

SIT MEANS SIT

DOG TRAINING

Potty Training Guidelines

For puppies 6 weeks to 6 months, eating 3 meals a day, and owner is home or is able to get home at lunch. If not applicable, adjust times to your schedule.

Remember these rules:

- 1) **100% Supervision!!!** If you cannot physically keep your eyes on the puppy while out of the kennel, put them up until you can. It doesn't matter if this is for 5 minutes or 5 hours.
- 2) If the puppy has been in its kennel for 30 minutes or more "30 minutes or 3 hours" take the puppy outside immediately after coming out of the kennel.
- 3) If the puppy has been out of its kennel for 30+ minutes and is going back into the kennel for 30+ minutes, take the puppy outside prior to putting back into the kennel.

- 6:30 – 7:00am Take the pup out. Don't wait until after your coffee or shower.
Take the puppy out to the same spot every time it goes potty. We go to the same spot, so should they. This a time for business, not play!
- 7:15 – 7:30am Confine for playtime (in the kitchen, laundry or kennel).
- 7:30am Feed and water. Allow 5-10 minutes for eating then remove the dishes.
- 7:40am Take them outside one last time before you leave for the day. No more food or water before you leave, remember what goes in must come out!
Put them back into the kennel with an appropriate chew toy for the day.
(If home during the day, take the puppy out every 2-3 hours.)
- Mid-Day If you, a friend, or dog walker are able to, let your puppy out for a potty break and leg stretch sometime mid-day. If you are not able to, that is ok, but make sure they will get extra **QUALITY** time with you when you get home.
- 12:00pm Take the pup out.
- 12:15 -12:30pm **SUPERVISED** playtime or do some training (about 5-7min)
- 12:30pm Feed and water. Skip this step if feeding only twice a day.
- 12:40pm Take them outside one last time before you leave again.
- 1:00pm Confine to kennel.

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Evening When arriving home from school or work, **DO NOT** immediately let your puppy out. Take the time to get yourself settled for a few minutes (change clothes, get a drink), then you can let your puppy out. This lets them know they need to hold it until you let them out.

5:00pm Take the pup out.

5:15pm **SUPERVISED** playtime and training time.

5:45pm Feeding time. No more feeding after this time.

6:00pm Take the pup out.

6:10pm Confine to a crate to give them time to digest and for you to eat and settle in.

7:15pm Take the pup out. No more water beyond this point in the evening.

7:30 – 9:00pm **SUPERVISED** free/play time with you! There is **NO** substitute for quality time!

9:00pm Take the pup out.

9:10 – til bedtime More **SUPERVISED** free/play time.

Bedtime The last thing you do before you go to bed for the night is one last potty break before putting them in their kennel for the night. If your puppy cannot stay dry all night, go ahead and set your alarm for 3-4 hours after the lights go out. Build the length of time between breaks when you start to see them staying dry for longer.

Don't forget 100% **SUPERVISION!!!**

You can only correct them when you catch them in the act, after is too late.

House Training Your Adult Dog

Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. Even if he was house trained in his previous home, if you do not recognize his "bathroom" signal, you might miss his request to go out, causing him to eliminate indoors. Therefore, for the first few weeks after you bring him home, you should assume your new dog is not house trained and start from scratch. If he was house trained in his previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind him where he's supposed to eliminate.

Establish a Routine

Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning when he wakes up, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed. Praise your dog lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he has finished and not wait until after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he will know that is what you want him to do.

If you want to establish a specific "potty spot" in the yard (this is a good idea!): Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. While in training, always take your dog, on leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he has eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, leave the soiled rags or paper towels in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your dog recognize the area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate. While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty," that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he is supposed to be doing.

Feeding your dog on a set schedule, once or twice a day, will help make his elimination more regular.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Do not give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog closely, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down and turn around in. We highly recommend that you crate train your dog and use the crate to confine him. If he has spent several hours in confinement, when you let him out, take him directly to his bathroom spot and praise him when he eliminates. If you decide not to use a crate, the confinement area could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with boxes or baby gates.

Oops!

Most dogs, at some point, will have an accident in the house. You should expect this, as it is a normal part of your dog's adjustment to his new home.

If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt him like making a startling noise and/or use a firm voice and say "NO! Outside!" (be careful not to scare him). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him, and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there. Do not punish your dog for eliminating in the house.

If you find a soiled area, it is too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your dog's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other type of punishment, will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals do not understand punishment after the fact, even if it is only seconds later. Punishment will do more harm than good.

Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces (see our handout).

Other Types of House-soiling Problems

If you have consistently followed the house training procedures and your dog continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for his behavior.

Medical Problems:

House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.

Submissive/Excitement Urination:

Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they are about to be punished. If you encounter this issue, please let us know and we'll provide more info and ideas for getting through it.

