

House Training

Why House Train a Puppy

House training is critical to prevent unwanted accidents inside your home. If not trained properly from the start, puppies can develop bad habits that will be much harder to correct later. Before you start training, or if you encounter training difficulties, make sure your puppy has a physical exam by a veterinarian. Medical issues such as urinary tract infection or digestive issues can make it difficult for your puppy to hold their eliminations and learn good behaviors.

House training Basics

Puppies need many opportunities to eliminate in the proper area in order to be successful with house training. A good rule of thumb is to take your dog out every two hours for the first couple weeks, as well as after sleeping, eating, drinking, or playing. Be sure to take your dog out right before bedtime too. Follow the steps below to begin working on house-training.

Steps to Success

1. Decide where you want your puppy to use as an elimination area. This could be a larger area, such as a fenced in yard, or a small area, such as a patch of grass.
2. It may be helpful to lead your dog with a leash instead of carrying them to the elimination area so that going straight to the appropriate spot becomes a habit.
3. Start by using a cue word such as “bathroom” or “potty” every time you take your puppy to the elimination area, so they will learn to associate the word with what you want achieved.
4. Try to take your puppy to the same area each time. Puppies are very easily distracted and being outside can be fun and enjoyable to them. In the beginning, you will need to go with them and make sure they eliminate.
5. If successful, immediately reward them with treats and praise.

Constancy is Key

Repeat these steps every time you take your puppy out to potty. Constant supervision is important when you begin house training. You need to catch your puppy in the act of going in the wrong place in order to correctly redirect them. If you find an accident on the floor after the fact, do not become upset with your puppy, it is too late for them to make the connection. If you catch your puppy in the act of eliminating inside, interrupt immediately and take them to the elimination area. Use your cue word. If your puppy finishes going outside, give treats and praise.

Cues to Look Out For

Puppies often give subtle signals that they need to eliminate. Circling, wandering off alone, whining, or going to the door you typically use to go to the elimination area are common signals that your puppy needs to potty. If your puppy is demonstrating any of these behaviors, stop what you are doing immediately and follow the training steps above.

House training can be challenging, but with patience and consistency, before you know it your puppy will be successfully house-trained.