

PetPeople Pet Care Center

Housebreaking Your New Dog or Puppy



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Housebreaking Your Dog



You should begin housebreaking your new puppy or dog as soon as they come home - housebreaking will take time, consistency, and patience, but does not have to be hard. It does not need to be a struggle or take a long time, it is just a training practice that demands a little extra attention! The more time and effort you put into it, the shorter the housebreaking period will be.

THE GOLDEN RULES

#1 When in doubt, take them out!

#2 If you don't catch your puppy in the act of going potty, don't punish him for it!

#3 Never rub your dog's nose in a mess. This will in no way help with training and may actually make your puppy afraid of you.

METHODS OF HOUSEBREAKING

Starting Inside

One way to start housebreaking a puppy is to start inside. If your end goal is to have the puppy go potty outside, you may not want to begin this way. It can be confusing to teach them it's ok to go

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inside, then when it comes time to make the transition outside, they don't understand it's no longer ok to go inside. However, for small dogs who are adverse to outdoor weather or for an apartment dweller, this can be a great training method.

Newspapers or Potty Pads

Place newspapers or potty pads in a convenient and accessible area to the puppy. Potty Pads may work better than newspapers as they are scented with a chemical that attracts the puppy to use them. When you see the puppy start to go into their telltale 'pre-potty signs,' such as walking around in circles or sniffing the floor, you gently pick them up without talking and carry them over to the papers/potty pad, and praise them when they go to the bathroom. If they start to go to the bathroom not on the paper or pad, use a noise like a sharp voice or a hand clap to interrupt them - then quickly scoop them up and put them on their potty pad, giving them a happy, verbal "Go Potty!" cue. If they do even a little bit more on the pad, praise them for going potty in the right place!



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Remember, unless you catch them in the act it doesn't help to reprimand them after the fact.

Going Outside

The most common method of housebreaking is to teach the dog to go potty outside on a grass surface. This can be done in much the same method as inside potty training - When you see the puppy start to go into their telltale 'pre-potty signs,' such as walking around in circles or sniffing



the floor, you gently pick them up without talking and carry them outside and set them on the ground where you would like them to go to the bathroom. It is important that you carry them, because by the time they have

started their 'pre-potty' ritual if you wait and try to walk them to the door, they might have an accident on the way there. Place the puppy on the grass and give your "Go Potty" verbal cue. When the puppy goes potty on the grass outside, praise him with a happy voice or treats. Again, if you are inside and you see your pet start to have

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an accident, don't throw your hands up and wait for him to finish! Interrupt him with a sudden noise like your voice, or a clap of your hands, scoop him up, and take him outside!

These methods work, of course, when the puppy is under constant supervision. The more times a puppy has an accident and you are not around to catch it and put him on his potty pad or take him



outside, the longer your housebreaking will take. Each time you are not right there to

correct him, he thinks it must be ok to go inside! Most people cannot watch a puppy 24 hours a day, so to prevent this unsupervised time and cut housebreaking time, usually some sort of confinement is used. This can be leaving the pet baby gated in a small area, or using crate training to help teach the dog how to 'hold it'.

FREQUENCY

How long can my puppy hold it? A general rule is however old the puppy is in months, he can hold it that number of hours plus one. For example, a



three month old puppy can only hold it a max of four hours. This is for a sleeping puppy - and the cause of those middle of the night potty breaks. If a young puppy is up and moving, more frequent potty breaks are necessary! A puppy also should not be crated for longer than they can physically 'hold it', as this will force them to potty in their crate. A dog under six months of age should not go an entire work day without a potty break - come home at lunch or consider having a dog walker let them out mid-day.

CRATE TRAINING

In the wild, wolves live in dens. Their den is their home where they sleep, hide from danger, and raise a family. Because of this they do not go to the bathroom in their den. Since puppies see crates as their 'dens' they do not like to soil in them. In crate training, whenever a puppy is inside the home but cannot be watched, or when the people are gone, he is placed



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in the crate. This could be while you are cooking, doing laundry, or doing anything that you cannot directly supervise the puppy. The last thing you should do before you put the puppy in the crate is take him outside and give him your verbal "Go Potty" cue. The first thing you do when you take the puppy out of the crate is another trip outside. No food or water is necessary in the crate, just a blanket and chew toy, preferably a treat filled Kong®.



Many people don't realize the benefits of crate training - using the crate appropriately is said to cut housebreaking time in half! It also does more than just stop the pet from having accidents in the house -using the crate teaches the puppy that he can 'hold it'. Just because he has the urge to go potty, the puppy learns he doesn't have to go right then. This is thought to be the reason why puppies that have gone through crate training have fewer mistakes later on. Crate training also keeps your puppy and your things safe from sharp puppy teeth!

