

Puppy Potty Training

There are 3 things you are trying to teach your puppy when you start potty training:

- When your puppy goes potty outside, she earns free-time in the house.
- When your puppy comes out of his crate, he gets the opportunity to potty outside. If he doesn't, he goes back in his crate.
- When your puppy goes outside, she has one goal- to potty for a reward (not to sniff, eat leaves, bark at squirrels, etc). This is why you only want to give him 3-5 minutes to go.

***Confinement in a crate or small area is used to teach your puppy's bladder and bowels how to physically hold urine and feces. Puppies will typically not 'go' in a confined area.

The more consistent the training, the faster your puppy will learn where to potty, and also how to hold her bladder and bowels. You will alternate confinement and free time until your puppy learns the appropriate time and place to go potty. Every time your puppy comes out of her crate, take her outside. Here is the schedule:

- 1). 3-5 minutes outside – Potty – 30 minutes free time – Back into crate for 30 minutes – 3-5 minutes outside
- 2). 3-5 minutes outside – NO Potty – Back into crate for 10-20 minutes – 3-5 minutes outside

The following guidelines will aid you in potty training your puppy:

- Adhere strictly to the suggested schedule. Accidents mean too much freedom!
- Allow only 3-5 minutes to potty outside. Reward urinating/defecating immediately (within 1 second) after it happens. Praise and treat.

Here is the suggested routine to quickly train your puppy to potty outside and avoid accidents in the house:

- In the morning, carry the puppy outside, place him on the ground (with leash attached), and give a command like "Go Potty". Allow 3-5 minutes for urination/defecation. Gently repeat the command and soon as the puppy responds, treat and praise immediately. Always bring a treat outside with you, and walk around you're your puppy as movement can help 'get things going'.
- If the puppy doesn't potty within 3-5 minutes, bring her inside and put her back in her crate for 10-20 minutes. Try again.
- When your puppy goes potty outside, bring him in and give him 30 minutes of free time in a confined area. You should be with him during this time. The confinement area should a small mudroom or doggie exercise pen.

Begin with this schedule:

- 1). Potty Outside = ½ -hour free time then 1 hour confinement

This routine will continue until your puppy goes potty outside consistently. Then you can experiment with giving him more freedom and less confinement.

- 2). Graduate to... Potty Outside = 1-hour free-time then 1-hour confinement

When your puppy becomes reliable with this amount of time, increase 'free-time' again.

- 3). Then graduate again to...Potty Outside = 2-hour free-time then 1 1/2-hours confinement.

Increase free time as your puppy becomes more reliable with 'holding it'. If puppy falls asleep during confinement, simply take her out when she wakes up.

If your puppy has an accident, DO NOT scold him. This could lead to many behavior problems. If you catch him 'in the act', pick her up, and carry her outside to finish. Reward her, and then put her in her crate.

***If you work during the day, arrange to come home at lunch or have someone to take your puppy out every 2-3 hours. You can also set up a puppy play-pen, within an ex-pen, with some potty pads or a patch of grass.

The entire process may take 2 to 6 weeks. Please don't become discouraged. Follow these guidelines, and remember- they are only puppies once!

If you are having issues, adjust feeding schedules so your puppy is only fed three times a day (what goes in comes out, so having free access to food and water can hinder the process). Also, if your puppy seems to go 'all the time', consider having a urinalysis and fecal test done to rule out anything medical. It is VERY common for puppies to have UTIs and bacteria in their gut/intestines. A premium human-grade, meat-based food and a probiotic and pumpkin can help save the day, too! Too many grains and fillers will cause your puppy to poop more. I do not suggest training your puppy to a bell to let you know when she has to go outside. It is much more effective to teach your puppy to hold it until you take her out, and will set your puppy up for success in the future. Once they know the behavior, then we can teach the bell as a cue. Also, what if, when he's 4, he rings the bell and you're not there?

I recommend using a potty journal/schedule so you can keep track of your puppy's potty behaviors and general structure throughout the day, plus waking time and bedtime. It works really well and when I am potty training a puppy, I live by it!

