

## House Training

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It's a good thing puppies are so cute because they are a lot of work. If they weren't so cute no one would want one. One of the biggest issues with puppies is housebreaking. A puppy can be causing sleepless nights or tearing up household items and not create as much frustration as a puppy who is toileting in the house.

The humans in the household will likely be the first ones to be "toilet trained." What this means is, before the puppy understands that you want him to toilet outside you will be setting a schedule to keep him reliably going outside. Initially you may be taking the puppy outside as frequently as every couple of hours **and** after waking, eating, drinking or playing.

When you can't devote full attention to the puppy's toileting, plan on using some type of confinement like a crate or baby gates. Also don't allow the puppy full access to the entire house during his early months. Until you are absolutely sure your puppy knows each and every time to toilet outside you should continue to use a combination of confinement and frequent outdoor trips.

When you take the puppy outside use a leash to keep him focused on the task. Always accompany the puppy, no matter what the weather, in order to make sure he has actually toileted. Puppies have very short attention spans. You may take the puppy out and after a quick squat the immediate urgency is relieved and the puppy gets distracted by any number of things. When you return indoors the distractions are gone and the puppy remembers that he hasn't actually finished relieving himself. Suddenly you see the puppy squatting just seconds after the trip outside. Many people believe their cute little puppy has suddenly become stubborn or is attempting to take control when in fact the puppy is just finishing the task when distractions are at a minimum.

If you take the puppy out and he does nothing after several minutes return him to his crate or confine him for ten to fifteen minutes. Once he has had some time to settle then try another trip outdoors. Hopefully this time will be a success but if not then try another round of confinement. Once the puppy is successful outdoors then he can be allowed a little more freedom when you return to the house.

If the puppy has an accident and you find it later just remember that the puppy won't understand any kind of punishment after the fact. You must resolve to be more vigilant in watching the puppy. Clean up the accident with a good enzymatic cleaner to make sure there is no lingering odor to attract the puppy again. If you do catch the puppy in the act, again punishment is not a good idea. That will just teach the puppy that a very natural act should be done where he can't be seen. You will soon have a puppy that toilets behind furniture or in other out of the way places. If you see the puppy toileting in the house, try a noise distraction or just scoop him up and run him outside. Once outside wait for him to finish his task and then gently and calmly praise him.

There is no magic trick to having a house-trained dog but putting in some concerted effort in the beginning will ensure that your puppy will have a good start on being reliable indoors.