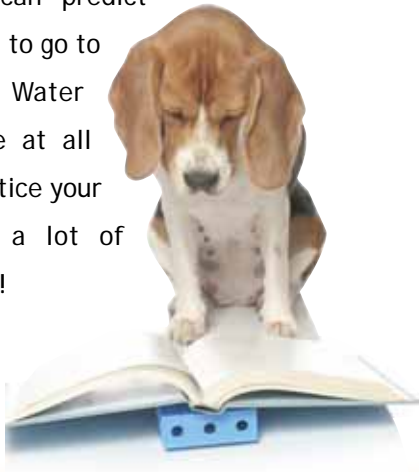
Please see our brochure [*Crate Training for Dogs*](#) for more thorough information on Crate Training.



TIPS OF THE TRADE

Get on a schedule

When in doubt, take them out! Young puppies need to go out often, and if you wait until they *need* to go potty it's often too late. A puppy should be taken out to their appropriate potty spot first thing when they wake up, about ten minutes after any meal, during periods of playtime, and last thing before they go to bed. During all their waking hours, it is recommended to take the puppy out every hour, on the hour. The more times you offer the appropriate potty spot ahead of time, the less likely an accident will occur. Because eating or drinking makes them have to go potty, it is recommended your pet is put on a feeding schedule, rather than allowing free access to food. Be consistent when you feed your pet so you can predict when they will need to go to the bathroom. Water should be available at all times, and if you notice your puppy just drank a lot of water, take him out!



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Verbal Cues

Specific verbal cues will help you and your dog understand what is desired. It is an excellent idea to always use a word when it is time to head to the bathroom. You can use words like "Go Potty", "Hurry Up", "Outside", or "Do Your Business". This cue should always be said in an upbeat tone, never as a correction or punishment. When you set the puppy on his appropriate potty area, tell him "Go Potty!" When he does, give plenty of praise and head back inside. You want to make

sure his verbal cue means to actually go the bathroom, not just go outside to play. This teaches him to eliminate on cue - when he hears those words, it's time to go. This is helpful in a strange



place if he's not sure where to go - if you reassure him with "Go Potty!" it will hurry the process along. Verbal cues can also help make sure your dog actually goes to the bathroom - oftentimes puppies get distracted outside by smells, or

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wanting to play, and forget to go. If you use your “Go Potty” cue first thing, they will get that out of the way before they start to play.

When Accidents Happen

Inevitably accidents will happen. When they do, it's important to be prepared. Use paper towels to blot up the majority of the mess, then use an enzymatic cleaner to spray on the area. It is important to use this special type of



cleaner made for pet stains, rather than a regular carpet cleaner or stain remover. Although a regular cleaner or stain remover gets the stain out to your eyes and nose, a dog's sensitive nose can still detect the accident. This will encourage your puppy to continue to soil in that area. An enzymatic cleaner gets the stain and the smell out so even the pet can't tell it was ever there. For this same reason it is important not to use any ammonia based cleaners - ammonia mimics the smell of urine, and can encourage more accidents.



CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Don't forget to follow the Golden Rules - If you do not catch your puppy doing it, then do not punish him for it! If you find a mess after the fact, clean it up and forget it. Dogs have only a three second window to understand correction, trying to punish them hours or even minutes later is ineffective. It does no good to show it to your puppy or rub their nose in it, they will not associate your anger with having gone to the bathroom even moments earlier. Your first thought should be, rather, what was I doing that I wasn't paying attention? If you adhere to the rule of constant supervision, your puppy won't have chances to make mistakes! Stick to your schedule of every hour, on the hour, after playtime, after eating, and when in doubt, take them out!

This may seem simple, and it really is. The keys are that it will take time and you must be consistent. Housebreaking is just as much a part of training as other commands, or teaching your dog to walk on a leash. However, most owners find that dogs that are not housebroken are a cause of constant strife. Just remember, housebreaking is a product of the time and consistency an owner puts into it!

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We at PetPeople are a group of dedicated and passionate pet people. We are so enthusiastic to engage our customers, exchange information, and work together to solve common pet problems. We hope you will continue to come to us with questions, problems or situations regarding your pets' care. It is our goal to be a partner with you and your veterinarian in the health and well-being of your pet.

We Care

While we are happy to advise you and share our knowledge with you, we would never propose that our recommendations be used instead of consulting with your veterinarian about any concerns or issues. You know your pet better than anyone, and should always use your best judgement regarding obtaining the best care for your pet.



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