

# PUPPY BODY HANDLING CHECKLIST

## Completing the Checklist Tables

The checklist table provided can be used to track the pup's desensitization to handling. You can use one of the scoring systems on page 2 to grade the puppy's response or just check off each exposure. Ensure the puppy's handling experiences are positive, not neutral or bad. This is accomplished by watching the puppy's body language (**learn more: Body Language Handout**) and giving highly valued treats. **Learn more from our "Quick Tips for Success: Puppy Body Handling" handout.**

-  **Note:** Careful biosecurity precautions must be undertaken when introducing the puppies to new people and objects. This includes sanitization of surfaces and objects, fresh clothing, and foot baths.
-  **Note:** If the puppy's comfort during handling sessions is not improving or is becoming more fearful, consult your veterinarian.
-  **Note:** If the dog's comfort during handling sessions is not improving or is becoming more fearful, stop and consult your veterinarian.

## Quick Tips For Using the Checklist:

- Tip:** The primary caretaker should move through the checklist first, then repeat with other caretakers, and then finally repeat with people the puppy does not know.
- Tip:** During early "real life" experiences that may be painful or scary (e.g. bathing, vaccinating, nail trims) feed throughout the entire event to prevent setbacks. Sticky food that the pup can lick (e.g. chicken baby food, spray cheese, Kong Paste) lasts longer and provides a hands free option.
- Tip:** Puppies may show changes in their previous comfort level once the fear period begins, and protocols should be adjusted when needed.
- Tip:** Include a copy of the checklist in the records that accompany dogs during rehoming. New owners can see what's already been accomplished and where more work may be needed.

# PUPPY BODY HANDLING CHECKLIST

## SCORING SYSTEM 1

PROGRESS	SCORE	RESPONSE TO PERSON, OBJECT, ENVIRONMENT OR HANDLING
<b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Over-arousal:</b> Growl, nip, bark, struggle, try to get at person/object or lunge
	<b>2</b>	<b>Avoid:</b> Struggle, hide, won't approach, try to run away or hesitant to approach
	<b>3</b>	<b>Freeze:</b> Holds still (but not eating), non-exploratory, moving slowly or appears sluggish when the animal should not be tired
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Calm:</b> Relaxed, explores the object or environment, playful and focused on treats
	<b>5</b>	<b>Calm:</b> Relaxed, explores the object or environment and playful even without food

**Note:** Additionally, a "+" can be used to denote better progress and a "-" to denote less progress: e.g. 2+, 2, and 2- indicate three different levels of response.

Scoring System 1 adapted from S. Yin (2011). Perfect Puppy in 7 Days: How to Start Your Puppy Off Right.

## SCORING SYSTEM 2

### FIDO BEHAVIOR SCORING SYSTEM

SCORE	BODY LANGUAGE
<b>GREEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOT FEARFUL</li> <li>• FEELS SAFE</li> </ul>	
<b>RED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FEARFUL</li> <li>• DOES NOT FEEL SAFE</li> </ul>	
<b>YELLOW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMBIVALENT</li> <li>• CANNOT SCORE GREEN OR RED</li> </ul>	

Bauer AE, Jordan M, Colon M, Shreyer T, Croney CC. Evaluating FIDO: Developing and Pilot Testing the Field Instantaneous Dog Observation Tool. Pet Behaviour Science. 2017; 4:1-15.

CHECKLIST

# PUPPY BODY HANDLING CHECKLIST

DOG ID: \_\_\_\_\_ START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



Specific Activity	Sun	Location	Mon	Location	Tue	Location	Wed	Location	Thu	Location	Fri	Location	Sat	Location
<b>Foundation</b>														
Approach														
Treat from hand														
Sit side-by-side														
Play														
Stroke chest, back, head, sides														
Stroke ears, cheeks, nose, forehead														
Hold the collar														
Hold part of the puppy's body														
Hold in your lap														
Hug														
Pick-up														
Cradle in your arms on their back														
Hold upside down														
Hold on their back and rub belly														
One-on-one interactions away from littermates														
<b>Gear</b>														
Put on a collar/leash/harness														
Put on coat/clothes														

**Notes:**

CHECKLIST

# PUPPY BODY HANDLING CHECKLIST

DOG ID: \_\_\_\_\_

START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



Specific Activity	Sun	Location	Mon	Location	Tue	Location	Wed	Location	Thu	Location	Fri	Location	Sat	Location
<b>Grooming</b>														
Brush the face and entire body														
Bath with water, shampoo, and rinse														
Wipe the puppy with a towel														
Blow-dry hair														
Trim and clip hair														
<b>Medical</b>														
Check the ears														
Examine mouth and gums														
Gently open the eyelids upwards, not pulling away from body														
Squeeze the feet														
Handle and trim toenails														
Pinch skin														
Poke the skin with a capped pen														
Touch and gently squeeze the nose														
Touch the nose with a capped pen														
Give water orally with needleless syringe														
Brush teeth with dog toothpaste														
Lift tail and touch anal area														

**Notes:**