

STRONGHOLD GERMAN SHEPHERDS

Exercise Mistakes Puppy Owners Make

Breeder: Stronghold German Shepherds

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And why they can cause lifelong damage

Most families think “tired puppy = good puppy.” But with German Shepherd puppies, **too much, too soon** can harm joints, growth plates, and long-term soundness.

Here are the mistakes that matter most.

1. Taking puppies on long walks

Puppies should *NOT* go on long neighborhood walks. Their bodies are still under construction!

Why it’s harmful:

- *Can cause lifelong damage*
- *Repetitive motion stresses soft growth plates*
- *Puppies don’t self-regulate*
- *Distance walking is an adult-dog activity*
- *Too much exercise can cause bowed legs, joint deformities, early arthritis, and lifelong lameness.*

Safe rule: 5 minutes per month of age, twice a day. Low impact movement only.

2. Repetitive fetch

Puppies don’t know when to stop. Throwing a ball over and over is one of the **fastest ways** to injure a puppy.

Why it’s harmful:

- *Sudden stops*
- *Sharp turns*
- *Hard impacts*
- *Overextension of joints*

Fetch is for **adult dogs**, not puppies.

3. Running beside bikes, kids, or joggers, rough play, stairs

Puppies will keep going — even if it hurts.

Why it's harmful:

- *Repetitive motion is the #1 cause of joint injury in puppies*
- *Forces unnatural gait*
- *Overloads hips and elbows*
- *Causes micro-tears in soft tissue*

Save running for **after 18 months**.

4. Too much rough play with big dogs

Older dogs can accidentally injure a puppy.

Why it's harmful:

- *Body slams*
- *Rolling*
- *Pinning*
- *High-impact collisions*

Puppy play should be **gentle and supervised**.

5. Jumping off furniture, beds, or cars

Even one bad landing can cause lifelong issues.

Why it's harmful:

- *Growth plates are soft*
- *Joints are held together by ligaments, not bone*
- *Puppies don't land evenly*

Use ramps or lift them down.

6. Too many stairs

Stairs are a hidden danger for growing puppies.

Why it's harmful:

- *Repetitive impact*
- *Slipping*
- *Twisting joints*

Carry puppies on stairs until they're older and stronger.

7. Dog parks

Dog parks are unsafe for puppies physically and emotionally.

Why it's harmful:

- *Over-exercise*
- *Rough dogs*
- *Disease exposure*
- *Fear imprinting*

Skip dog parks entirely.

8. Letting puppies play until they collapse

Puppies don't know when to stop.

Why it's harmful:

- *They push through pain*
- *They overheat easily*
- *They can injure themselves without showing it*

Puppy play should be **short and structured**.

9. Thinking “high energy” means they need more exercise

High energy is normal — not a sign they need more exercise.

Why it's harmful:

- *Families try to “wear them out”*
- *Puppies get overstimulated*
- *Over-exercise becomes a habit*

What they really need: **structure, training, and mental work**.

10. Ignoring the 5-Minute Rule

This rule protects joints and prevents injury.

5 minutes of structured exercise per month of age, twice a day.

Examples:

- *8 weeks → 10 minutes*
- *12 weeks → 15 minutes*
- *16 weeks → 20 minutes*

A STRONGHOLD REMINDER

Your puppy is not fragile — but they *are* developing. Protecting their joints now gives them:

- *a stronger adult body*
- *healthier hips and elbows*
- *fewer vet bills*
- *a longer working life*
- *a happier, pain-free future*

Slow, steady, and safe wins every time.