

Taking The Hassle Out of House Training Your Puppy

Your home has just been blessed with a new puppy who arrived cuddly, warm, and ready to be loved. Unfortunately, he did not arrive house trained. House training your new puppy can be easy and effective if you dedicate the necessary time and patience. A successful plan includes supervision, confinement, and encouragement. With these elements most pups can be trained in a relatively short period of time.



Getting The Message Across

If you want your puppy to eliminate outside, you must be aware of various conditions and activities that typically stimulate puppies to eliminate including feeding, drinking, playing, and waking from naps. Learn to be aware of these activities and be alert that your puppy needs to eliminate. Begin to condition your puppy by using a command such as “out” as you take him outside. With time your puppy will learn to signal if he has to go out.



The next step is to teach your puppy where you want him to eliminate. To accomplish this you must accompany your puppy every time he goes outdoors. Choose a specific location with easy access. The area will soon become a familiar spot as the pup recognizes the odor from previous excursions. If you are training your puppy to eliminate on "pee pads", always place the pad in the same location and use the pad to soak up any accidents so that he can recognize the smell for next time.



Mildly praise any sniffing or other pre-elimination behaviors and consider associating a unique training command such as “potty time” with the act of eliminating. When your puppy eliminates, praise him heartily, offer a tasty food reward, or start playing. Your puppy will soon learn what is expected of him whenever he goes outside and hears the special command. As you begin house training, try to take your puppy outdoors every one to two hours. As he grows older and gets the hang of things, you can wait longer between outings.



Scheduling Puppy's Dinnertime

Controlling your puppy's feeding schedule provides some control over his elimination schedule. Most will eliminate within a predictable time after eating, usually within the first 20 minutes. Because of this, it is best to avoid feeding a large meal just before confinement. Offer food two or three times each day at the same times and make it available for no longer than thirty minutes. The last meal should be finished three to five hours before bedtime.

Preventing mistakes

The most challenging part of the house training process is preventing your pup from eliminating indoors. Until he is house trained you will need to provide constant supervision. You should not consider your puppy house trained until he has gone for at least four to eight consecutive weeks without eliminating anywhere in the home. Until your pup accomplishes this keep him within eyesight or a family member all the time. When you are unable to provide constant supervision because you are busy, sleeping, or away from home confine your pup to a crate or a small, safe area. Always take your puppy out to eliminate just before confinement.





Returning To The Scene Of The Crime

To help prevent your puppy from returning to previously soiled areas remove urine and odor with an effective commercial product. Saturate areas of soiled carpeting with an odor neutralizing product, merely spraying the surface is not as effective. If your puppy begins eliminating in certain areas of the home deny access to these areas by closing doors, using baby gates, or moving furniture over the soiled areas. Most pets avoid eliminating in areas where they eat or play. Feeding or placing water bowls, bedding, and toys in previously soiled areas can discourage elimination at those spots.

Keeping Your Cool

No puppy has ever been house trained without making a mistake or two. Be prepared for the inevitable. It does not help to become frustrated and harshly punish your puppy. Punishment is the least effective and most over used approach to house training.

A correction should involve nothing more than mild discipline and should only be used if you catch your puppy in the act of eliminating indoors. A correction that occurs more than a few seconds after your puppy eliminates is useless because he will not understand why he is being corrected. If the punishment is too harsh your puppy may learn not to eliminate in front of you, even outdoors, and you run the risk of ruining the bond with your puppy. And don't even think about rubbing his nose in the mess! There is nothing your puppy will learn from this other than to be afraid of you.

Instead, wait until he finishes eliminating, then drop your voice low and scold without using his name. Finally, banish him from the pack (temporarily!) by placing him in the "penalty box", a room chosen so he can be enclosed in it for four to five minutes but not otherwise be expected to spend time there. **DO NOT USE HIS CRATE!**

Now, clean the mess up and release him from the penalty box. He must be welcomed back as if all is forgiven. These disciplines make sense to a puppy who will quickly learn to associate eliminating in the house with discipline from the alpha leader.

Some pets will squat and urinate as they greet family members. Never scold them! This problem is due to either nervousness or excitement and scolding will always make the problem worse. With a little patience and a consistent approach, your puppy will be as house trained as the rest of the family.

