

Housetraining Your Puppy

Housetraining a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience and commitment. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will be trained. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy and with some of the smaller breeds it might take longer.

Establish a Routine

- Your puppy will do best if he is taken outside on a regular schedule. He should be taken outside after waking up, after playing and after eating.
- Use the same door and take him, on a leash, to the same spot in the yard. To reward him, take him for a walk or play with him after he's eliminated.
- If he has an accident, take the soiled paper towels out to this area of the yard. This will help your puppy learn where he is supposed to eliminate.
- While your puppy is eliminating, use a key word or phrase, like "go potty," that you can eventually use when you want him to eliminate.
- Praise your puppy immediately after he eliminates. Rewarding your puppy for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know that this is an appropriate behavior.
- Put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four 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

Don't give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You can tether him to you with a leash or use baby gates to keep him in your view. 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.

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. This area could be a crate, a small bathroom or laundry room. If your puppy has been crated for several hours, make sure to take him outside before he does anything else.

Accidents

- When you catch him having an accident in the house, do something to interrupt him, like make a startling noise (be careful not to scare him). Immediately take him outside and praise him.
- Don't punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it or taking him to the spot and scolding him will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later. Punishment will do more harm than good.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.