

HOUSETRAINING

Client Information Series



As with most things in life, there is the hard way and the easy way to get things done. Using ample amounts of supervision and positive reinforcement is the easy way to housetrain your puppy.

Crate Training

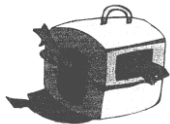
Training a puppy to be comfortable in a crate is a popular way to provide safe confinement during housetraining. The majority of puppies will rapidly accept crate confinement when you make the introduction fun. Since it is important to associate favorable things with the area where your puppy is confined, it is a good idea to play with him/her there or simply spend some time reading or watching television nearby as he/she relaxes with a favorite chew toy.

Make the crate a pleasant place for you pup. Give the command “crate” or “kennel up” at the same time as you place a treat within the crate and the puppy kennel.



When you pick up the toys, store them in the crate so he/she will enter on his/her own to play. You may even want to occasionally hide a biscuit in the crate for a nice surprise.

You should not use the crate for periods that exceed the length of time your pet can actually control the urge to urinate or defecate. The pup’s natural desire not to eliminate in the crate will force the animal to give you signals that he/she has to go outside. Be observant of these signals (i.e. crying, whining, barking, scratching at crate floor, etc.). So you may take the pup outside and reward him/her for eliminating outside. If you are gone for long periods each day, you will need to provide a larger confinement area. You may want to consider using an exercise pen or small room. Provide an area large enough so that if your puppy has to eliminate when you are gone, he/she can do it in a space that is separate from the sleeping area. A 15-30 square foot area is adequate for most puppies. If he/she chooses a specific place to eliminate, cover it with paper to make cleanup easier.



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Timing is Important!

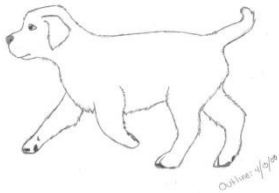
A six to eight week old puppy should be taken outdoors every one to three hours. Older puppies can generally wait longer between outings. Most puppies should be taken out:

- After waking in the morning
- After naps
- After meals
- After playing or training
- After being left alone
- Immediately before being put to bed



Starting Off on the Right Track

The first course of action in housetraining is to produce the desired behavior. You need to:



- Designate an appropriate elimination area outdoors
- Frequently guide your dog to the elimination area to do his/her business
- Heartily praise him/her when they go

By occasionally giving a food reward immediately after your dog finishes, you can encourage him/her to eliminate in the desired area. The odor left in that area from previous visits will quickly mark it as the place for the pup to do his/her business.

Eliminating on Command

To avoid spending a lot of time waiting for your puppy to get the job done, you may want to teach him/her to eliminate on command. Each time he/she is in the act of eliminating, simply repeat a unique command, such as “hurry up” or “potty”, in an upbeat tone of voice. After a few weeks of training, you will notice that when you say the command your puppy will begin pre-elimination sniffing, circling, and then eliminate shortly after the command. Be sure to praise your puppy for his/her accomplishments.



Feeding Schedules

Most puppies will eliminate within an hour of eating. Once you take control of your puppy's feeding schedule, you will have some control over when they need to eliminate.

- Schedule your puppy's dinner times so that you will be available to let him/her out after eating

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- Avoid giving your puppy a large meal just prior to confining him/her or he/she may have to eliminate when you are not around to take them out
- Schedule feedings two to three times daily on a consistent schedule
- Have food available for only 10-20 minutes then remove it
- The last feeding of the day should be completed several hours before he/she is confined for the night



By controlling the feeding schedule, exercise sessions, confinement periods, and trips outdoors to the elimination area, your puppy will quickly develop a reliable schedule for eliminating.

Expect Some Mistakes

Left on his/her own, the untrained puppy is very likely to make mistakes. Close supervision is a very important part of training. Do not consider your puppy housetrained until he/she has gone at least four consecutive weeks without eliminating in the house. For older dogs, this period should be even longer. Until then:

- Your puppy should constantly be within eyesight
- Baby gates can be helpful to control movement throughout the house and to aid in supervision

When you are away from home, sleeping, or if you are just too busy to closely monitor your pet's activities, confine him/her to a small, safe area in the home.

Practice Patience



- When your puppy does have an accident, quickly take him/her outdoors so that he/she can finish in the appropriate area and be praised. Do not continue to scold or correct your puppy after he/she has stopped.
- Never rub your dog's nose in the mess. There is no way that this will help training and it may actually make him/her afraid of you.

Don't Make Things Worse

It is a rare dog or puppy that can be housetrained without making an occasional mess, so you need to be ready to handle the inevitable problems.



- Do not rely on harsh punishment to correct mistakes. This approach usually does not work and may actually delay training.
- An appropriate correction consists of simply providing a moderate, startling distraction. You should only do this when you see your dog in the act of eliminating in the wrong place.

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- A sharp noise, such as a loud “NO” or a quick stomp on the floor, is all that is usually needed to stop the behavior. Just do not be harsh or your pet may learn to avoid eliminating in front of you, even outdoors.

Direct Them Away From Problem Areas

Urine and fecal odors should be thoroughly removed to keep your dog from returning to areas of the home where he/she had made a mess.

- Be sure to use a good commercial product manufactured specifically to clean- up doggy odors. Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations for usage.
- If the carpet has been soaked with urine, be sure to saturate it with the clean up product and not merely spray the surface.
- Rooms in the home where your dog has had frequent mistakes should be closed off for several months. He/she should only be allowed to enter when accompanied by a family member.

Nervous Wetting

If your puppy squats and urinates when it greets you, you may have a problem called submissive urination. Dogs and puppies that urinate during greetings are very sensitive and should never be scolded when they do this since punishment inevitably makes the problem worse.

Most young puppies will grow out of this behavior if you are calm, quiet, and avoid reaching toward the head during greetings. Another helpful approach is to calmly ask your dog to sit for a very tasty treat each time someone greets them.

SUCCESS!



The basic principles of house training are pretty simple, but patience is required. The most challenging part is keeping an eye on your active dog or puppy. If you maintain control, take your dog outside frequently, and consistently praise the desirable behavior, you should soon have a housetrained canine companion.

We are here to foster the best bond between you and your pet. Call us if you have any question or concerns. We are here to help!

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