



Housetraining Puppies

To be successful at housetraining, you must be patient, listen to what your puppy is telling you, and **be consistent**. Having a set schedule allows your puppy to learn when it is “potty time” and lets you learn your puppy’s “I have to go potty” signals.

Praise for “potty”

Use a phrase such as “Want to go outside and potty?” to indicate that it is time to urinate or defecate outside.



Go outside with your puppy and give him extremely great (small) food rewards every single time he urinates or defecates outdoors.

Do this while he is actually urinating or defecating or immediately afterwards. If there is any delay, he may not understand why he is being rewarded.

If he doesn't do anything, take him back into the house. Don't let him wander around or start to play outside. The only reward is if he does his business. If you want playtime, take him back into the house, wait a few minutes then go back outside to play.

Your puppy will learn to associate that “outside and potty” means going outside to urinate and defecate. If you want, you can even teach them to urinate or defecate on command. Simply use the word with praise while they are doing the action.

When to take your puppy outside

- Right after waking up
- Right after eating
- Right after drinking
- Right after vigorous playing
- Every 1-3 hours if not in the crate

Puppies can hold urine during the day about one hour for every month of age. The frequency of taking him out depends on his age. This may seem like a lot of trips outside and it is. You can't take your puppy out too often! The more chances he has of being successful outside, the quicker he will learn what he is supposed to do.

It also prevents unwanted accidents in the house. As your puppy becomes trained, you can extend the time between trips outside. If an accident occurs, you know you have waited too long and need to shorten the time intervals again.

Feeding schedule

The feeding schedule is very important for successful housetraining. If food is available at all times, you cannot determine when the puppy ate and when he needs to go outside.

Offer food and water only 2-3 times a day. Leave the food and water down for 20 minutes before taking it away. Take him outside shortly afterwards when he will be more likely to do something and increase his chances of success.

Ring a bell

You can train your puppy to ring a bell each time he needs to urinate or defecate. This avoids missing the subtle signs that your puppy may try to give you otherwise. Simply hang a bell near the door.



Ring the bell every time you take the puppy outside to urinate or defecate. You can then use a treat to entice them to hit the bell with their nose or paw. Soon, your puppy will associate the bell with having to “go potty” and will ring the bell when needed.

Crate training

Crate training is excellent for potty training your puppy. A crate acts as a natural den. Place it where your puppy feels safe and comfortable. There should be enough space to stand up and lay down comfortably but no more. A dog naturally doesn't want to defecate or urinate in his den.

If there is too much space, your puppy will simply use one corner for waste and move to the other side. Ideally, your puppy will learn that the entire house is his den and want to keep it clean.



Your puppy should be in the crate any time you are not **directly** supervising. This means, watching your puppy at all times. Once taken out of the crate, he should be taken directly outside for a chance to urinate or defecate.

Out of the crate, you can attach a leash to your belt to ensure he stays with you while you are busy with cooking, eating, etc. It's critical he not be allowed to wander away from you to have an accident somewhere else in the house.

Nighttime

Puppies can usually hold their urine much longer during the night just like people can. Take the water dish away a couple hours before going to bed and take him outside before he goes into his crate for the night.

If he wakes up during the night, take him outside quietly without talking to him or playing with him. You don't want him to learn that waking you up gets him a playmate! Once he's finished, put him back into his bed.

Accidents in the house



Never punish your puppy for urinating or defecating in the house, especially if you find the mess later. After more than two seconds (yes, just 2 seconds), your puppy will not understand why you are upset.

If you catch him in the act, scold him with a sharp "No" to stop the action, pick him up, and take him outside immediately. This gives him the opportunity to do it right. Praise and reward him if he urinates or defecates outside. Don't let him wander around or start to play (you don't want him to associate accidents in the house with playtime outside).

At the beginning, catching him in the house may help to reinforce he is supposed to go outside. This is assuming you catch him in the act. After that, accidents work against you and he learns he can do it in both places.

Training for pee pads or a litter pan

If you want your puppy to use pee pads or a doggy litter pan indoors, follow the same steps. The only difference is the location to urinate and defecate. Designate one area specifically for defecating and urinating as to avoid confusion.

However, don't train him indoors first with the idea you will then have him go outdoors. It requires you to go through the whole process twice and it's easier to get him outdoors in the first place. For this reason, avoid getting a tiny puppy in the middle of winter!

Remember

Remember to pay attention to your puppy's signs. They are often subtle such as sniffing around, walking to the door or looking out it, or placing his head on your arm.

Make sure to give your puppy plenty of chances to be successful. You must be consistent and more importantly, patient. Your puppy (and your floor) will be thankful!

