergency recall word (unique word, always followed by amazing reward).	Practise emergency recall 2–3 times per week.

Place / Settle	Teach going to a mat/bed and settling. Start at home, take to cafes, friends' houses. Reward calm behaviour.	Aussie cafe culture is dog-friendly — a solid “settle” makes outings enjoyable.
Continuing Classes	Graduate to intermediate obedience. Look for distraction training, longer stays, and off-lead work.	Structured training during adolescence dramatically reduces behaviour problems.
Mental Stimulation	Increase puzzle toys, snuffle mats, frozen Kong's, scatter feeding, nose work.	A 15-minute puzzle is worth a 30-minute walk for tiring out a teenage puppy.

Month 9–12 — Approaching Adulthood

Your puppy is starting to look and behave more like an adult dog. Polish their training, solidify good habits, and address any remaining behaviour challenges.

Focus Area	What to Do	Tips & Notes
Off-Lead Reliability	Practise in enclosed off-lead areas. Start when quiet, gradually add distractions. Always carry high-value treats.	Off-lead fines in on-lead areas can be \$300+ in most Australian states. Know your local council rules.
Advanced Commands	Sustained stays (1–2 min), distance commands, chained behaviours (sit → down → stand). Move to variable reinforcement.	Random rewards actually strengthen behaviours long-term.
Behaviour Check	Assess any persistent issues: barking, guarding, reactivity, separation anxiety. Consult a qualified behaviourist if needed.	Look for ABTC, Delta, or NDTF accreditation.
Exercise Adjustment	Gradually increase to 30–90 min daily (breed-dependent). Large breeds: avoid repetitive high-impact exercise until 12–18 months.	Swimming is excellent low-impact exercise. Many Aussie beaches have dog-friendly sections.
Annual Booster	First annual C5 booster due at 12 months. Great time for a full health check, dental assessment, and ongoing parasite prevention review.	Set a yearly reminder for your dog's annual vet visit.

Sample Daily Schedules by Age

Adapt these to your lifestyle — consistency matters more than exact clock times.

Daily Schedule: 8–12 Week Old Puppy

Time	Activity
6:30 AM	Wake up → Immediately outside for toilet break
6:45 AM	Breakfast (hand-feed some for training)

7:00 AM	Short play/training session (5 mins) → Toilet break
7:15 AM	Nap in crate (1.5–2 hours)
9:15 AM	Wake → Toilet → Play/socialisation → Toilet → Nap
11:45 AM	Wake → Toilet → Lunch → Short training → Toilet → Nap
2:30 PM	Wake → Toilet → Play/explore backyard → Toilet → Nap
5:00 PM	Wake → Toilet → Dinner → Family time → Toilet
6:00 PM	Settle time (chew toy/Kong in crate)
8:00 PM	Final toilet break → Bedtime in crate
~2:00 AM	Middle-of-night toilet break (phase out by 10–12 weeks)

Daily Schedule: 4–6 Month Old Puppy


Time	Activity
6:30 AM	Wake up → Toilet break → Breakfast
7:00 AM	Morning walk (15–25 min) or backyard training
7:30 AM	Free play or settle while you work
12:00 PM	Lunch (if still on 3 meals) → Toilet → Short play
3:30 PM	Toilet → Training session (10 min)
4:00 PM	Afternoon walk or park play
5:30 PM	Dinner → Family time → Toilet
7:30 PM	Settle with a chew toy
9:00 PM	Final toilet break → Bedtime

Working From Home vs. Away

If you work away from home, consider a dog walker or puppy daycare (once fully vaccinated). Puppies under 6 months shouldn't be alone for more than 3–4 hours. If you work from home, practise leaving your puppy alone for short periods to build independence and prevent separation anxiety.

AU Training Tips for Popular Australian Breeds (2025)

The core schedule applies to all breeds, but here are specific considerations for Australia's most popular puppy breeds:

 Breed	Training Focus	Top Tip
Cavoodle	Highly food-motivated and eager to please. Prone to separation anxiety — prioritise alone-time training from day one.	Avoid overfeeding treats. Cavoodles gain weight easily. Use regular kibble for training.

