

# **Potty Training Made Easy**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most exciting things that most dog lovers can imagine is bringing home a new puppy or dog for the first time. Unfortunately, this excitement often wears off quickly when the new little addition to the family begins using the house as a bathroom area. Fortunately, with a bit of consideration and understanding of some of the basic principles of potty training a dog, it is easy and simple to teach your dog or puppy this very important behavior.

There are some points to keep in mind when planning or starting your potty training routine. No matter which method you decide to use, there will be accidents. Plan for them, accept them and move on with as little fuss and negative actions or punishment towards the puppy as possible. Usually with puppies, accidents are due to very small bladders and bowels and poor control as their bodies develop, very similar to young human infants.

Avoid punishing or reprimanding your puppy for an accident, as it is likely to be more a fault of the owner for not taking the puppy to the potty area soon enough. Learn from mistakes and keep notes on when the puppy has accidents. Try to see if there is a pattern developing that can assist you in the training, rather than become frustrated with the puppy. Virtually every puppy wants to make his or her owner happy, and this can be used as an effective motivator in potty training even young puppies.

Older dogs that are being housebroken or potty trained for the first time will also have accidents, until they understand what you want. Again, patience and a positive attitude will help the training process. Remember that dogs aren't aware of the value of antique rugs or wall-to-wall carpeting, rather they tend to relieve themselves where they feel they should - usually somewhere out of the way, like behind the couch or in the corner behind the potted palm.

There are many things that pet owners can do to make the process of potty training easy for their new dog or puppy. Good planning, an understanding of the potty training method to be used, plus other factors such as high quality food, lots of exercise, attention and love can all have a bearing on the time that it takes to potty train your dog.

It is also important to consider that some breeds are generally more challenging to potty train than others. Smaller breeds, particularly some of the toy dogs, can be more difficult to train simply because they are so small

and they can easily slip under furniture or behind a chair and complete their toilet without even being noticed. With a little extra attention and effort these breeds can be potty trained successfully.

Finally, each dog is different in personality and temperament. Some puppies and dogs seem to almost potty train themselves where others, even from the same litter, may require additional training but will soon learn what is expected.



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# POTTY TRAINING METHODS

There are several different potty training methods that can be used. Deciding on the best potty training method depends a lot on the age of the dog, the time that you have to interact with the dog or puppy, and what method you are most comfortable with. Some of the potty training methods encourage the dog or puppy to use an outside area to relieve themselves, whereas others focus on containing the area the puppy or dog uses inside of the house - by the use of litter boxes, potty training pads or even newspapers.

The following sections will outline each common method of potty training for either a dog or a puppy, and will indicated the advantages and disadvantages of each.

## **CRATE TRAINING**

Crate training is one of the most effective ways to potty train a puppy or a small to medium sized dog, as it uses the natural "denning instinct" of the dog to encourage it to keep the area that it sleeps clean and free from waste materials. In the wild, the den is kept clean by the mother while the puppies are young. Once they get older and are able to walk, they naturally go outside of the living area or den to relieve themselves. In houses there are no dens, and the area is simply too large for puppies to feel that this is "their spot". By providing a den, in the form of a crate, the puppy will learn to wait until he or she is taken outside before soiling in the crate.

Crate training does required active participation and monitoring on the part of the dog owner. The following is an outline of how to complete a crate training routine:

- Purchase an appropriately sized crate, either plastic or wire, that is large enough for the puppy to stand and stretch out comfortably.
- Make sure the crate is comfortable - use soft, washable liners or dog blankets.
- Sit with your puppy at the door of the crate. Place a small treat inside the crate. Praise the puppy for going into the crate and getting the treat. Let the puppy come out when he or she wants, **do not** close the door at this time.
- Only praise for going in the crate, ignore the puppy when he or she is coming out.

- When the puppy or dog walks into the crate say "Crate" or "Den" or whatever word you wish to associate with going into the crate.
- When the dog is staying in the crate on their own to eat the treats, close the door for a few seconds, then open it up. Only praise when the dog goes in, **never** when it is exiting. Soon the dog realizes in is good, out is neutral.
- After the puppy or dog is fine with being in the crate for more than a few minutes, put a chew toy in with the dog to keep it occupied. Try very slowly and gradually increasing your distance away from the crate, and the time in the crate with the door closed.
- Since the puppy or dog will not eliminate when they are in the crate because it is their den, take them outside to eliminate when they come out of the crate.
- After feeding, crate the puppy with a chew toy. In about 10-15 minutes take the puppy out of the crate and to the designated toilet area. Do not play or interact with the puppy at this time, simply take them to the spot.
- If the puppy relieves itself, praise the puppy and spend some time interacting. If, after about 3-5 minutes the puppy has not toileted, return it to the crate, again without saying anything, for an additional five minutes. Repeat the process without interacting with the puppy until it goes to the bathroom. Praise and play always follow toileting while crate training.
- At night, keep the crate in the bedroom or somewhere that you can easily hear the puppy. If he or she whines, take them to the toilet area and return them to the crate with as little interaction as possible. Just a simple "good girl" or boy will do when they toilet. Too much praise will be seen as play, and may encourage the puppy to whine throughout the night.

The advantages to crate training include the fact that it uses the puppies or dogs natural instincts to help with the learning process. It minimizes the dangers of messes and accidents around the house when done correctly. In addition the puppy feels secure, and they can understand what is required in a relatively short time.



