

5MIN/MONTH RULE

THOUGHTS BY AMANDA PERRIMAN CANINE MASSAGE
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What follows is just my opinion on the article which debunks the five minutes per month rule. I have based this on scientific knowledge that I have ascertained through my journey to be a canine therapist.

The 5min/month rule was developed without any scientific backing and the rest of the industry jumped on this as the gold standard. This doesn't mean that I'm against the rule. I believe that dogs should be given the opportunity to develop.

However this development will take many different forms to support the dogs mental development (brain work), their neurological pathways and of course skeletal and soft tissue development. In order for this to happen they require a variety of different activities giving them the opportunity to recruit the connections needed but also give them time to process these mentally and recover physically. So by disagreeing with the 5min/month rule, I'm not saying it's absolutely fine to go and take your dog for a run when they're less than 18 months of age. It's just the proof of exercise and damage to growth plates in young dogs hasn't actually been proven with this magic remedy.

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We're relying on the soft tissues and muscle memory to hold the bones in place and them being mature enough to be able to use their body correctly.

We've all seen the puppies that look like Bambi on ice because they're trying to skate across their owners wooden floor, this is actually going to be more damaging than the 5min/month rule. We need to allow our puppies time for their bodies to join up. So I don't think the amount of exercise is the be all and end all I think you have to look at their environments. Look at the lead walking equipment, their collars and harness that you're putting your puppy in, the flooring that they're having to walk across. If you're allowing them to jump on and off the sofa or up and down the stairs. Your home could be worse then taking them for a walk that's longer than 5min/month.

Bear in mind I'm not a behaviourist but it is crucial that dogs learn how to communicate with other dogs and by restricting their exercise you might be restricting them learning social skills. So it's not as easy as to say 5min/month.

You need to look at their genetics. You need to look at the environment they live in. You need to look at the rate they're growing. You need to look at their nutrition.

There is no evidence supporting this 5min/month prescription.

Exercise in puppies should be sensible and allow conditioning, especially those breeds prone to osteoarthritis, hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia & shoulder OCD, If you really want a stab at getting a healthy breed, you need to look into genetics. There is hardly ever any fighting with genetics.

But what also affects dogs is the environment they're in. An overweight puppy is more likely to have joint disease in later life.

We need to think about the puppies not just the growth plates, but actually developing neurologically and keeping their musculoskeletal system all working together in balance.

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So I don't entirely support the 5min/month rule. I don't think we should keep comparing the domestic dogs to wolves, when wolves aren't getting on and off the sofa or jumping in and out of a car and up and down the stairs and being put in an inappropriate harness and repeatedly chasing a ball being thrown without any appropriate warm up or cool down. I don't feel you can compare the two it's just not a level playing field. I do know the time it takes for growth plates to close and I wouldn't want my dogs to do a concussive repetitive movement until not only the growth plates closed, but they've got the structure within their muscles to be able to hold their body in the correct position. So everybody's looking for that secret recipe of what is the right amount of exercise to do for your dog, but you've literally got to be looking at your individual dog and their individual traits and for that, I would get an independent practitioner. I have my dogs looked over for any possible areas that even my keen eye doesn't spot, there's no shame in that.

It's good for puppies and dogs to be active. But it may be that their activity should be little and often rather than one long exercise. *A 16 week old puppy needs to sleep for 10 to 12 hours according to some texts and 15-18 hours in others.

Give their bodies time to develop, give them an enriched environment to develop in. Look constantly at their rates of growth and their size - are they evenly balanced?

Get vet consent for them to go to a therapist who's going to be able to check their movement.

Think about the activities you're doing. Are they safe? Are they going to be encouraged to jump or brake abruptly, to turn, twist and put pressure on joints? Could this create problems further down the road? Allow them time to recover. All too often we think taking our dog for a walk is the most important exercise but actually you need to also build in their recovery, nutrition and their social skills and what they're being taught every time they go out.



CONTACT ME FOR FREE PUPPY EXERCISE DOWNLOAD

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USEFUL LINKS & THANKS

Thanks to Online Pet health for their continued learning and downloads
<https://onlinepethealth.com/>

What is the Logic Behind Not Exercising Puppies Until the Growth Plates are Closed? Dr. Darryl Millis Dec 29, 2019 the article
<https://www.mylamedog.com/post/what-is-the-logic-behind-not-exercising-puppies-until-the-growth-plates-are-closed>

Canine Arthritis Management go to their website for their puppy Guidance caregiver handout
<https://caninearthritis.co.uk/> or use this link
<https://caninearthritis.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CAM-Puppy-Guidance-Caregiver-Handout.pdf>

*How to build a puppy into a healthy dog, 2022 by Julia Robertson

*Canine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, 2018 by Chris Zink and Janet B. Van Dyk