

House-training Your New Puppy

Goodpuppy™ Social Club

It takes time, and it takes patience, but we sincerely hope you will put your best efforts into teaching your pet good toilet habits since he will be sharing your house for the next 12-14 years! This handout outlines a humane housetraining program based on praise and prevention, not punishment. If followed carefully, the results will be a happy, well-trained dog.

The key principles in successful housetraining are:

- **Prevention**

Limit puppy's opportunities to eliminate in the wrong places by keeping her confined when you can't keep a constant watch on what puppy is doing.

- **Routine**

Set up a regular routine. Feed puppy regular meals (a measured amount three times a day) and take him outside to eliminate at the same times each day.

- **Anticipation**

Take puppy out at times she is likely to have to eliminate. This includes after sleeping or resting, after being confined, after playing and shortly after eating. Walking around in a circle and sniffing the floor are signs puppy may be about to eliminate, so take her outside immediately!

- **Praise**

Softly praise puppy while he is eliminating in the location you've selected for him. When he has finished, lavish on the attention - petting, verbal praise and don't forget a small tasty treat!

We encourage you to train your puppy to go to the bathroom outside from the beginning rather than/paper training. Your aim from the first day is to **catch your puppy being successful** and give her the praise she deserves for doing it right. Your puppy really does want to please you and get some loving attention, and she will catch on very quickly that you seem truly thrilled with her when she eliminates behind the old lilac bush. If you do catch your puppy eliminating in the house, **DO NOT PUNISH** puppy - **NO HITTING** - **NO SHAKING** - **NO RUBBING PUPPYS NOSE IN THE MESS!** These things not only **DON'T** help, they can make your puppy fearful and training that much harder. When you catch puppy eliminating indoors, just scoop her up and take her outside at once. And that's all!

One of the basic rules of housetraining is that if you don't see him do it, don't scold him about it. When he's caught in the act and is taken outside, he makes the connection that wetting on the Oriental rug was not a great idea. But if you drag him to a damp spot on the carpet hours (or even minutes) after the fact, he simply can't make the connection. He may learn to anticipate being punished when there is a mess on the carpet, but puppies do not make the extra connection that they need to stop eliminating in the house to prevent being punished the next time. When you find a spot after the fact, don't make a fuss and rush the dog outside; just accept that you lost that round, clean it up and forget it. For cleaning up accidents, use one of the enzymatic cleaners available at your veterinary office or most pet supply stores, or use diluted white vinegar in the last rinse to remove odors which might tempt him to use the same spot again.

Since your aim is to praise your puppy for being successful, it's important that you give her the chance to earn praise by anticipating her need to go outside. There are certain times when you can be almost certain your puppy will need to eliminate - take her out after eating, when she wakes up in the morning or after a nap, and after a playing session. Some puppies want to eliminate immediately after such activities, other some minutes later; you will soon learn your puppy's pattern. If you watch your puppy closely to learn what signals she gives before eliminating (sniffing, restlessness, circling), you will be able to get her outside soon enough to prevent accidents at other times as well.

This program of prevention and praise requires you to keep an eye on your puppy. Some accidents are inevitable, but you just can't give him the run of the house and let him get used to making mistakes. Use a baby gate or a ten-foot lead to keep puppy with you in the kitchen or family room where you can watch him. Some people have also taken the step of tying the puppy's leash to their belt, so puppy can't wander off on his own and get into trouble.

The use of a crate in housetraining a puppy can be a useful tool. But it can also be misused. A sleeping size crate takes advantage of a dog's natural instinct not to soil his "den" or sleeping quarters, a trait held over from his wolf ancestors. Since no one can watch a puppy every minute, a crate is useful for confining a small puppy for a short time while you run to the store or take a shower. A crate could also be properly used as a good sleeping place for an older puppy who is almost at the stage of making it through the night without a trip outdoors (The crate will encourage him to wait, but place it in or near your bedroom so he can wake you if he really needs to be taken out). However, placing a puppy in a sleeping size crate for hours at a time is unfair. He cannot control his bowels and bladder for very long and is forced to dirty his bed and himself. If a small puppy must be left for more than brief periods, a far more humane practice is to prepare a pen (partition off part of a room or use an old baby playpen) with a sleeping area, a playing area and a papered area where it is OK for him to eliminate.

You probably have noticed that we used the phrase "take your puppy out" throughout this handout. Even if you have a fenced yard, it is important to take your puppy out to go to the bathroom. If you just shove him out the door, you won't know if he has eliminated and you're skipping that essential part of training: praise. In addition, he's going to get into the bad habit of eliminating just outside the door. It's best (for both your puppy and your lawn) to take him to a selected spot each time so that he gets used to the idea that he is expected to eliminate there. Some experts also advocate consistent use of a brief phrase like "do your business" to help your puppy understand you brought him out at 2:00 a.m. in your pajamas because you thought he had to go the bathroom, not because you wanted to play.

If your puppy continues to have accidents at a favorite spot even though you have cleaned it thoroughly, make that spot unappealing by such methods as covering with a plastic runner (use the point side up) or laying down a section of double-side tape.

Please don't expect too much too soon. A 3 or 4 month old puppy cannot really be considered housetrained. He may know what you want, but his immature body will cause him to make mistakes. These will decrease as his system matures, but it is not unusual for a puppy to still have an occasional slip at 8 or 9 months, especially if you are gone longer than normal.