



Potty Training

Housetraining your dog or puppy requires patience, plenty of commitment, and above all, consistency. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy, and with some of the smaller breeds, it might take longer.

By following the guidelines outlined below, you can minimize accidents. Virtually every dog, especially puppies, will have an accident in the house. Expect this—it's part of living with a puppy.

Establish a Routine

Like babies, dogs do best on a regular schedule. Generally speaking, a puppy can hold his bladder one hour for every month of age. So, if your puppy is three months old, he can hold it for about 3 hours. If you go longer than this between bathroom breaks, he is almost guaranteed to have an accident. Puppies should be let out to potty upon waking up, after playing, and after eating and drinking.

- Your dog should be on a regular feeding schedule. This means offering food at specific times of the day and picking up the bowl after 15 minutes- whether your dog has finished his food or not. If you “free feed” (leave a bowl out all day), it will be very difficult for you to pinpoint when your dog needs to go potty.

Pick up your puppy's water dish about two and a half hours before bedtime to reduce the likelihood that he'll need to potty during the night. Most puppies can sleep for approximately seven hours without having to eliminate.

- If your puppy does wake you up in the night, don't make a big deal of it; otherwise, he will think it is time to play and won't want to go back to sleep. Turn on as few lights as possible, don't talk to or play with your puppy, take him out to do his business and return him to his bed.

Pick a Potty Spot

It helps to bring your dog out on a leash when you start potty training or re-training. This will teach your dog to potty first and play later. If we just let them out in the back yard and go back inside, we don't know if they did their business and they end up taking twice as long.

Walk your dog to a certain place in your yard that you would like him to eliminate. Give him a cue like, "go potty" and let him sniff around some. You can periodically remind him with the verbal cue, but don't be too distracting. Sometimes, you may have to wait 5-10 minutes before your dog goes. When he does, immediately reward him and take him off of his leash. Then, allow him to play around the yard for a few minutes.

*Reward your dog every time he eliminates outside either with praise or with a treat.

Supervision

Don't give your puppy an opportunity to eliminate in the house- keep an eye on him!

- Tether your puppy to you or a nearby piece of furniture with a six-foot leash if you are not actively training or playing with him. Watch for signs that your puppy needs to eliminate. Some signs are obvious, such as barking or scratching at the door, squatting, restlessness, sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately grab the leash and take him outside to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.
- Keep your puppy on leash in the yard. During the housetraining process, your yard should be treated like any other room in your house. Give your puppy some freedom in the house and yard only after she has become reliably housetrained.

Crate Training

- When you're unable to watch your puppy at all times, restrict him to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. The space should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down and turn around. You can use a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with baby gates.
- Or you may want to crate train your puppy and confine him in the crate. (Be sure to read over crate training basics to do this correctly) If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, you'll need to take him directly to his bathroom spot as soon as you let him out—and praise him when he eliminates.