

## PUPPY LOVE SHELTIES

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**Your Sheltie puppy (or adolescent) does NOT have fully developed leg bones and joints and won't until near adulthood**



I never knew this.... so I thought I'd share. Got it from a Senior Lab Group page.

This is something everyone should see.

When you get your 8/10 week old puppies, please keep this image in mind. Their bones do not even touch yet. They plod around so cutely with big floppy paws and wobbly movement because their joints are entirely made up of muscle, tendons, ligaments with skin covering. Nothing is fitting tightly together or has a true socket yet.

When you run them excessively or don't restrict their exercise to stop them from overdoing it during this period you don't give them a chance to grow properly. Every big jump or excited bouncing run causes impacts between the bones. In reasonable amounts this is not problematic and is the normal wear and tear that every animal will engage in. But when you're letting puppy jump up and down off the lounge or bed, take them for long walks/hikes, you are damaging that forming joint. When you let the puppy scramble on tile with no traction you are damaging the joint. You only get the chance to grow them once. A well built body is something that comes from excellent breeding and a great upbringing- BOTH, not just one.



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Once grown you will have the rest of their life to spend playing and engaging in higher impact exercise. So keep it calm while they're still little baby puppies and give the gift that can only be given once.

A bit of back-story: This is a baby puppy who had a knock to his elbow and wasn't using it properly, so he was taken to the vet. There is nothing wrong in these x-rays, thankfully it is a soft tissue injury and he is expected to be fine.

Depends on the breed of dog. The larger the breed the longer time until the growth plates are closed. The "gaps" are cartilage.. which doesn't show on x-rays. But it is correct that exercise is good but don't "over do" it. Dog should NOT be "jumping" or doing "agility" until the bones and growth plates are mature. And this is ALSO a reason you do NOT want to spay/neuter your puppy before it is DONE growing. Those gonads do more than "make puppies". They control how the dog matures and altering too early can cause the "growth plate to stay open longer". which also affects the dog's GROWTH.

## Puppy Exercise General

The ages for growth plate closure are only general guidelines and will vary from puppy to puppy. There will also be differences in recommendations based on your dog's breed - giant breed puppies' growth plates tend to close later and small breed puppies' growth plates close earlier. Sex hormones are what signal growth plates to close, so if your puppy was neutered before around 18 months old, he will have some delay in growth plate closure, and he will also have uneven growth in his bones resulting in joint angles that could be more liable to injury. A more conservative exercise approach may be warranted with early spayed/neutered dogs.

There are breed-specific orthopedic concerns which are not addressed here.

For any dog that you wish to enroll in a performance career, I highly recommend doing x-rays to confirm growth plate closure before proceeding with any intense training. Age is only a number to us! We can fit teeny pups, just like this little one, as soon as they're ready to start going on walks. However, did you know that young pups shouldn't have, and don't need much exercise?

As a general rule, aim to exercise your puppy for five minutes per month of age, twice a day, for example:

3 months of age = 15 minutes twice daily

4 months of age = 20 minutes twice daily

5 months of age = 25 minutes twice daily

Hope that helps 😊