

Potty Training Your New Puppy

Teaching your new puppy to potty at the right time and in the right place is one of the most important first steps you can take toward a long, happy life together. House soiling is among the top reasons why dogs lose their homes or end up in shelters. Few people are willing to put up with a dog who destroys rugs and flooring or who leaves a stinky mess that needs cleaning after a hard day at work.

To be successful, follow these tips:

- ❖ Supervision
- ❖ Crate Training
- ❖ Make A Schedule - this pertains to trips outside, feeding and exercise
- ❖ Control the Diet
- ❖ Praise

Supervision

You have to watch your puppy carefully to learn their individual signals and rhythms. Some puppies may be able to hold it longer than others. Some will have to go out every time they play or get excited. Some will stop in the middle of a play session, pee and play on. As with human babies, canine potty habits are highly idiosyncratic. Supervision means actively engaging with your puppy.

Signs That Your Puppy Needs to Eliminate

Whining, circling, sniffing, barking or, if your puppy is unconfined, barking or scratching at the door are all signs they may need to go. Take them out right away.

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Crate Training

Crates make life easier. It's a good idea to get your dog accustomed to one for many reasons, such as vet visits, travel, convalescence and safety. Dogs are den animals and will seek out a little canine cave for security whether you provide one or not. That makes it relatively easy to train your dog to love their crate. The principle behind using a crate for housetraining is that dogs are very clean creatures and don't like a urine-soaked rug in their living space any more than you do. It's important that the crate is the right size—just large enough for the dog to lie down, stand up and turn around. If it is too large, the dog will feel that it's OK to use one corner for elimination and then happily settle down away from the mess. Many crates come with partitions so you can adjust the size as your puppy grows.

When they feel an urge, they will usually let you know by whining and scratching. That's their signal that they have to go and want out of the little den. Now! Don't delay because if you let your pup lose control in their crate, they'll get the idea that it's OK to mess up their living space.

It is okay to put your puppy in their crate if you or another family member cannot actively supervise them. Don't use the crate for punishment. The crate is a safe place.

House Training Setbacks

Accidents are common in puppies up to a year. The reasons for accidents range: incomplete house training, improper supervision or a change in environment. When your puppy does have an accident, keep on training. If it still doesn't seem to be working, consult a veterinarian to rule out a medical issue.

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Make a Schedule

A schedule is vital to housetraining success. Puppies have tiny bladders and water runs right through them. The same holds true for solid matter. Goes in. Goes out. Make sure you give your puppy ample opportunity to do the right thing.

A good rule of thumb is that dogs can control their bladders for the number of hours corresponding to their age in months, up to about nine months to a year. (Remember, though, that 10 to 12 hours is a long time for anyone to hold it! If you doubt that, try it yourself sometime.) A 6-month-old pup can reasonably be expected to hold it for about 6 hours. Never forget that all puppies are individuals and the timing will differ for each.

Monitor daily events and your puppy's individual habits when setting up a schedule. With very young puppies, you should expect to take the puppy out:

- First thing in the morning
- Last thing at night
- After playing
- After spending time in a crate
- Upon waking up from a nap (even if they have only been napping for 5 minutes)
- After eating
- After drinking

Take your puppy to the same spot each time to do their business. Their scent will prompt them to go. Use the same door to go outside. Use a command like “potty” or “do your business” every time they go potty. You should stay with them outside, at least until they’re housetrained.

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Control the Diet

Puppies have immature digestive systems, so they can't really handle a lot of food. That's why it is recommended to break up feedings into three small meals. Another thing to keep in mind is the food itself, which should be the highest quality, whether you choose kibble or home-prepared meals. Whatever you choose, make sure it agrees with your puppy.

When you feed your puppy, give them 8-10 minutes to eat, then pick up their food bowl. This time limit will encourage them to eat when given their food and discourage them from grazing. If you don't know when your puppy has eaten, you won't know when to take them out.

Praise

Scolding a puppy for soiling your rug, especially after the fact, isn't going to do anything except make her think you're a nut. Likewise, some old methods of punishment, like rubbing a dog's nose in her poop, are so bizarre that it's hard to imagine how they came to be and if they ever worked for anyone. On the other hand, praising a puppy for doing the right thing works best for everything you will do in your life together. Make them think that they are a little canine Einstein every time they perform this simple, natural act. Be effusive in your praise—cheer, clap, throw cookies. Let them know that no other accomplishment, ever—not going to the moon, not splitting the atom, not inventing coffee—has been as important as this pee. If your dog has an accident, don't make a fuss, just clean up the mess. A cleaner that also kills odors will remove the scent so the dog will not use it in the future. Blot up liquid on the carpet before cleaning the rug.

If you catch the dog starting to squat to urinate or defecate, pick them up and immediately rush outside. If they do their business outdoors, give them praise and attention. Remember that when it comes to housetraining, prevention is the key.

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How Long Does It Take?

There is no correct answer to that question. It will take as long as your puppy needs.

There are many factors to consider, such as age, learning history and your methods and consistency. An 8-week-old puppy is very different developmentally than a 5-month-old puppy. If your pup came from a responsible breeder who was already working on the basics with the whole litter, this puppy will have a better grasp, a head start in a way, on the basics of potty training. Some puppies have perfect manners after just a few days. Others can take months, especially if the dog has had a less than ideal situation before coming to you. With patience and persistence, though, most dogs can learn. Consistency from all family members is essential to achieving a well potty trained puppy.