

Housetraining, Use of the crate and Appropriate Chew Toys

We need to set your pup up for success by eliminating the possibility for him/her to continue to make housetraining mistakes. **They need to be VERY closely supervised 100% of the time that he/she is not confined in the crate or attached to you via a leash around your waist.** If they have made enough mistakes thus far in their "housetraining career" they may assume that inside is the place to go. We need to ensure that they no longer have the option to roam freely unattended for even a short period of time. If you can prevent him/her from making mistakes inside for the next 2-3 months, they will rethink their potty preferences and opt for the great outdoors as their elimination place of choice.

Puppies MUST be taken out immediately EVERYTIME they come out of the crate, wake up from a nap and 20-30 minutes after they eat or drink. You should be controlling access to food and water for awhile to help ensure housetraining success. It is difficult to anticipate a "potty break" when you are not sure when they had their last drink of water or mouthful of food. Puppies with constant access to the food and water dish often grab a quick drink or a bite of food while we get busy doing things in our daily routine, or take a quick bathroom break ourselves. These random drinks and snacks make it very difficult to predict when puppies will need to eliminate.

Puppies should be taken to the exact same "potty spot" each trip outside and given the 6 foot radius of the leash around you. Stand still and allow the puppy to walk around you. You can take 2-3 steps back and forth if needed to create "motion", but do not walk around the entire yard as puppies are easily distracted chasing "stuff" and they forget to take care of business when they are busy goofing off. Once puppy eliminates, then you can **and should reward with a longer walk or game of fetch or treats or whatever your puppy thinks is most thrilling.** The faster puppy takes care of business, the faster they get treats or walks or ball tosses, etc. Remember, don't start the walk before puppy eliminates as they will get distracted on the walk and busy themselves doing other "stuff", then when it's time for you to go back in the house to go to work or make dinner, puppy will realize "oh, I forgot to pee", and they'll make a mistake in the house.

If you take puppy out and they don't eliminate, then they need to come back in and either go back into the crate or get tethered directly to your waist for close supervision for the next 30 minutes and the cycle is repeated from there. This will eliminate their ability to make mistakes inside and get their "brain gears" thinking about needing to let you know when they need to go outside. We need to reverse puppy thinking so that eliminating outdoors does not signal the end of playtime outdoors or walks. Eliminating quickly once they get outside now signals the beginning of playtime and fun walks, etc!

The crate must be associated with fun things. Puppies need to learn how to be alone or they will frequently have problems such as separation anxiety in the future. Making positive associations with crate time from the very beginning helps puppies learn that the crate is a great place to be, not a place they get “locked up” away from their human families. Fabulous interactive chew toys (such as a stuffed Kong™, sterilized hard bones filled with peanut butter or a little cream cheese) should be put in the crate for the dog when you are unable to supervise them directly and with a very watchful eye. This special treat will help create a positive association with crate time and make puppies look forward to time alone because that is the time they get their “super special treats”.

Be sure to restrict your pup’s access to the house until they have earned it. Too many puppies are given the run of the house from the very beginning which makes close supervision very difficult. Puppies should be restricted to the room you are in until they are “accident free” for at least 2-3 months. They can then earn access to an additional room from there and so on. It is easier to give them access gradually then it is to take it away once they are used to roaming wherever they please. Keeping them a bit restricted also ensures that you can keep a close eye on them and prevent chewing catastrophes as well.

Puppies need jobs to do and it is in your best interest to keep them “working” on appropriate chew toys rather than the leg of the coffee table. Small increments of training can also be incorporated into a daily routine very quickly if your puppy is close by all of the time for the first 6-9 months. **Close supervision** allows you to teach appropriate behavior and significantly decreases the chances for bad behavior as you are more likely to be able to “catch them in the act” and redirect them to something more appropriate.

It’s OK to let them drag a short (4ft) leash so you can readily tether them to keep them in sight and out of trouble. The leash will also give you quick access when they have to take an unexpected potty break. “Power Chewing” puppies must have appropriate chew toys while unattended or they will make short work of your valuables. I recommend any KONG™ product as they are virtually “chew proof” and hard sterilized bones stuffed with kibble, cream cheese, peanut butter or anything else that might be in your refrigerator and will help keep puppy happy and busy!

Management of puppies and their endless energy is a tough job! Use interactive toys and good quality chew stuff to help take some of the pressure off you when you need a little time for yourself, or you just want to eat dinner in peace without a dog nose bugging you tirelessly! Put your puppy to work extracting his/her meals from an interactive Tricky

Treat™ ball or a stuffed Kong™, so he/she burns up mental energy while he/she is busy eating their meal AND leaving you alone for 20 minutes! Tether your pup to a desk or living room chair with a delicious chewie bone while you eat dinner or read the newspaper at the end of the day.

Interactive toys will help keep your puppy from getting “bored”, which often leads to destructive behavior and/or attention seeking behaviors like barking. Keeping them busy and “working” and confined to the room you are in protects them, your house and your mental sanity while they learn the rules of the house and some critical doggie manners along the way!