Disadvantages to crate training are few, but the biggest one is that it will only work if the trainer monitors the puppy closely while in the crate, and follows the attention/inattention guidelines. Some owners may think that crate training is cruel, but this is simply not the case. Once people understand the crate is not used as a punishment but as a safe and secure place for the puppy, they change their opinion quickly.

## **LITTER BOX TRAINING**

People are very familiar with litter box training of cats, but many people don't realize the same technique can be used with dogs. Simply because of size, this process works best with toy or small dogs, and is usually used when people live in apartments or are unable to let their dogs outside at regular intervals. Litter box training can be used as a back-up plan if the dog may need to be left in the house for long periods of time.

Litter box training can be completed using the following strategies:

- Designate a spot in the house or apartment that is a litter box area. An uncarpeted area is ideal, or simply lay some heavy plastic sheeting like paint drop cloths under the litter box.



- Use a bit of commercial kitty litter or shredded newspaper in the bottom of the box.
- When you notice the dog or puppy becoming agitated, whining, circling around or sniffing take them to the litter box and place them inside.
- If they don't relieve themselves, take them out of the box and away from the area until they start the behaviors again.
- When they relieve themselves in the box provide lots of praise.
- Some dogs and puppies will need to have the scent of the urine left in the box until they understand that this is the toilet area.

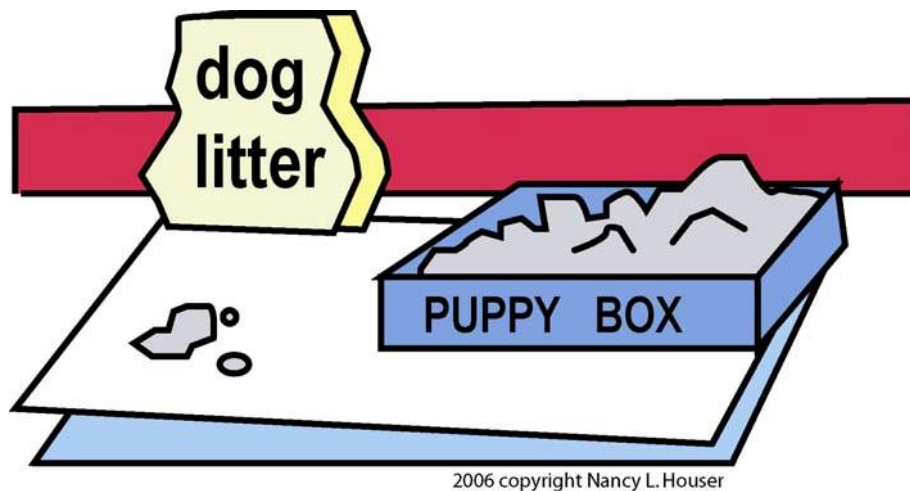


The key to litter box training is that you have to actively be watching the dog or puppy around the times that you know that it will relieve itself. This is usually 10-20 minutes after eating, right after waking from a nap, or shortly after drinking water. Many dogs and puppies also have to urinate after or during exercise periods. Watch for signs that your dog or puppy is suddenly disinterested in the game and appears to be more engaged in sniffing around the room; this is usually a sign that they will need to toilet.

One problem with litter box training is that unlike a confined training method like crate training, you have no way to be in constant supervision of the dog. A way to overcome this is to keep the dog on a short leash, three to four feet at the most, and keep it attached to you at all times. While this may be a bit difficult at first, it will help you monitor the dog or puppy at all times, and will allow you to know when to take it to the litter box. The same process can be used at night by tethering the dog to a piece of furniture in the bedroom and providing a doggy bed or blanket to sleep on. When you hear the puppy or dog start to whine or move around, simply take them to the litter box and then return them to the bed area.

The advantage to litter box training is that it allows the dog or puppy to recognize where you want it to eliminate. A litter box can also be used outdoors to prevent difficult yard clean-ups.

The major disadvantage to litter box training is that dogs, unlike cats, do not cover the waste with the litter. The dog litter box will quickly become very foul smelling if not cleaned as soon as the dog uses it. Some commercial potty pads or even cat litter has deodorant in it, but this is usually not enough to cover the smell of the waste. Dogs that have been previously trained to only go outside to toilet may be very difficult to litter train, and it may not be advisable to try this method with previously potty trained dogs.



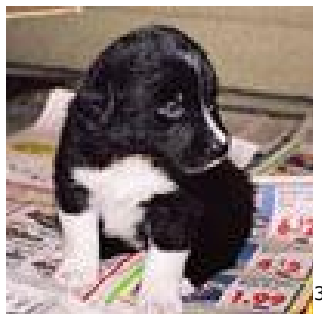
## **PAPER TRAINING**

Paper training is often a solution for those people that have to leave their dog or puppy alone infrequently, but want to have the pet understand that there is a place to eliminate other than the carpet on the living room floor. Paper training with puppies follows the basic strategies similar to other potty training methods, in that it is designed to teach the puppy where to go, not to punish him or her for going in the incorrect location.

Puppies quickly learn to associate a toilet area by how it feels to their feet. Once a puppy has been trained to eliminate on a particular surface type, they may have difficulty transitioning to another surface. Paper training can sometimes make this easier, since it is easy to simply put paper down outside and get the puppy or dog to go outside on the paper, as well as in the house on the paper.

