

POTTY TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

Potty training a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience and consistency. By following the recommendations outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house (more likely several). This is part of raising a puppy and should be expected. The more consistent you are in following these housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn to eliminate outdoors. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy and with some of the smaller breeds it might take longer. A puppy can usually be considered reliably housetrained when it has not had any accidents for 4 to 6 weeks.

Establish a Routine

- Your puppy will do best if he is taken outside on a consistent and frequent schedule. He should have the opportunity to eliminate after waking up from sleep, from a nap, after playing, and after eating.
- Choose a specific location outside to be the bathroom spot. Always take your puppy, on a leash, directly to the bathroom spot. You can take the leash off AFTER the puppy has eliminated. While your puppy is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like “go potty”, that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him what he’s supposed to be doing.
- Praise your puppy every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him or treat him immediately after he’s finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house.
- Put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed two or maybe three times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he’ll eliminate at consistent times as well. This makes housetraining easier, for both of you.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don’t give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You keep him near you by using a leash or use baby gates to confine him in your space. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you’re unable to watch your puppy closely, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won’t want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around. The best option is to crate train your puppy and use the crate to confine him. If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, make sure to take him out directly to his bathroom spot before doing anything else.

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Oops! What to do when your puppy has an accident.

Expect your puppy to have an accident in the house – it's a normal part of housetraining.

- When you catch him in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt him, like make a loud, interruptive noise (clapping or shouting AH!). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him, and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there.
- Don't punish your puppy if you find a soiled area in the house later on, it's too late to administer a correction if you didn't catch him in the act. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it, taking him to the spot, and scolding him (or any other punishment or discipline AFTER THE FACT) is not an effective way to housetrain your puppy.
- CLEANING! Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. Use a cleaner with an oxidizing agent – I use the brand Nature's Miracle.
- Finally, DO NOT USE POTTY PADS OF ANY SORT. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate and think that eliminating inside is acceptable, which will prolong the housetraining process.

It's extremely important that you use the **supervision and confinement** procedures outlined above to minimize the number of accidents and maximize your puppy's preference for eliminating outdoors. The potty training process usually take about 4-6 weeks of consistency to accomplish. You can assume your puppy is reliably potty trained after 4 weeks of no accidents!