



House Training: The Fool-Proof Way to Teach Your Puppy!

When we bring our new puppy home, one of the first things we want him to learn is to go to the bathroom outside. Thankfully, this is also one of the easiest things to teach your new puppy! By practicing good management of your puppy and his environment and being clear to your puppy about the rules, house-training can be an error-free and fool-proof thing to teach! Dogs use a method called *scent marking* to identify their potty place, meaning that once they have urinated or defecated in an area, residual smells (undetected to humans) tell your puppy “pee here!” Because of this, every time your puppy has an accident in the house, he is more likely to continue having accidents! To properly house train a puppy we must prevent accidents and teach him where to potty. Preventing accidents by following the tips below will lead to a quick training process!

Because prevention is so important, during the process of house training, your puppy should ideally, always be in one of the following situations:

1. **“Potty Breaks” Outside, under your direct supervision, so you can reward heavily for urinating or defecating in the “right” spot.**
2. **Inside, under your direct supervision, so you can prevent accidents from happening.**
3. **Crated, or gated in a small “play-pen” area**

While this type of management may sound like a hassle, in the end it will be worth it, as your house training process will change from a long and frustrating process to a simple and quick one!

1. **“Potty Breaks!” outside, under your direct supervision, so you can reward heavily for urinating or defecating in the “right” spot.** Take your puppy outside and stay with him. If you want your puppy to ultimately only potty in one specific area in the yard, keep him on a leash in that area. Stand still and quiet and wait for your puppy to start to go. Make sure to ALWAYS have treats with you when you take your puppy outside. Giving a treat immediately after your puppy goes is the fastest way for him to become house-trained. This will really give your puppy motivation to pee and poop outside!
2. **Inside, under your direct supervision, so you can prevent accidents from happening.** This is definitely the hardest one! To ensure proper house training you have to be supervising your puppy AT ALL TIMES! This means your eyes are always on him, he is *never* allowed to wander off alone to another room. It only takes a second for your puppy to have an accident in the house, especially in the beginning. Puppies go when they feel they need to, and unless you are watching like a hawk you will miss the subtle signs your puppy is about to go. Some people find it easiest to tether the puppy’s leash to their belt loop so your puppy has no chance of wandering off. You can also use baby gates to restrict your puppy’s movements, keeping them in the room with you. This doesn’t mean you have to spend 24 hours a day watching your puppy, using a crate or play pen will give your puppy a relaxing space to be alone and unattended when you need a break. This type of supervision is really needed for the first few months.

3. **Crated, or gated in a small “play-pen” area.** Puppies are less likely to urinate or defecate in the area they sleep in, so using a crate, a play pen, or both, will help prevent accidents when you are not able to be watching your puppy. If you are using a crate alone, it should be big enough for your puppy to lie down in and stretch out comfortably. If you are using a crate and a play-pen, the play-pen should be big enough that the crate can be in one corner, open, with space left over for a small bed, and some toys. Make sure the play-pen area is not too large, or your puppy may choose to potty in a corner. To raise a well-balanced puppy, divide your puppy’s day between sessions of active play and training, and time spend settling, napping and gnawing on an appropriate chew toy in his play-pen or kennel



A play area with a crate inside

The Basics of House-Training

1. **Be aware of your puppy’s clock!** Young puppies are unable to hold their bladder or bowels for long. When your puppy is awake, take your puppy outside for a potty break every hour. If your puppy doesn’t potty, bring him back inside and keep him either with you or in his crate for 5-10 minutes, and bring him back outside. Repeat this process as many times as needed until your puppy goes potty.
2. **Other times for potty breaks:** In addition to the hourly approach, also make sure to take your puppy out to potty after eating, napping, or having a long play session.
3. **The Indoor Potty: To use, or not to use?** There is a wide variety of opinion on whether to use an indoor toilet or not. The answer really lies in your specific lifestyle. If you are going to be forced, due to your work schedule or lifestyle to leave your puppy along for long periods of time, longer than you know he will be able to hold his business in, then an indoor toilet is needed. If you are able to be home with your puppy often enough that you can avoid him having any indoor mistakes, don’t bother with the indoor toilet, as it just adds another step to your training process. Many people will use “pee-pads” or newspaper as an indoor toilet. The problem with this technique is you are teaching your puppy it is ok to urinate and defecate on paper or plastic, and it can be very difficult to get your puppy to stop this behavior as he ages. Instead, buy a large litter pan or low plastic tote. Line it with something that closely mimics your puppy’s outdoor toiling substrate. This may be some sod and grass from outside, gravel or bark chips, artificial turf/grass, or even concrete tiles for city pups. When you are going

to be leaving your puppy for long periods of time when you know he will have to potty, place the indoor potty in his play pen, along with his crate, bed and toys.

4. Reading your Puppy: As your puppy grows he will get more deliberate about telling you he needs to potty, but at first you will need to be on the look-out for signals! Some signals your puppy might need to potty could be: becoming distracted from a game or training session, sniffing the ground intently, sniffing the ground while circling, wandering towards the door, wandering towards an area he has previously had an accident in, sniffing an area he has previously had an accident in, he starts to whine, starts to look at his hind end, or of course if he starts to actually squat.
5. Catching an Accident: If your puppy has an accident and you see it happen, you can interrupt him and move him outside. Make a loud, abrupt noise to startle him (DON'T shout at him!) such as clapping hands. Scoop your puppy up immediately and rush him outside and praise him for going outside. Scolding or punishing your puppy will just make him afraid of you! If you constantly scold or scare your puppy when he has an accident inside, he will start to associate you with scary things and will start hiding when he has to potty! Reward your puppy for finishing his business outside!
6. Finding an Accident: If you come across a puddle in the house after the fact don't scold or punish your puppy. Any of these things will just confuse and scare your puppy and won't help the process at all! When cleaning up an accident, you must make sure to clean it thoroughly to eliminate any scent. Avoid normal household cleaners, or anything with bleach. These products contain ammonia, and the scent of ammonia will actually attract your puppy back. Instead, use an enzymatic cleaner specifically designed for cleaning up pet stains. These products contain enzymes that break down the chemical components of urine and feces, completely eliminating all trace. Start by blotting up as much of the accident as you can into paper towels or hand towels, then treat the area multiple times with the enzymatic cleaner as per their directions.