

The Key To Successful Houstraining Is Prevention, Not Punishment

Veterinary Exam & Urine/Fecal Check

Your puppy's state of health will affect his ability to be successfully houstrained (housebroken). Make sure your puppy is seen by a vet within 48 hours of his coming home from the breeder or animal shelter. If your puppy does not receive a "clean bill of health", it is important that any physical conditions that can impede successful houstraining (such as cystitis, bladder infection, etc.) be properly treated. A fecal check will determine whether worms or internal parasites are present. (There are several types of worms that are not visible except under a microscope. Also, fleas can cause tapeworm.)

Feed Your Puppy A High-Quality Puppy Food

A consistent diet of a high-quality premium brand dry (kibble) puppy food is recommended. Avoid feeding your puppy table scraps or changing brands unnecessarily. If you should need to change your puppy's food for any reason, do it gradually over a period of 4 to 7 days (by overlapping both the old and the new puppy food together, until the old food is phased out completely). [Note: Feeding your puppy lots of canned dog food can loosen his stool, making it harder to housebreak him.]

Close Supervision Is Essential

Close supervision is essential any time your puppy is not crated indoors (or confined to a small area covered with newspapers) . It only takes a few seconds for your puppy to have a housesoiling accident, so watch for signs that your puppy may need to eliminate, such as sniffing the floor, circling, or running out of sight suddenly.

Confinement When Puppy Can't Be Supervised

[Crate training](#) or area confinement are recommended for puppies and most adolescent dogs when left unsupervised alone in the house. If properly introduced and used appropriately, crate training is an efficient and humane way to prevent houstraining accidents as well keep your puppy safe when you can not watch him (or when you leave the house/apartment without him). The crate should not be used for excessive periods of time and should not be used as a punishment (although brief "time outs" in the crate are fine). Sufficient daily companionship, interactive playtime and exercise are very important to all puppies and dogs.

[Note: Crate training and other forms of confinement must be balanced with sufficient exercise and companionship. Excessive periods of isolation can be very detrimental to your puppy, and

can contribute to numerous behavioral problems including hyperactivity, destructive behavior, digging, self-mutilation, and excessive barking.]

Determine Puppy's Safety Zone, Grey Zone & Danger Zone

Keep a diary of your puppy's urinating and defecating times for several days or more. Determine the minimum interval between elimination. Subtract 15-30 minutes from this period of time and that will be your puppy's temporary "Safety Zone". This is the duration of time he can generally be trusted to hold his urine after he is taken for a walk or has "gone" on his newspapers, provided he does not drink a ton of water during this time. Make sure however, that he is still closely supervised any time he is not confined to his crate or confinement area.

Frequent Access To Newspapers, Backyard, Or Taken For A Walk If Fully Immunized

Puppies need to urinate shortly after the eat, drink water, play, chew, or sleep. For most puppies over 10 weeks of age, that means somewhere between 5 and 10 times a day! Adolescent dogs (from 6 to 11 mths. old) will need 4 to 6 walks a day. Adult dogs need 3 to 4 walks a day, and elderly dogs need at least 3 to 4 walks daily (incontinent dogs will need more).

Do Not Return From A Walk Until Your Puppy Eliminates

If your puppy has been confined overnight to a crate, take him outside first thing in the morning (before he's had a chance to soil indoors.) Be prepared to stay outdoors with him until he eliminates. (This could take from a few minutes to as much as several hours!) As soon as your puppy eliminates outdoors, offer him lavish praise and a treat. If you take your puppy back inside the house before he's fully eliminated, he will surely have an housesoiling accident indoors!

[Note: If you absolutely have to return home before your puppy does his "business", crate him, then try taking him outside again every 15-30 minutes until he "goes".]

Early Interactive Socialization With People Is Important

Early and ongoing interactive socialization with lots of friendly new people (including calm friendly children) is very important. If your puppy is not immunized sufficiently to taken for a walk, make sure to have lots of new people visit your puppy in your home. You can also carry your puppy outdoors to public places to properly acclimate him to the sights, sounds and activities of the outdoors (especially crowds of people and traffic noises) soon after he has received at least two series of shots, provided he is not placed on the sidewalk or streets, and he is not brought near other dogs (or anywhere other dogs might have been).

Praise & Reward Your Puppy For "Going" Outdoors

Lavish praise, a trigger word (ie: "potty", "get busy", "business", "bombs away", etc.) and a treat reward immediately following his eliminating in the right place (newspapers, backyard, or outdoors) will help you to communicate to your puppy that you are pleased with his behavior. Delayed praise is not effective, so witnessing him going in the right spot is important.

No Access To Inappropriate Areas To Eliminate

Many puppies and dogs prefer certain areas or surfaces to eliminate on, such as rugs, carpeting, etc. Keep your puppy away from risky areas or surfaces whenever possible. If your puppy suddenly runs out of sight (ie: out of the room), he may be looking for a secret spot to eliminate, so close doors to rooms where he may sneak a quick pee or poop.

Neutralize Urine Odors With Enzyme-Based Deodorizer

Should your puppy have a few housesoiling accidents despite your best efforts to prevent them, neutralize any soiled areas (carpet or floor surface) with an pet odor neutralizer such as Nature's Miracle, Nilodor, Fresh 'n' Clean, or Outright Pet Odor Eliminator. Avoid using ammonia-based cleaners to clean up after your puppy's urine, as ammonia breaks down to urea, which is a component of urine.

No Water After 9PM

Generally speaking, it is advisable to take up your puppy's water bowl after 9 PM, unless he seems very thirsty or weather conditions are exceedingly hot. (But a couple of ice cubes are OK)

Eliminate Worms and Parasites

Contact your veterinarian if you suspect that your puppy has worms, coccidia, fleas, ticks, or other internal or external parasites.

Diarrhea Will Prevent Houstraining Success

Your puppy or dog cannot be expected to be reliable if he has diarrhea. Loose, liquidy or mucousy stools will hinder any houstraining success.

After-The-Fact Discipline Does NOT Work!

Never ever discipline (verbally or otherwise) your puppy or dog after-the-fact for housesoiling accidents that you did not actually witness. (Even if you should see your puppy eliminate on the

floor or carpet, harsh physical punishment is never recommended.)

Never Discipline A Dog For Submissive Urination!

Submissive and excitement urination are completely involuntary, so never discipline your puppy for this. Eye contact, verbal scoldings, hovering over, reaching out to pet your puppy's head, animated movements, talking in an exciting or loud voice, as well as strangers/ visitors approaching your puppy, may all potentially trigger your puppy to piddle. Disciplining your puppy for involuntary piddling must be avoided or the problem will simply get worse.

Recommended Links

[Housetraining Your Young Puppy](#)

(Gwen Bohnenkamp, Perfect Paws)

[How to Successfully Crate Train Your Puppy](#)

Humor

A rolled up newspaper can be an effective training tool when used properly. For instance, use the rolled-up newspaper if your dog chews up something inappropriate or has a housebreaking accident. Bring the dog over to the destroyed object (or mess), then take the rolled-up newspaper... and hit yourself over the head as you repeat the phrase, "I FORGOT TO WATCH MY DOG, I FORGOT TO WATCH MY DOG!"