To start a paper training program with your dog or puppy follow the steps below:

- Designate an area of a tiled or hard floor surface of the house or apartment. It is not advisable to use this technique on a carpeted area even when covered with plastic, as the dog's toenails will puncture the plastic and the urine will leak into the carpet.
- Cover this area with the type of paper you are planning to use. Most people use newspaper or roll butcher paper. Make the area an appropriate size, so that it is about three to four times the size of the dog. Areas too small will not work for the dog physically, and areas that are too large will take up more space and will be harder to manage.
- A potty training pad can also be used in place of paper, and has the added benefit of being treated with an attractant to encourage the puppy to use the area.
- Allow several sheets of thickness to absorb the urine or fecal material.
- Monitor the dog or puppy very closely.
- At the first sign of agitation or sniffing around, circling or whining take the dog or puppy to the papered area.
- Let them sniff around and praise them when they eliminate on the paper.
- If they don't use the paper within 3-4 minutes remove them from the area and come back again and repeat the process.
- Keep constant supervision of the dog or puppy.



Paper training often works best with small dogs and puppies, especially if the kennel that the puppy is from used papers. The biggest advantage to paper training is that it is very inexpensive, and is easy to do wherever you may be. Dogs quickly learn that paper equals toilet area, and this can be set up anywhere.

The most obvious disadvantage is the odor that is associated with paper training. No matter how careful the owner is, the urine and fecal matter will be in contact with the floor surface, unless very heavy protective plastic is used between the floor and the paper. In addition, one of the advantages of paper training - the paper equals toilet area advantage - also becomes a disadvantage if newspapers are left on the floor beside a favorite reading chair!

## **POTTY PAD TRAINING**

Potty training pads can be used in the same manner that paper is. They are much more effective at controlling odor and absorbing liquids than standard newspaper.

Potty training pads are sold in various sizes from relatively small to quite large. Basically they are similar to a disposable diaper in composition, although there is often a layer of liquid absorbing crystals inside the pad that forms a gel when the dog urinates on the pad. This holds the liquid inside the pad and minimizes the tracking of the waste onto surrounding floor areas.

The potty training pads also have a plastic backing that prevents damage to the floor area beneath the pad. Like paper, they are simply placed in the dog toilet area within the house. Many of the potty training pads also have a chemical scent added to the potty pad to encourage the dog or puppy to use the pad.



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## **ON COMMAND**

Teaching your dog to urinate on command is not as difficult as it sounds, and is a wonderful behavior to teach both for house training or potty training for when you are traveling. The key to on command potty training is to monitor the dog constantly, and be prepared to give praise and reward for doing the right thing at the right time.

To start a program of on command toileting is relatively simple. The key is to catch the dog just as he or she is about to urinate. As soon as you see the leg lift on a male dog or the squat of a female dog, give the command you wish to use. This can be "Get Busy", "Tinkle" or "Toilet". The command word itself is not important, but it should not sound like any other commands or the dog will become confused. A word like "Go" should be avoided because it sounds too much like "No" and will lead to a problem with training. Always make sure everyone working with the dog is giving the same command. You may also want to consider the fact that you may have to give the command when others are around, so make sure it is a not offensive word or something that is inappropriate to say in public.

With the sign that the dog is going to urinate, the verbal command is given. Immediately after the dog finishes, there should be lots of praise and a treat. If the dog goes in the correct area before you give the command, don't punish or reprimand the dog, simply praise them for using the toilet area.

The key to on command training is understanding when the dog is associating your command with the act of relieving him or herself. If you notice the dog looks up at you in the toilet area, they are likely waiting for the command to urinate. Be sure to praise, and give lots of treats when the dog urinates on command.

Some points to keep in mind for on command training include:

- This works by pairing a natural behavior with a command, and the more frequently it is done, the quicker the dog will understand the connection.
- Treats are very important, so buy some small sized good quality treats and keep them with you when you are walking or outside with the dog.
- When first starting out, go to areas that are "attractive" to a dog for urinating, including areas where other dogs go.
- Learn your dog's behavior by observing how they act before they have to go - this will help you time the command.

- Use the same spot as a toilet area until your dog is using the on command routine perfectly before using it in unfamiliar areas.
- Always praise the dog for a job well done, especially when they are outside in new places.
- If the dog does not go on command do not punish them. Start back in the familiar area and go slowly to giving the command in other areas.

Usually on command training is only done after the dog has been potty trained or during the process, when the puppy or dog understands the toilet area, either inside or outside of the house.

## **POTTY TRAINING IN EXTREME CLIMATES**

Extreme climates that are very wet, windy or cold may pose their own challenge to potty training a dog or puppy. Most pets, like humans, prefer to stay indoors on cold, wet, snowy and rainy days. Some breeds, especially miniature breeds, toy breeds, small dogs and those with very short coats or single coats will not want to go outside on those nasty days.

