

# POTTY TRAINING YOUR PUPPY



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House-training and potty-training a new puppy takes a lot of time, patience, consistency and commitment. Do not be fooled – accidents happen! With most puppies, the potty-training process is likely to take weeks or months. But by utilizing a routine schedule and following our professional tips and tricks, you will get started on the right paw.

## CONSTRUCT A SCHEDULE

Planning a regular schedule is vital to ensure your puppy's success with potty-training. Puppies, much like children, thrive on regular schedules. Keep in mind that puppies can only comfortably hold their bladder for one hour per how many months old they are. Example: a two-month-old puppy can comfortably hold their bladder for two hours.

- **Take your puppy outside often!** The following is a list of vulnerable times that your puppy will need to eliminate.
  - Shortly after eating a meal
  - Immediately after drinking a lot of water
  - Immediately after waking up from a nap
  - Immediately after a play session
  - Shortly after a training session

While it is important to keep these in mind, these are not necessarily the only times your pup may need to potty! Be mindful about how long it has been since they last went out (even have a timer set!). Always look for any cues they may be giving you that they may need to potty soon.

- **Find a restroom spot for your puppy!** Be sure this location is close to the door, so they do not have to travel too far to go to the bathroom.
  - ALWAYS take your puppy to their bathroom spot on leash
  - Try to add a verbal "command" before they go to the bathroom (such as "Go Potty!" or "Do Your Business!"). If you can't catch them before, be sure to say it during!
  - No fun happens outdoors until they do their business! This is key to ensuring your puppy will get into the habit of eliminating quickly and efficiently, every time.
- **Congratulate your puppy every time they eliminate!** Positive reinforcement and encouragement will reinforce their behavior.
  - Verbally congratulate them by saying "Good Boy/Girl!"
  - Immediately after they eliminate, give them three tiny pieces of a high-value treat reward. Examples: liver based moist treats, dehydrated chicken hearts, freeze dried treats, cheese etc.

## WATCH FOR CUES

As you start to potty train your pup, be sure you are watching for their potty cues. These cues may be things they do right before they eliminate (sniff around, go to a corner, etc.) or they could be indicators that your pup needs to go outside (walking to the door, barking). The more attention you can pay to the cues the better as it will help you to learn when your dog is telling you it needs to go out and thus reinforce the other potty training steps you are taking!

## ALWAYS SUPERVISE OR CONFINE YOUR PUPPY

Puppies need your help to be set up for success. The tools outlined below are important for containing where and what your puppy has access to. Doing so will help ensure your puppy does not have accidents and decrease the likelihood that they will get into any other sort of mischief while you are not keeping your eyes on them. These tools limit their ability to get away with inappropriate behaviors such as chewing and destructiveness.

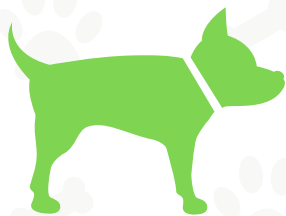
- **Baby Gates** – Section of portions of your home with baby gates so that your puppy has limited opportunities to be out of your sight or to go and have accidents.
- **Dog Kennel/Crate** – Learn how to appropriately crate train your puppy by referring to our "Crate Training" handout. Your puppy's crate should only be big enough so that they have room to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably.
- **Play Pens** – Form a decent sized play pen in your home for your puppy to give them less opportunity to free roam. Be sure to have a variety of toys and things to keep them busy while they are in their pen.
- **Leash Tethering** – Tether your puppy to you on leash while they are inside instead of letting them free roam in the house. Never leave a puppy tethered to anything but yourself, they should always be supervised.



## ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

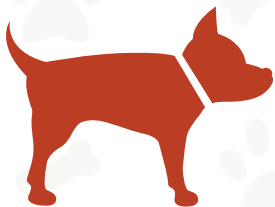
Accidents are a part of the process, so be prepared. Again, potty-training a puppy takes a lot of time and patience and mistakes will always happen. It's important to keep in mind how you respond to your puppy having accidents in your home. Below are some "Do's" and "Do Not's" to help you understand the best way to approach the situation.

### DO



- Clean up accident areas thoroughly. Using an enzyme cleaner is best to ensure you are appropriately cleaning the area. If a puppy smells their urine or feces in areas of the home, they will be more likely to continue eliminating there.
- Praise and reward your puppy when they choose to eliminate outdoors, especially in their specific bathroom area. Remember to give them three tiny pieces of a high-value treat reward when they eliminate in the correct areas.
- Ensure you are utilizing confinement tools when necessary to avoid the chance of your puppy having accidents in the home.

### DO NOT



- **DO NOT:** Punish or startle your puppy if you catch them having an accident in the home. Making startling noises or punishing them during an accident will have long-lasting negative effects on your puppy. It will also cause them to be afraid of you anytime they are eliminating, which can really affect the potty-training process. Simply scoop them up as quickly as possible and take them outside, on leash, so they can finish their business in their bathroom location.
- **DO NOT:** Assume your puppy remembers having an accident. If you find feces or a urine puddle after the puppy has finished (whether it has been 10 minutes or 2 hours) it is far too late to use that as a training opportunity. Puppies will not remember having an accident, and punishment should not be used in this situation. Clean up the area appropriately and make a note of the timing around the accident. The accident is an indicator that the puppy needed to go to the bathroom with more frequency than you were assuming, so it will serve as a reminder to stay vigilant to their needs!
- **DO NOT:** Rub your puppy's nose in old accidents in the home. This is a myth that puppies "know" where they had an accident and that they "know" they did something wrong. If your puppy is still having accidents in the home, ask yourself why and how they had the opportunity to have an accident.

## LONG-TERM CONFINEMENT WHEN AWAY

At times, it's necessary that you will need to leave your puppy for more than a couple of hours than the couple of hours they can hold their bladder.

If you need to be away, it's necessary to have a long-term confinement area for your puppy while you are gone. To avoid sabotaging all the hard work you have instilled with potty-training your puppy, follow the guidelines below to create a proper long-term confinement area.

- Create an enclosure with a stable barrier to keep your puppy in a contained area. Examples: puppy play pens, exercise pens attached together, temporary fencing attached together, a crate/kennel attached to an exercise pen or similar type of barrier, etc.



- Ensure your puppy has some type of bedding in their confinement area such as blankets or beds. Their bedding should be on the opposite side of where their elimination area is.
  - Provide a water source for your puppy such as a no-spill water dish or a hanging water bucket.
  - Provide a "potty area" in their confinement area. We strongly recommend using a surface like what you would prefer your puppy to eliminate on in other situations. For example, if your puppy's outside elimination area is grass, use an artificial grass potty system for your long-term confinement area. We do NOT recommend using puppy pads as they are similar to carpet-type material and puppies can easily chew up and ingest them.
  - Ensure your puppy has things to keep him/her occupied. A variety of toys, especially interactive food dispensing toys are strongly recommended.
- Provide your puppy with soft music at a low volume while you're away. The sounds will help comfort and relax him/her while you are gone.

As you build on your puppy's potty training, your puppy will learn to hold its bladder for longer portions of time. With dedication, patience and consistency your pup will grow into a reliably housetrained adult dog!

**TIP!** If your puppy has been reliable with their house training skills for awhile and they are now suddenly having multiple accidents, it may be a good idea to visit the veterinarian for a wellness exam. Sometimes, puppies can develop bladder infections or other problems. It's better to be safe rather than sorry!