Territorial Urine-Marking:

Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.

Separation Anxiety.

Dogs that become anxious when they are left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization. If you need more info regarding separation anxiety please let us know!

Fears or Phobias.

When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your dog is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he is exposed to these sounds. There are good articles available to assist in overcoming this issue. If you need more info, please let us know.

Surface Preferences.

When a dog has been trained to eliminate on only one type of surface, such as newspapers, or has not been offered a variety of surfaces, such as being confined to a run with a concrete floor, a surface preference may develop. This can be difficult to change but is often managed by ensuring that their preferred substrate is unavailable indoors, but is available in an outdoor location.

Potty Training

It is an undeniable fact that puppies need to eliminate. The frustrating part is the communication barrier as well as the lack of understanding about *where* and *when* it is appropriate to eliminate. Puppies come to us with the simple motto: "If I have to, then I'll do it." This pertains to eating, sleeping (ever see a pup fall over asleep in mid-play?), activity, exploration AND elimination! Puppies *do not* understand anything more than that. It is up to us to establish a bridge of understanding if they are to live with us harmoniously. *We* are the ones with all the requirements, *not* them! They'd be just as happy to take care of their needs the way they already know.

The most successful potty training methods consist of four key elements:

1. **Confinement**
2. **Training**
3. **Timing**
4. **Praise**

This article will discuss them all and answer common housebreaking questions and address some special cases.

Feeding Schedule

It is important to have a set feeding schedule for puppies. Most puppies, depending on age, will be fine with 2 daily feedings. For example, you can set your feeding schedule in the morning around 7am and the last feeding no later than 6pm in the evenings. The importance of a set schedule is that you know within several minutes to two hours after a feeding, a puppy will need to urinate and defecate. This will help you determine your puppy's "Potty Clock." Being able to anticipate this after each feeding will help you know when it is necessary for the puppy to go out and potty. Also, in the evenings you will know your puppy is on empty at bedtime. Leaving food down at all times for a puppy means the puppy will need to go numerous times throughout the day and this makes the potty training process very difficult

Confinement

Puppies (or dogs who don't yet understand where it is appropriate to eliminate) need to be confined in order to facilitate the easiest potty training. The BEST and most effective place to confine are in a crate or cage. At this point don't leave anything on the bottom of the crate (blanket, newspaper, etc.). Puppy will make a project out of destroying it. Most dogs do NOT want to eliminate where they live, therefore the crate needs to be just large enough for puppy to turn around and lay down. Anything larger will encourage a puppy to eliminate at one end and sleep in the other. For those puppies that will grow quite a bit larger, use a crate that is sized for an adult and partition it to a smaller size using a homemade insert or a crate insert made by the crate company to fit your crate.

Training and Praise

When teaching a new dog (or puppy) where to eliminate, ALWAYS use a leash. Leashes keep your dog close to you, where you can supervise and control everything that happens. Puppies, especially, are easily distracted. A blowing leaf, new flower, stick, another animal - all can take a puppy's mind off the matter at hand. If you are near the puppy (or dog) with the leash in hand, a gentle tug will redirect away from the

curiosity. Leashes are also good to help teach an AREA to eliminate (behind the garage, etc.). With a leash, you just take the dog there every time.

Teach words for elimination. This way, when the puppy understands what the words mean, he will understand WHAT is wanted as well as WHEN it is to happen. Words to use are "go potty" for urination and "go poop" for defecation. Your choice can be ANY word or phrase you want to use consistently (such as, "hurry up," "do your business", "get busy", "let's go", "tinkles", etc.). Remember when you choose your word or phrase that you will be repeating it A LOT!

As you take your dog outside on a leash, start by teaching him the word "OUTSIDE". "Let's go OUTSIDE!". "Do you have to go "OUTSIDE"? "OUTSIDE! OUTSIDE!" In time, the dog will learn that the word OUTSIDE is associated with elimination. Eventually you will be able to ask the dog "do you have to go OUTSIDE?" and gets a response like barking, running to the door or tail wagging.

Using the Leash & Words to Teach

A slip-type leash is quick and easy to slip on the puppy to take him outside. If the puppy isn't used to the leash yet, slip the leash on and carry the puppy from his crate to outside, saying the entire time "Do you want to go outside? Let's go outside! Outside! Outside! Yay! Outside!". Your emphasis should be on the word "OUTSIDE". Once outside, set puppy down and change your mantra to your word/phrase "Go Potty! Go Potty! Let's Go Potty!" Let puppy sniff and move around a little, but keep him in a general area. Each time he gets distracted (leaf, squirrel, etc.) give the leash a tug and repeat "Go Potty!". The command is generally not said in a firm or angry way and not in a soft or pleading way either - it is usually said in an encouraging tone. When elimination occurs, use a happy tone and repeat "GOOD Go Potty! Yay! Go Potty!". It is preferable to use WORDS ONLY to reinforce elimination, because petting or treats can interrupt the act. Verbal praise needs to happen DURING the act, not after! Usually dogs will urinate first, and then defecate.