If you know that you live in a cold or wet climate and are planning on getting a puppy or dog, an excellent bit of advice is to try to time the arrival of your new dog or puppy with the best possible weather conditions. This usually means purchasing the puppy in the late spring or early summer, hopefully leaving you several weeks to get the potty training completed prior to bad weather setting in. However, this is not always possible, and often puppies or dogs come home in the worse weather conditions for potty training. Below are some tips and strategies for potty training in cold or poor weather conditions:

- Try to make potty training outside as short of a time period as possible. Take the dog out and then return them to the house and reward and praise indoors, especially if the dog does not enjoy being outdoors.
- Don't assume because you don't like the weather the dog doesn't. Many terriers, small dogs and even miniatures enjoy being outside for brief amounts of time in the snow. Most breeds of dogs do not enjoy the rain but again, some breeds do.
- If your dog is extremely unhappy about going outside in the cold or rain consider an alternative toilet area of cold weather. Perhaps paper or litter training in the garage or carport area if you have a covered area may be more suitable and less out of the elements. Potty pads may also be an option in cold climates and rainy conditions.

- Be reasonable with regards to the temperatures your breed of dog can stand. Chihuahua's simply cannot tolerate cold or wet so expecting this breed to go outside under bad weather conditions simply will not work and can cause the dog to become ill if it is forced to stay outside.
- Litter box training for small dogs may be an option for these small dogs even if it is only used on bad weather days.
- Use the best possible weather to take the dog outside. You may have to adjust feeding schedules over the winter months, to allow your pet to eat and then eliminate when it is the warmest temperature. This is usually in the mid to late afternoon.
- Perhaps consider a warm doggy coat if you are crate training or potty training and have time to get the dog "dressed" to go outside and do his or her business. They will need to adjust to having the garment on, and may initially take some time to get used to it, particularly puppies.

Potty training in extreme climates is often just as difficult for the owner as it may be for the puppy or dog. Keep to a schedule as much as possible with feeding, exercise and play. Avoid changing your dog's brand of dog food over this time, as changing feeds can often result in diarrhea and other stomach problems that will increase the dog's need to make trips outside.

# **POTTY TRAINING FOR A NEW PUPPY**

Bringing a new puppy home from the kennel for the first time is a wonderful experience. A puppy starts learning about you and what you want on your very first contact, and it is important to start out on the right foot when it comes to puppy potty training. Allowing bad habits to begin will only result in more challenges to training the puppy, as he or she will have to both unlearn bad habits and re-learn desired behaviors. By starting with potty training right from the start, the puppy is better able to understand what you want, and will establish your relationship with the puppy as the leader.

## **WHEN TO START**

Puppies will usually be removed from their mother's care and given to new owners when they are between six to eight weeks of age. Puppies, even this young and small, can begin to be potty trained from the moment that they arrive at your house. Puppies at the age of less than ten weeks usually will need to either urinate or defecate every two to three hours. By taking your puppy outside prior to these time limits, the puppy will learn to relieve him or herself outside, and will also become comfortable with the feel of the lawn or concrete under their feet when they are relieving themselves. This is big component of potty training a puppy, as they will begin to associate the feel of the ground surface outside with going to the bathroom, and the surface of the floor inside as playing and resting - but more importantly not toileting.

If you are able to prevent the puppy from having accidents in the house, he or she will not develop the habit, and will be much easier to potty train than a puppy that is allowed to soil in the house initially and then potty trained later.

It is important to remember that puppies, like babies, have very small bladders and stomachs and have poor muscle control. They cannot be expected to walk far or delay having to go, so proper house preparation is important.



## **PREPARING THE HOUSE**

In order to make potty training your puppy as easy as possible, there are a few changes that can be made to the house to simplify the process for both you and the puppy. The following tips can make potty training, whether crate training, litter box training, or paper or potty pad training easier for all involved:

- Control the area that the puppy has access to. This means installing puppy gates at doors, using a crate, purchasing a indoor puppy pen or keeping your puppy on a leash that is either attached to a piece of heavy furniture or even better, attached to you. This prevents the puppy from sneaking off into the other room to eliminate,, or from getting behind furniture to do their business.
- If your puppy area has lots of items on the floor you may wish to remove them and keep the room as uncluttered as possible. Clutter is a perfect place for the puppy to slip behind to use the toilet.
- Consider keeping your puppy confined to an area that has no carpet. Anticipate accidents and prepare for them. Cleaning up on tile or linoleum surfaces is much easier than cleaning carpet.
- Have the puppy area relatively close to the exit or door that you will need to take the puppy through to go outside, and keep this exit consistent. If the puppy area is on the other side of the house from the door, there is a greater chance that tiny bladders will lose control as you are making for the door. With the puppy area close to the door, the time between the signs of needing to go outside and actually getting outside will be much shorter.

Remember that safety is also important. Don't have the puppy rushing up or downstairs to go outside as they can hurt themselves in the hurry. In addition if you are leashing the puppy, only allow 3 to 4 feet for the leash and monitor them constantly to avoid any chance of them choking or chewing on the leash and choking on the parts.

## **BASIC TRAINING PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND**

As a new puppy owner, there are some basic training principles that can be helpful in working with even a very young puppy when potty training. One of the biggest considerations is that you are working to mold or shape a puppy's behavior, and this takes time. It would be unreasonable to expect a baby to be potty trained the first time you put them on the toilet, and it is unreasonable that a puppy will be potty trained the first time you take them outside, put them in the litter box or placed them on the potty pad or newspaper. Patience and constant monitoring of the puppy is what is needed to make this process as stress free as possible for both you and the puppy.

