

Helpful Hints for Housebreaking Your Puppy

When you first get your puppy there may be some predetermined things that may make housebreaking your puppy a little easier or a little harder. These things include the breed of your puppy; toy breeds are generally harder to train, whereas hunting breeds are often easier to train. The type of environment that your puppy came from before you got him/her will also make a difference. If the puppy was raised the first 2-3 months of its life in an area that was not kept very clean, the puppy may be accustomed to sleeping in its own feces and urine and this may make it more difficult to housebreak him/her. Where the puppy was originally trained to “go” (i.e. outside, newspaper, or litterbox) will have an impact if you are attempting to train them to use a different medium. Here are some tips that should help make the transition easier.

- Meal feed your puppy. Feeding your puppy on a regular schedule 3 or 4 times a day will make it easier to plan your trips outside. Avoid changing the brand of puppy food. Avoid feeding table scraps, and keep treats to a minimum. All of these things will keep your dog's elimination patterns more regular and stools well-formed.
- Establish one toilet area. Establish a pattern from the house to the toilet area. When you take your puppy to the toilet area, stand still and remain quiet so that your puppy can concentrate on his business. When the puppy eliminates in the right place, praise him, praise him, praise him! You may want to come up with a key phrase, “go potty”, “go outside”, etc. that everyone in the family will use. Consistency is very important! Take the puppy out as often as possible, especially after eating/drinking, napping, and after waking or playing.
- Stay calm about accidents that happen in the house. Punishing a puppy after the accident occurs does not help the puppy, and may actually make the problem worse. A puppy does not have the ability to connect the punishment you are administering now to something that he did 5 minutes ago. If you catch your puppy in the act of urinating or defecating in the house, interrupt him by clapping your hands or shouting (don't hit the puppy!) Then take the puppy outside to the correct toilet area and leave him there for 5 minutes. If the puppy had finished the job inside, quietly bring the puppy back in the house. Clean up accidents that occur in the house with as little attention as possible, and try not to let your puppy see you do this.
- Crate your puppy when you are not able to watch him closely. Most puppies will naturally not want to eliminate in the same area where they sleep, this will help your puppy be more conscientious about “holding it.” Do not give the puppy free range of your home. Young puppies should be confined to areas within your eyesight so that if they start to show the preliminary signs of going to the bathroom (such as sniffing, circling, and squatting) you can catch them and get them outside. Then, praise your puppy for going in the “right” area!
- Use a neutralizer on the areas where he does have accidents. These products eliminate the odor; they do not just cover up the smell. Your dog's sense of smell is much better than ours, although you may not be able to smell it after it's been cleaned up, your puppy probably can.

Be patient and remember that consistency is the key!