Timing

Puppies (and dogs) earn freedom by eliminating appropriately. The best time for a puppy to be out of his crate is AFTER eliminating appropriately outside. This free time will still need to be strictly supervised, so any inclination toward inappropriate elimination can be immediately addressed. Baby gates are great for limiting a puppy's area of freedom. A short, inexpensive leash (4ft or so) attached to the puppy's collar (ALWAYS SUPERVISED, of course) works well and enables the owner to catch a quick puppy without grabbing for him (which, ultimately, can create a fearful dog). This works well when he needs to be corrected for inappropriate behaviors like chewing, eating things, digging or eliminating indoors.

The BEST rule of thumb is to ANTICIPATE the need!

As a general rule, the length of time a puppy can be left confined in his create without going outside is roughly equal to his age in months:

2 months old = 2 hours of confinement without a potty break

3 months old = 3 hours of confinement without a potty break

4 months old = 4 hours of confinement without a potty break

etc. - up to about 6 - 8 months of age.

ANY time there is a change in activity, such as after waking, playing, or eating, puppy MUST be taken outside!

Your puppy will also give certain indications each time he needs to eliminate: abrupt stop of play, circling, sniffing, and running out of the room, a "look" on his face. You will eventually become familiar with these "warning signs".

Accidents

All is not lost if puppy eliminates in the house or in his crate! If you catch him in the act, pick the puppy up quickly with no harsh words or tone of voice and say "Let's go OUTSIDE! Outside!" Yelling or startling the puppy if you see it starting to go inside can set back potty training or make the dog fearful of you. Once the puppy is outside where it can finish what it started inside they use the usual "Go Potty. GOOD DOG go potty!" Use many cheerful praise if he finishes outside.

Remember, you MUST catch puppy IN THE ACT of inappropriate elimination to facilitate an effective lesson. Rubbing his nose in "it" afterward (even by just a few moments) only teaches him that "doo doo" in the house gets him in trouble. "Oh no", you say, "my dog KNOWS!". Well, not really. A behaviorist once mentioned he illustrated this to a skeptical client by sending the client out of the house while he collected stool from the backyard and set it in the middle of the living room. The client was invited back into the house and the dog ran and hid! Here's another example of how dogs think: Puppy poops where he shouldn't and wanders into another room to quietly chew a bone. The owner finds the poop, locates the puppy and drags him to the mess and stuffs his nose in it. Puppy wonders, "I was off chewing my bone and now I'm getting my nose shoved into this mess! I just don't get it! I get punished for chewing my bone?"

TIMING...of catching the puppy in the act to correct and teach...of **PRAISE** for appropriate elimination...is everything and **CONSISTENCY** is the key! Proper behavior must be praised EVERY TIME you give a command and it is followed.

Common Questions and Problems

"What about paper-training?"

The old method of paper training can still be effective; however it adds unnecessary time and mess to the whole picture. Owners will have MUCH more cleanup and mess and smell with papers and they will STILL have to use the papers to transition puppy to the outside.

"My puppy goes outside, then comes in and poops on the floor...!"

You, as the owner/trainer, are at fault here. You are missing the two BIG keys in successful potty training:

1. You MUST accompany your puppy outside WITH a leash on to supervise elimination and
2. Freedom in the house is only earned by appropriate elimination outside. No pees or poos - NO FREEDOM, and puppy goes back in his crate. Next, the owner checks again in a period of 20 minutes to an hour and takes puppy outside on the LEASH for another opportunity to eliminate appropriately and earn freedom.

"I stand at the door and watch while my puppy goes potty outside. When he is finished and comes back in, he gets a treat. Why do I have to go out with my puppy?"

Your puppy is getting his treat for coming back into the house, NOT for appropriate elimination. Praise MUST happen DURING elimination to make the connection in puppy's mind. Some dogs will run outside and run back in without eliminating because they know they'll get a treat. This can also encourage frequent demands to go out - just so they can get a treat when they come in!

"I leave my puppy outside to play for an hour or more, then I bring him in and he eliminates. Why couldn't he just do it while he was outside?"

Well, he probably DID eliminate when he first went out, but he didn't have to go later, and he certainly doesn't have the human capacity to think "Well, my owner is probably going to take me inside soon, so I'd better get my business done while I'm outside!" YOU need to remind a puppy who has been outside for a while to "Go Potty!"

"When will I know if my dog is housebroken?"

Appropriate elimination FIRST happens primarily because we, as owners, control it. We are working, when we potty train, to establish a HABIT, and that will usually take two to three months, depending on how consistent and persistent you are as the owner/trainer.