The following basic principles for potty training can be kept in mind to help modify what you may be doing to make it work for you and your puppy:

- Different breeds mature both physically and behaviorally at different rates. Don't assume that every puppy will hit the same milestones at the same time. Just like people, dogs have different abilities and intelligence levels. Some puppies will need additional time, attention and praise to understand what is expected of them with regards to potty training.
- Remember that it takes time for bladder control to develop fully, with some breeds this can be up to several months. If the puppy seems to be urinating too frequently, be sure to have a vet examine the puppy as it may have bladder infection or genetic condition that is causing the frequent elimination.
- Housetraining a puppy should be as consistent as possible. Ideally one person should work with the puppy until they understand the concept, then other people can start working with the puppy. The more variances there are in the training, the longer the process will be.
- Never punish a puppy for an accident. This will only cause the puppy to distrust and stay away from you, resulting in more messes in the house. The puppy must love and trust you to make housetraining successful.
- Never restrict a puppy's access to fresh, clean water. Dehydration can happen very quickly with puppies, especially in hot climates, and can result in severe health conditions and even death in extreme cases. Limiting water before bedtime may be acceptable as long as the puppy has free access during the day.

- Praise should be the cornerstone of the puppy potty training routine. Praise given after the puppy has used the designated toilet area reinforces the desired behavior. Since a puppy loves to know they have done a good job, this will be a very powerful motivator to go to the correct area next time.
- Keep a journal or log of when the puppy eliminates and when it eats and drinks. This will help you determine when the puppy may need to go outside.

Finally, remember that an accident on the part of the puppy is due to lack of attention on the owner's part. If the owner had noted the puppy's pre-elimination behavior and taken them to the potty area, the accident would not have happened. Clean the area completely and then begin again, being sure to attend more to the puppy to catch them when they are starting to indicate that they have to go.



**Being patient is the key to successful potty training. Puppies are like babies, and they won't learn to toilet correctly overnight. Do not use harsh or loud "corrective" measures as it will have the opposite effect.**

# **POTTY TRAINING THE OLDER DOG**

There are some dogs that were never potty trained or never had any housetraining while they were puppies. This could be because they were always outside dogs or lived with owners that simply couldn't manage to housetrain their pet. One of the most common reasons for older dogs ending up in shelters and at the pound is because the owners simply didn't have the time, energy or skills to housebreak their dog. The good news is that you can teach an old dog new tricks, and even senior dogs that have not been housebroken can learn to ask to go outside to relieve themselves.

Many of the techniques used with older dogs are very different than working with puppies. This is largely due to the fact that older dogs need to be correctively trained to go outside. This means, in fact, that they must "un-learn" their previous behavior of relieving themselves in the house.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER DOGS**

When planning to potty train or housetrain an older dog, there are some important considerations to keep in mind. If you know the previous owners of the dog, you may be able to find some of the necessary information, but if you got the dog from a rescue shelter the pet's background may or may not be know.

An older dog may have several conditions that cause them to urinate in the house that are not related to potty training issues. If your older dog is urinating in the house frequently, no matter what type of housebreaking program you are using, the dog should be taken to a vet as soon as possible. Some of the conditions that can cause lack of bladder control in older dogs are:

- Kidney stones, infections, or genetic conditions or diseases
- Bladder infections or diseases including bladder stones
- Improper pH levels in the urine
- Hormonal imbalances
- Female dogs may have issues with bladder problems after having puppies
- Male dogs may have prostate problems
- Incontinence that is age related

Most of these conditions can be cured with antibiotic treatments or other specialized treatment that your veterinary can provide. It is unfair and damaging to the dog to punish them for accidents that are simply beyond their control. Having the vet examine your dog is usually the first step in determining if the bladder control issue is a medical condition or a behavior. If the dog urinates in the house frequently only when you are not home, but does not seem to have the same troubles when you are home, it is more likely to be behavior that is driven by anxiety or fear of abandonment. Often dogs that have been found and turned in to shelters exhibit this pattern of urination. The new owners working with the dog providing love and attention, as well as a consistent potty training routine will usually overcome this issue with older dogs.

As dogs mature and become senior dogs is likely that they will experience some level of incontinence, as they begin to lose control of the bladder and sometimes even the bowels. There are special dog diapers and pads available for senior dogs with incontinence problems.

For those mature dogs that simply have not been housetrained, there are several different options available for owners. The first is simply to be sure to take the dog outside every two to three hours, especially when it is first brought to the house. This will prevent most accidents inside, and will allow the dog to understand where and when you want it to relieve itself.

Remember that an older dog may have been punished for urinating or defecating in front of people, whether inside or outside. This may make it hard for the mature dog to relieve itself in your presence. Try having the dog go outside in the yard with you, off a leash, until it is comfortable with you being present when it toilets. Give lots of praise and maybe play for a bit outside, but only **after** the dog has gone to the bathroom. Romping around before will simply encourage the dog to want to go outside, without actually doing anything but play. If you don't have a fenced yard, consider one of the long, retractable leashes that will give the dog privacy while still allowing you to have control.

Litter training or paper training will often work for smaller breeds of dogs, but again, if the dog has been punished for relieving themselves in the house they may be very uncomfortable doing this until they have built a relationship of trust with you. Take things slowly, and provide lots of praise when the dog goes outside. Respond as soon as the dog indicates there is a need to go out.

Don't play with the dog, simply take them to the designated area and wait about five minutes. If the dog does not relieve themselves return to the house with no comments, treats or play. Repeat the process until the dog does toilet, then give lots of praise and attention. Soon the mature dog will understand what you want and that going outside is rewarding for them.

