

How to House Train Your Puppy



Improving the breed... one litter at a time.

1. Start at the ideal age.

The best time to begin house training a puppy is when she is 7 to 8 weeks old. At this age, you can teach your puppy where to eliminate before she has established her own preferences. But don't worry if your puppy is older when you start house training; she will still learn, though it may take a little longer.

2. Six to eight times a day, take your puppy outdoors to eliminate.

Choose an appropriate spot to take your puppy immediately after she wakes up, after play sessions, and 15 to 30 minutes after meals. If you take your puppy to the same spot every day, previous odors will stimulate her to urinate or defecate. Be sure to pick up fecal material immediately as parasite eggs are often present in the material and can cause reinfestation. Many puppies need 15 to 20 minutes of moving around and sniffing before they eliminate. Stay with your puppy the entire time. House training problems can result if you're unsure whether your puppy actually eliminated and you let her return to the house too soon. And remember your puppy needs to focus on the job at hand, so don't play with her until she has eliminated.

3. Use a key phrase while your puppy eliminates.

If you repeat the same phrase (e.g. go potty, take care of business, hurry up) every time your puppy eliminates outdoors, she will learn this phrase means it's the right time and place to eliminate.

4. Once your puppy eliminates outdoors, immediately reward her.

Reward your puppy by praising her, giving her a treat, or playing with her. But remember the reward needs to be given immediately. Your puppy will not learn to eliminate outdoors if the reward comes when she returns to the house. Instead, your puppy will think she is being rewarded for coming into the house.

5. Supervise your puppy indoors as well as outdoors.

Find a room in your house that allows you to watch your puppy as much as possible. This will help you catch her if she starts to eliminate indoors.

6. When you leave home, put your puppy in a crate.

If you can't keep continuous watch on your puppy, leave her in a small puppy proof area, such as a crate. If the crate is large enough to accommodate your puppy as an adult, partition it to avoid having your puppy soil in one end and sleep in the other. And remember, young puppies' bladder and bowel capacities are limited; so let your puppy out at least every 2-4 hours.

7. Don't punish after the fact.

If your puppy has an accident in the house, don't go get her and rub her nose in it. This doesn't do any good because the misbehavior has already occurred. Instead, try to catch your puppy in the act. If you can see your puppy is getting ready to soil in the house, don't swat at her. Instead, stomp your foot or startle her by yelling "outside!" Your puppy will likely stop what she is doing and you can take her outside to eliminate.

8. Don't leave food and water out all day.

Feed your puppy at set times every day, and remove the food bowl after 20 minutes. This will create regular intervals at which your puppy will need to eliminate.

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9. Thoroughly clean areas where your puppy has eliminated in the house.

Your veterinarian can recommend a safe, effective product that removes both stain and odor. It is important to clean a soiled area completely or your puppy may return to the same spot to soil again.

10. Stick with the training program.

Most puppies can be successfully house trained by 14 to 20 weeks of age. But a pet may take longer to house train for several reasons. Consult your veterinarian if you're having difficulty