



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Puppy Raising Department

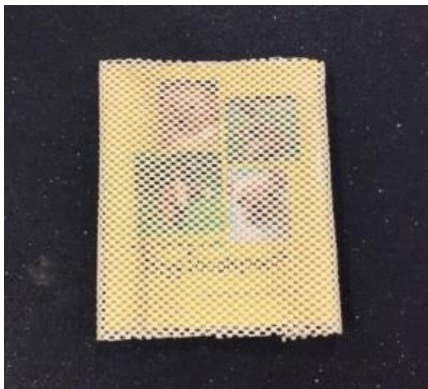
Paw Pads – Suggestions and Guidelines

The Paw Pad, also known in dog training as a Touch Pad, Mini Platform or Perch is a small raised area, big enough for the dog to place his two front feet on comfortably. Its purpose, as we use it, is to teach the puppy a nice, straight heel position and to hold that position, relative to the handler, as the puppy goes into stand, sit and down, the “Foundation Positions.” Paw Pad training is also a fun, positive way to teach the puppy impulse control. Once the puppy has a high reinforcement history on the Paw Pad, the pad acts as an anchor and simplifies teaching a “stay” cue.

Most raisers will find that they can find something around the house, or garage, that will work as a Paw Pad. The material should be heavy enough so that the pup doesn't knock it out of position easily. We have found that pads made out of books and yoga mats are the most versatile and comfortable for the puppy but in the beginning stages any of these will do:

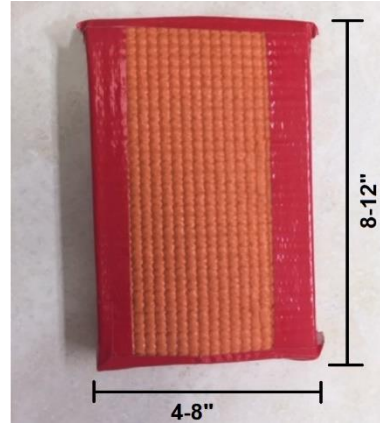
- Pieces/blocks of wood
- Dog dishes/ rubber livestock feeders upside down. (Metal dishes are too slippery)
- Bricks (several can be placed together)
- Cut up horse stall mats placed on top of each other, bound with duct tape
- In a pinch just a book, appropriately sized, with piece of shelf liner wrapped around it

Examples:



Making a Paw Pad (tip – great club activity!)

Soft cover books work best and old phone books are ideal if you can find them! But any appropriately sized book works and the hardback can be removed. The best non-skid cover is a piece of yoga mat, cut to size and duct taped on front and back. This type of pad is soft and comfortable for pups to lie down on in Paw Pad Game #4 and sturdy enough that it won't easily get knocked out of place by an enthusiastic puppy.



Sizing:

- **HEIGHT: 4-6"** for Paw Pad #1 and #2; **1-2"** for Paw Pad #3 and #4
 - The pad should be high enough for the first week or two of training sessions that the pup finds it more comfortable to stand than to sit when its front paws are on the pad. (See Paw Pad Games #1 and #2) Pads can be stacked to make them higher for a pup that consistently tries to sit.
 - Once starting PPG #3 and #4 a shorter pad, just an inch or two high, will be more comfortable for the pup to sit and down with its front feet on the pad.
- **LENGTH 8-12"** and **WIDTH 4-8"**.
 - It should be big enough that the pup has room to comfortably put its two front feet on it; the pup will find it easier to balance if the pad not too small. Too wide a pad and the pup may try to get all four paws onto it.
 - If the pad is too long the pup will find it easier to curl out of position
 - If the pad is too wide the pup may not be able to tuck its hind feet under it to sit

Clubs will find it helpful to have a variety of sizes available to fit growing puppies!