

Puppy Potty Training

Housetraining is one of the very earliest lessons you need to teach your pup. Puppies are naturally clean by nature; they have an inbuilt need to keep their den clean, so this should not be particularly difficult. In most cases the basics are usually mastered within two weeks. Getting it right is important not only for the sake of your home, but also your puppy will be learning about you. If he learns that you are clear, consistent and easy to understand, it is a good basis for everything else he needs to know. However, if he learns that you are unpredictable, inconsistent and frightening, learning will be more difficult in the future.

Consistency is the key to housetraining—your consistency, not puppy’s. Keep in mind during the housetraining period: if the puppy does not respond in the desired way to house training, ask yourself; “what am I doing wrong?” It is you that is trying to accomplish this feat, not puppy.

A valuable learning tool for you is to understand that every time puppy empties itself it passes pheromones that act like little flag signals to both itself and any other dog to use this spot again. Thorough cleaning of any mishaps in the house is extremely important, as is leaving some droppings and smell in the spot selected for this purpose. Dogs are creatures of habit; use this to your advantage and create a routine for your pup and you will find that within a day or two your puppy will be starting to get the idea.

WHERE? Teaching your puppy where it is to go is well worth the effort; not just anywhere except in the house, but a designated area especially for this purpose. Try to choose a place that is a bit secluded and out of the way.

WHEN? Your puppy will need to empty itself regularly . Take him/her out:

On walking

After playing

After feeding and drinking

After any excitement

When awake and has not been out for an hour or so

When seemingly suddenly distracted, sniffing the ground, walking quickly in circles

And many other times in between

Lastly, Last thing at night.

HOW? When it is time ‘to go’, walk your pup to the back door, on lead, and go to “The Spot”. Go with him. Remain still and quiet so as not to distract your pup whilst sniffing and preparing. While he empties put a word to the action. (Such as Toilet). The word itself should be socially acceptable and always be used. In time your pup will put the two together and will go on command. When finished, praise and treat your pup so a good association is formed with going in the right place. If, however, there are no results within five minutes, take your pup back inside and keep a very close eye on them. The pup will need to go soon and you will need to recognize the signs so that there are no mistakes. Every mistake teaches your puppy the wrong habit. Every time he gets it right makes training easier and faster.

Success depends on your dedication and consistency

ACCIDENTS! Be prepared. They will happen. What to do when.....

You see pup “in the act”. DO NOT scream and yell and frighten the pup. However you MUST interrupt the puppy. Do this with a stern STOP, go to it and walk it to the door. Do not pick up the puppy and carry it—you want it to learn to walk to the back door when it needs to go outside. Take it to “the spot” and wait for action, then praise as usual. You need to clean up after an accident. DO NOT use ammonia or any ammonia based products, this only enhances the smell and it will become a more enticing spot. DO clean thoroughly with an enzyme based product - URINE OFF works wonders. But if you do not have any on hand a mix of 1 part white vinegar to 3 parts water can also be used. DO NOT clean up the accident whilst the puppy can see you as this can teach the puppy to start hiding its toileting, or even worse, may lead to an unpleasant behavior ‘Cop aphasia’ which is when the dog eats its own stools, mimicking the behavior of us picking up the mess.

Cleaning up...

First blot up as much of the liquid as possible and lift up any solid mess.
Clean with warm soapy water and then soak up as much of this as possible (if using urine off this step can be eliminated)
Apply the enzyme or vinegar mix and then soak up
Place a chair over the spot until dry or the enzymes have done their work.

Accidents can occur for a variety of reasons. Some female pups do not have strong enough muscles to control themselves until they have practiced for a while. Remember that they have just come from a litter where they went whenever and wherever they felt the urge to go. Other pups may lose control due to submission or excitement. Do not take these occasions as housetraining lapses; rather be better prepared for next time. Crate training speeds up housetraining enormously.

Keep in mind when dealing with “incidents and accidents” that if you frighten your puppy with your response, it will learn to hide them from you (under beds, behind things etc) and the more frightened the pup becomes the harder the whole exercise will be.

If training does not appear to be going according to plan, speak to a Trainer, or perhaps your puppy may have a physical problem and a visit to the Vet may be in order.