

DOGS AND PUPPIES: Housetraining



Patience and consistency will set your puppy up for potty training success. After bringing your new puppy home, it's best not to immediately allow her full run of the house. Freedom must be earned by good behavior, so keep her on a leash tethered to you the first few weeks. This creates a stronger bond and avoids potty accidents, as well as undesirable destructive behaviors around the house. Crate training (see separate handout) is also recommended.

Establish a consistent routine for your puppy and monitor food and water intake, as well as activity levels, so you are better able to guess when your puppy needs to go potty. What goes in must come out, and exercise boosts metabolism. Refrain from "free feeding" and instead have a set mealtime. Defecation will typically occur between 5 and 60 minutes after a meal.

Recognize "pre-potty" behavior such as sniffing, circling, and walking with stiff legs. Take your puppy outside frequently during the day, several times per hour. Give the act a name, such as "potty," and use this word each time you take your puppy out AND while the act is occurring. Immediately after she has eliminated outside, reward with praise, affection, or treats. Keep your puppy leashed during potty time to teach her to urinate and defecate in a designated location. As a general rule, puppies can exercise bladder control for one hour per every month of age (for example, a 4-month-old puppy should be able to hold her bladder for 4 hours).

It's best practice to put the water dish away about 2.5 hours before bedtime and give her plenty of opportunity to empty her bladder.

If accidents in the house occur, clean the soiled area thoroughly with odor-control cleaners to eliminate any lingering scents that would make your puppy more likely to potty in that spot again. Never punish or yell at your puppy for a mess she made earlier, or rub her nose in it. Dogs aren't able to make a connection between presently occurring punishment and bad behavior of the past.

MORE RESOURCES AT

hsppr.org/resources



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