## **CRATE TRAINING FOR OLDER DOGS**

Crate training older dogs is very similar to crate training younger dogs or pups. Many older dogs, especially those that have been in an animal shelter or even in a vet's office, may have a natural fear of being confined in a crate. The key to helping the dog is to have him or her understand that the crate is their comfort area, not a place to go when they have been bad.

Crate training provides a place of safety and security for an older dog, just as it does for a puppy. All dogs have an instinct to stay in a den or enclosed area, so working with an older dog to help them learn the crate is their safe haven will take some attention and time but is well worth it.

To make crate training as positive follow these guidelines:

1. The crate should be the correct size. The dog should be able to stand up comfortably without hitting his or her head, and should be able to lay down with front feet extended in at least one direction in the crate.
2. Provide a blanket or liner to the crate that is padded and will be comfortable for the dog to lie down on. A washable fabric is often best, as it will become dirty from use.
3. Add some chew toys to provide something for the dog to play with while in the crate.
4. Provide water for the dog in the crate. Clip on pet water bottles are available that will not drip or splash onto the liner or blanket.
5. Position the crate so that the dog can see people or see the room. They are less likely to feel isolated if they can still see a familiar area or the family members.
6. Start by just having the dog walk into the crate. Usually a treat placed and the door is a good start. Allow the dog to even just grab it and move elsewhere to eat the treat. Put another one just a bit farther in. Keep doing this until the dog will walk in and eat the treat inside. **Do not close the door or detain the dog in the cage at this point.**
7. Encourage the dog to stay in the crate for longer periods of time. This can be done by feeding treats through the other of sitting beside the crate and talking to the dog. Always praise the dog for entering the crate but ignore any behavior when coming out of the crate.
8. When the dog goes into the crate and stays try shutting the door for 30 seconds. Gradually increase this time. If the dog becomes panicky

at any point go back to a shorter time. Stay right beside the crate during this training, do not walk off and leave.

9. Once the dog stays calm for 5 or more minutes with the door closed try moving off a bit farther, but stay in the same room. Gradually increase your distance and the time away.

Work at the pace set by the dog, not by what you would like to accomplish. Once the dog realizes the crate is just a temporary place to rest, he or she will be very comfortable staying in the crate when you are away. Never leave a dog crated for more than four hours to prevent any accidents.

To housebreak using the crate, simply put the dog into the crate after eating or drinking. After 10 to 20 minutes take the dog outside to the toilet area. If he or she eliminates, praise them and play with them, and return with them to the house. If they don't, return them to the crate, without saying a word, and then try again in five or ten minutes. Within a very short period of time your dog will learn to go outside. Many dogs prefer to stay in the crate at night, so simply bring the crate into the bedroom so you can monitor their behavior or need to go outside.

## **TIPS FOR POTTY TRAINING OLDER DOGS**

If you have started the process of potty training or housetraining an older dog, or if you are planning to start, there are some tips and techniques that work effectively. One thing that owners must remember is that every dog will learn at a different rate, and every dog will naturally be better at some tasks than others. Try to be as patient with an older dog, as you would be with a puppy. Love and attention will only help strengthen the bond between you and your dog and help the training process.

Some thoughts to keep in mind with older dogs are:

- Never punish an older dog if catch it in the act of relieving itself in the house. Simply rush it outside and hopefully it will finish there, and then praise the dog for ending up in the right spot. Punishing will only encourage the dog to be sneaky and hide when they are relieving themselves.
- Never punish a dog for an older accident that you have just discovered. Dogs won't make the connection between the spot on the carpet and their behavior; they will just know that you are mad at them.

- Never punish a dog for submission urination. This occurs when a dog in a pack is indicating to another dog that they are submissive to it. As the dominant family member an adult dog, especially one that may have been abused, may naturally urinate in submission. Punishment, including yelling, will only make the problem much worse. Playing with the dog, providing love and affection and having the dog outside when you greet it will make the situation better.
- Male dogs may mark their territory, even inside a house. If you have more than one dog in the house you may find that even the housetrained male starts to urinate inside when the untrained dog comes to the house. Cleaning and disinfecting is the key to preventing this problem.
- Adult dogs that urinate or mess in the house only when you are not home may have anxiety problems, or may simply be bored. Try taking the dog for a long walk before you leave, ensuring that they go while you are outside. Praise the dog when you return and there are no surprises. Start small, leaving for only 1 to 5 minutes and then gradually stay away longer. Provide lots of chew toys and entertaining things for the dog to play with while you are away.
- If you are going to be gone long periods of time consider having a neighbor or friend come over and let the dog outside or take them for a walk. If you are going to use this strategy be sure to introduce the dog to the friend so they already know each other before the first time they come to let the dog out.
- Finally, be consistent. Don't change rewards or cues in the middle of training; it will only further confuse the dog.

Housetraining or potty training an adult dog is more challenging than working with a puppy, but remember that older dogs want your love and attention too. Once they clearly understand what you want, they are more able to hold their bladders and bowels than puppies, so this can make the process easier in the long run. Be patient with your older dog, and be sure to provide lots of treats and attention when they do the right thing.



# PLANNING FOR POTTY TRAINING

By planning in advance for either puppy potty training or housebreaking an adult dog, the process will be much easier for both the owner and the dog. Having the right equipment, supplies, cleaning materials and even schedules for food, water and exercise can really help. Before bringing the dog or puppy home, reviewing the method that you would like to use for potty training your dog is critical to getting the right supplies and other needs.

## EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Since each method of housetraining, crate training, litter training or paper or puppy pad training requires slightly different supplies each section will be discussed separately. While the following lists are meant to be inclusive, you may find that there are additional supplies and materials that you may need depending on your situation.

### CRATE TRAINING

The basic equipment needed for crate training is provided below. While there are two types of crates listed you may only need one, which type is really a personal choice:

- **Wire crate** – wire crates are usually lighter and provide more opportunities for dogs to see out and people to see in. This may be important if your dog is very nervous and needs to be able to see what is going on to feel comfortable. Most wire crates will fold down when not in use and can be easily used in cars or vehicles. Most airlines will not allow wire crates.
- **Plastic crates** – generally very sturdy but can be chewed. Plastic crates are usually very practical for small and medium sized dogs but may not be suitable for moving large breeds.
- **Washable padding** – special fabric that doesn't trap hair or dirt is available on commercially purchased crate liners. Be sure the liner is washable so you can easily clean it if it becomes soiled or dirty. Avoid

using "people" blankets that are down or filled as the dog will chew through them and pull out the stuffing, posing a choking hazards and making a huge mess.

- **Chew toys** – the dog or puppy should have good quality, sturdy chew toys to keep themselves entertained while in the crate. For the same reasons listed above avoid putting stuffed toys into the crate with the dog or puppy.
- **Clip-on water bottle** – keep the dog hydrated while preventing any spills or mess.

## **LITTER BOX TRAINING**

The basic supplies for litter box training include:

- **Appropriately sized litter box** - There are some special dog litter boxes but a cat box will work as well. Due to the size small or toy dogs usually can use the standard cat boxes but you may have to build your own for larger dogs. Some Rubbermaid flat plastic storage tubs may work for larger breeds.
- **Litter** – this can be shredded paper, paper sheets, potty training pad or litter pellets. Remember that potty training pads can be shredded and some dogs will eat litter so care needs to be taken when choosing the correct substrate to use.
- **Heavy plastic** – it is a good idea to place the litter box on heavy plastic for easy clean up in the case of spills or messes over the edge of the box.

## **PAPER TRAINING**

Paper training requires the fewest supplies with just paper or potty training pads placed on the ground in a designated area. Some of the commercially available potty pads are chemically treated to encourage the dog or puppy to urinate on them and then also are odor absorbent to help control the smell.

With all methods a good quality leash and collar is also important, as are treats and toys for rewards for good behavior.

## **CLEANING TIPS FOR SOILED AREAS**

No matter how well you plan, there will be accidents with housetraining both puppies and dogs. Try to avoid getting upset when these situations occur, and simply have the necessary equipment to clean them up on hand. Cleaning soiled areas as soon as possible is very important, both to prevent discolorations and smells in the fabric or surface areas, as well as preventing your dog from returning to the same spot at a later date.

There are several very good commercial cleaners on the market. They are available at most pet stores as well as on the internet. Products that eliminate pet odors often have an orange peel ingredient that works very well for two reasons; dogs don't like the scent and people generally do. There are also some industrial use flakes that can be sprinkled over both fecal material and urine, that absorb the moisture as well as the odor and dry out the waste. The resulting dry waste can simply be collected with a broom or a vacuum.

If you don't want to purchase commercially available products, there are some homemade doggy cleaning products that work just as well. For any type of mess remember to clean as much of the liquid off the surface as soon as possible. The faster the cleaning product is applied to the soiled area, the more complete the removal will be.

A good way to remove both stains and odor is using a simple mixture of one part white vinegar with two to three parts water. A bit of liquid soap, approximately one teaspoon full to one cup water/vinegar mix will be an excellent cleaning solution on almost every surface. Be sure to spray on and then blot up, never rub, especially on carpet or fabric.

Borax or baking soda sprinkled on urine stains and then allowed to dry will absorb the liquid and eliminate odors. When the powder is completely dry vacuum thoroughly.

If the dog has constantly urinated in the same place and the urine has soaked down to the pad under the carpet, the only option may be to remove that part of the carpet and padding and replace it with new. Commercial cleaners may be able to clean even deep-set stains but often the continuing problem will be odor. Be cautious using fabric deodorizing products, as this may eliminate the odor for humans, but the keen nose of a dog will still be able to tell that urine is present in the area.

Cleaning products to avoid when trying to remove stains and odor are anything with bleach. Bleach contains the compound ammonia, which has the same properties as urine and may, in fact, cause the dog to return to the spot to urinate again.

One of the best ways to avoid soiled carpets and fabric is to remove the dog from those areas when you are not able to supervise. Crate training or a dog room or pen, or putting the dog outside or in a kennel when you cannot monitor them is one of the best options.

# **COMMON POTTY TRAINING PROBLEMS AND WHAT TO DO**

Often there are little bumps along the road to potty or housetraining your dog or puppy. Sometimes they may actually derail the training process and may make life much more challenging for the owner. Some common questions and problems that owners experience when potty training their dogs or puppies are discussed below.

## **MESSING IN THE CRATE**

Often dogs or puppies get into the habit of messing in the crate because they have been left in the crate for too long. Start with a fresh liner, and work with the puppy or dog to get them outside sooner. In addition, if the crate is much larger than the dog, he or she may see part of the crate as their den and part of the crate as the bathroom. Inserting a board or wire mesh into the back of the crate and making it smaller can correct this. A smaller crate only provides enough room for the dog to be in, not enough room for them to relieve themselves in part.