Labrador	Extremely mouthy as puppies. Invest in bite inhibition and chew outlets. Labs need significant exercise from 6 months.	Prone to obesity. Use measured food portions for training, not extras.
French Bulldog	Overheating risk during training, especially in Aussie summers. Keep sessions short, in cool shaded areas.	Can be stubborn. Keep sessions fun with high-value rewards.
Border Collie / Kelpie	Need substantial mental stimulation. Introduce puzzles, trick training, nose work early. Without it, they'll create destructive "jobs".	May nip at heels (herding instinct). Redirect into structured fetch and tug games.
Golden Retriever	Gentle, eager learners. Sensitive — avoid harsh corrections. Focus on retrieve games to channel natural instincts.	Grow fast. Monitor joint health; avoid excessive jumping until 12+ months.
Staffy	Strong, enthusiastic, people-focused. Socialisation with other dogs is especially important.	Invest in robust chew toys — Staffies have powerful jaws even as puppies.
Groodle / Labradoodle	Intelligent and energetic. Consistent training from day one prevents pushy behaviour.	Coat maintenance starts early. Get them used to brushing from 8 weeks.

⚠️ Australian-Specific Hazards to Train For

Australia has unique environmental dangers. Training a reliable “Leave it” and “Come” could genuinely save your puppy’s life.

🕸️ Paralysis Ticks

Found along the eastern seaboard from North Queensland to Victoria, paralysis ticks (*Ixodes holocyclus*) can be fatal within 24–48 hours. Use year-round tick prevention (NexGard, Bravecto, Simparica). Check your puppy daily after walks in bushland. Symptoms: wobbly back legs, changed bark, vomiting, difficulty breathing.

🐍 Snakes

Australia is home to extremely venomous snakes including browns, tigers, and red-bellied blacks. Train a rock-solid “Leave it” and recall. Consider snake avoidance training. If bitten: keep dog still, carry to car, emergency vet immediately. Do NOT apply a pressure bandage to dogs.

🐸 Cane Toads

In QLD, NT, and northern WA/NSW, cane toads are a serious risk. Dogs that mouth toads can be poisoned. Symptoms: excessive drooling, red gums, pawing at mouth, seizures. Rinse mouth with water (side to side, NOT down throat) and get to a vet immediately.

🔥 Heat and Hot Pavement

Never walk your puppy during 10am–4pm in summer. Test pavement with the back of your hand — if you can’t hold it for 5 seconds, it’s too hot. Walk early morning or

after sunset. Always carry water. Watch for heatstroke signs: excessive panting, drooling, lethargy, bright red gums.

? Frequently Asked Questions

When can I take my puppy for a walk in public?

You can take your puppy for walks 10–14 days after their final vaccination (typically 14–16 week C3 booster). Before that, carry them in public to expose them to sights and sounds.

How long should training sessions be?

Under 4 months: 3–5 minutes, multiple times daily. 4–6 months: 5–10 minutes. 6–12 months: 10–15 minutes. Always end on a positive note.

Is it too late to start if my puppy is 4–6 months?

Absolutely not. While the critical socialisation window closes around 14–16 weeks, dogs learn at any age. Start from the beginning of this guide and work at your puppy's pace.

Should I use treats forever?

No. Once a behaviour is well-established (8/10 correct responses), begin replacing treats with verbal praise, pats, or play. Reward with food only occasionally. This variable reinforcement actually makes behaviours stronger.

My puppy bites me constantly. Is this normal?

Yes. Nipping peaks between 8–16 weeks during teething. Teach bite inhibition by withdrawing attention when they bite hard, and redirect to chew toys. Consult a trainer if it persists beyond 5–6 months.

Trainer vs. veterinary behaviourist?

For basic training (obedience, manners): a qualified trainer (Delta, APDT, NDTF accredited). For serious behaviour problems (aggression, severe anxiety, phobias): a veterinary behaviourist (specialist vet). Your regular vet can refer you.

Your Puppy's First Year: Summary

Raising a puppy in Australia comes with its own unique joys and challenges. By following this week-by-week schedule, staying on top of vaccinations and registration, and investing in positive reinforcement training, you're setting your puppy up for a lifetime of good behaviour.

Remember the Three Pillars

CONSISTENCY (same rules, every day, from every family member) + PATIENCE (your puppy is a baby learning a foreign language) + POSITIVITY (reward what you want to see more of, and redirect what you don't).

 [**Download Your Free Printable Checklist**](#)

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