Here are some indications your dog/puppy understands the program:

- "Accidents" in the house and/or crate have decreased during the training period to none or almost none.
- When you use your commands for elimination, your puppy responds by eliminating.
- Your puppy starts to "ask" to go outside by barking, running to the door, staring at you, or in some other way. The freedom you give your puppy is "accident" free.

"My puppy wakes me up at 3AM EVERY NIGHT! I take him out; he pees and then wants to play. I play with him for a while and put him back in his crate where he cries for some time before he settles down. How do I break him of this?"

Nighttime needs should diminish quickly as the puppy gets older. At first, you may need to get up 2-3 times nightly for a 7-week-old pup. That frequency should quickly reduce to once a night for a 9-week-old pup. When a puppy cries in the night, you DO have to check on him - it's the only way he has to tell you there is a problem. YOU will soon learn which cries are "fussing" and which indicate a real need. Remember when it said you are working to establish a HABIT when potty training? Well, if you get up during the night to take puppy out and then play with him, you are establishing a nighttime play routine habit! Any nighttime trips outside should be all "business only": outside then back in the crate - PERIOD! Temporarily removing access to water by 6 or 7 p.m. will also help.

Special problems...

Dogs or puppies purchased from a pet shop or other place where they were always kept in a small cage.

These dogs never had a choice and HAD to eliminate where they lived. Owners must devote extra time to take such dogs outside more frequently in order to get elimination outside rather than in the crate. Elaborate praise when they "go" is essential so they learn that life is better all around when they eliminate outside. Elimination in the crate should be ignored and just cleaned up at first - with no correction or harsh words. Training these dogs takes a lot of patience and time.

About small breeds and "Sneaking"

Some people say that small breeds can be difficult, if not impossible to potty train. This is NOT because they are stupid - actually they are rather smart; smart enough to sneak to out of the way place to make their deposits instead of asking to go outside. This just requires MORE vigilance on the owner's part, and LESS freedom for the dog. If necessary, the owner needs to attach the other end of the leash the dog is dragging to their belt loop to keep closer track of the sneak! This is known as the umbilical cord process.

Submissive Urination

"When I come home from work and let my dog out of her crate, she urinates all over when I'm greeting her. I yell at her and she pees more! Why does she DO that?"

What your dog is doing is called submissive urination. It is NOT a housebreaking problem. She is telling you that she recognizes that you are the leader. When you yell at her, she pees more to say "Yes, I KNOW that you are alpha!"

Things you can do to deter submissive urination:

1. DO NOT bend over the top of the dog, especially when greeting. That is a dominant position.
2. For some reason, sweet, happy talk makes dogs urinate - so happy greetings with a lot of conversation should be avoided.
3. DO NOT pet your dog to greet her - the best thing to do when greeting a submissive urinator is to fold your arms across your chest, turn and ignore, but encourage your dog to go outside right away. Praise when she urinates outside, and then you should be able to greet.
4. When visitors come over, have them greet your dog (on leash) outside on the porch or grass to avoid messes in the house.
5. DO NOT yell at your dog for being "bad" - this isn't being "bad" at all! It is actually dog language affirming your leadership.

Spitefulness?

"When I leave the house, my dog frequently leaves me "presents" of stool and/or urine. I know he hates me to leave, and I'm sure he's doing it out of spite."

Dogs by nature are not spiteful animals. That is too much of a human emotion and too much reasoning: "If she leaves, then I'm going to poop on the floor because I know she HATES that! That'll teach her to leave me here alone!"

Usually, if there is an "accident" when the owner is gone these are usually the *real* reasons.

- I forgot to do my business outside
- I'm really not reliably potty trained and I don't completely understand the concept.
- I waited by the door to go outside but I couldn't get out and I just couldn't wait any longer!
- You left me all alone in this house! This is a BIG job, and we usually watch over the house together as a pack. This is too stressful for me. I'm so stressed I have to poop!
- I have too much freedom - and too soon - without supervision.

If you come home to "accidents", you need to consider these steps:

1. Backtrack on potty training - no matter what your dog's age. (We just had a brain glitch and need a refresher course)
2. Reduce the space of freedom - either with a crate, baby gates or a room.
3. Back to outside supervised potty breaks - with leash on so praise can be used at the right time.
4. Make sure there is no physical cause for the problem (intestinal parasites, urinary tract infection, etc.)

Questions to ask yourself if you are having problems...

- Am I taking the dog out enough?
- Do I know every time he goes?
- Does he have too much freedom in the house?
- Am I watching him carefully when he is free in the house?
- Is there any physical reason (intestinal parasites, urinary tract infection, etc.)?
- Am I trying to move things along faster than this dog is able to learn - therefore skipping steps so the entire picture is unclear to my dog?
- Am I consistently praising for appropriate behavior so he gets the idea?