## **MESSING IN THE HOUSE WHEN YOU ARE AWAY**

This is usually caused by either boredom or anxiety. Try walking the dog for a good, long, brisk walk before leaving them alone. If they have been crate trained you may wish to use this again, provided you will not be gone prolonged periods of time. Leave lots of toys for the dog to play with, or try leaving an old, unwashed t-shirt in their sleeping areas so they know you are around.

## **TIME IN THE CRATE**

Time in the crate is roughly equivalent to a dog's age. A good guideline is one hour per month, up to a maximum of four hours. Therefore a puppy of 2 months can stay in the crate a maximum of two hours after going outside before they will need to go again, provided they are not fed in between. No dog should be crated for more than four hours without the ability to signal to you they need to go outside.

## **FEED AND WATER SCHEDULES**

By controlling the amount of food and water your dog or puppy has, you can regulate their times outside. Generally dogs will need to go outside between 15 and 30 minutes after eating. They will need to urinate every three to four hours during the day, and mature dogs usually do not need to go out over the night once they are housebroken. Therefore it is important to feed at least 45 minutes prior to leaving the dog or puppy alone. Be sure to follow crate-training procedures, or supervise them between eating and going outside. It is better to take them out too soon that too late, so be sure to be carefully timing and watching for changes in behavior.

Water should be free access during the day. Most dogs won't drink at night once they are mature, but it may be necessary to remove the water from a puppy's crate or bed area when you go to bed. Be sure to give them fresh water immediately in the morning, and allow free access when you are there to monitor. Remember that dogs and puppies, like humans, will need to relieve themselves when they first get up in the morning or when they wake up from a nap.

## **RETURNING TO THE SAME SPOT TO URINATE IN THE HOUSE**

This usually occurs because the dog can still smell urine, even if you cannot. Try using a deodorant with orange peel or even better ask your vet to recommend a product with active enzymes that will eliminate and not just mask the odor. If at all possible restrict the dog or puppies access to the area and continue on with the housetraining program.

## **MARKING TERRITORY**

Especially for young male dogs, marking territory starts to occur at between four and nine months of age for most breeds. Some female dogs will also engage in marking behavior as well, especially if there is more than one dog in the house. Generally, marking territory is a hormonally driven behavior that male dogs engage in to establish their dominance. If a new dog, baby, pet or other change occurs in the house you may find that a previously house trained dog will begin marking territory.

Marking territory is dog's way to indicate that the house is his or her territory. Outside dogs will mark the areas of their domain such as fence posts, lamps, or even bushes, shrubs and trees in the yard or neighborhood.



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Unfortunately some dogs also want to mark their territory on the inside of your house and this is certainly not a desirable behavior.

Marking territory as a hormonally driven behavior will indicate that the dog is ready for neutering. In about 50-70% of male dogs neutering will prevent the likelihood of future marking behaviors. Cleaning and using an enzyme based product that will completely eliminate the odor of the urine will assist in preventing future issues.

If the dog has been neutered but still continues to mark territory there are a few simple techniques that you can use to deter the behavior. While some are directly related to the marking others are more specific to establishing that you are the dominant member of the family, not the dog. Try the following to help with preventing further marking behaviors:

- Ensure that the dog has lots of exercise prior to being left alone.
- Encourage him to mark outside by providing interesting places to sniff and mark.
- Remove or completely clean any furniture or items that the dog previously marked.
- If you cannot remove the furniture place a piece of aluminum foil over the area in a flat sheet. Simply attach the top to the furniture with

tape or small pins. When the dog attempts to urinate on the area the spray hitting the aluminum will make a noise that will startle the dog and may assist with preventing the behavior. The resulting spray will also be unpleasant to the dog and will often stop the behavior.

- Take the dog to an obedience class or work with him on a constant basis to help the dog understand that he is not the "top dog" on the pecking order in the family. Once the dog understands that he is not dominant the behavior will often stop.
- If there is a female dog in heat in the house or area the intact male dog will mark to establish a territory. Remove any female dogs in heat from the area to prevent this hormonally driven marking. Neutering will help with this behavior as well.

If there appears to be no change in the male dog's marking behavior after using these techniques try working with a professional trainer or consulting with your veterinarian. Occasionally some hormonal imbalances may cause the behavior and can be controlled by drug therapies.



# CONCLUSIONS

Potty training your puppy or housetraining your dog is a challenging but very rewarding experience. Within a few short weeks you can have your dog or puppy trained to use the appropriate area for a potty or to ask to go outside when they need to.

Take the process slowly; it has to work at the dog's rate, not the owners. Don't become frustrated with accidents; rather use them as a way to act more proactively next time to get the dog or puppy outside.

Finally, if the accidents become more frequent or if the dog or puppy doesn't seem to control their bowels or bladder immediately seek assistance of a vet. A professional trainer may also be able to provide assistance in those cases where you have consistently followed a training program, there is nothing medically wrong with the pet, and he or she is still not making any progress in potty training.

Once your dog or puppy is potty trained, you will have the freedom to take them places with you, as well as feeling safe and secure leaving them alone in the house. With lots of praise and attention, potty training will help build your relationship with your dog and puppy, and allow them to spend more time with you and your family both now and in the future.

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