



# HOUSEBREAKING

Unless you see life through a dog's eyes, the housebreaking may seem arbitrary. But if you enter into a puppy's world, you'll be a more sympathetic and effective master. Here are a few things to know about training your new friend:

1. **Bladder control:** Until 10-12 wks, they have little control. Don't scold. Get him out when he's most likely to go.
2. **Creating good habits:** If you think he has to go, take him outside (he'll eventually associate the trip outside with his duty). This is why you always want to return to the same area for your pup's potty trips.
3. **Scolding:** Unless caught in the act, don't scold. Shoving his nose in it after will only instill fear--of you!
4. **The Signs:** They'll usually start circling and sniffing. Stop him with a firm "No." Then take him outside immediately.
5. **Clean bed:** Dogs have a natural instinct not to soil their beds. If you keep your puppy in a crate when unsupervised he'll hold it until you let him out (after 10 wks old). Getting him outside right after will be the key!
6. **Food:** Pick a food and stay with it. Switching may cause upset stomachs hindering the training process.

## Consider a Crate

Pups like small, confined, warm places. As long as they get enough time for exercise and bonding, they're actually quite happy and relaxed. They do spend most of the day sleeping anyway. Be sure not to leave your dog in the crate too long. Most importantly, the crate will give you more control over when he relieves himself, enforcing outside is the place to go. Just make sure you he goes directly out! In an excited tone, use "go potty" when you're taking him out so he thinks this is going to be fun!

Make it a cozy environment with a soft blanket. The crate shouldn't be too large (otherwise the puppy will treat part of it like a bathroom)--just large enough for him to stand up, turn around, and stretch out. Leave toys that he can safely chew on and play with. Never use the crate as punishment. It's meant to be a safe, cozy place, not a prison. When you first get a puppy, use the crate even when you're home. This way he doesn't associate the crate with your absence (and thus punishment). Lavish praise on the dog when he gets in and out of the crate. Feed him a small treat so he has good associations with it. When the dog is out of the crate, leave the door open. You may find that he goes into the crate voluntarily. Again, this will help him think of the crate as a home, not a penitentiary.



## Use Praise, Not Blame

Dogs are pack animals and to them, you are the "leader". As a result, they very much want your approval. If you dole out praise at the correct times, you'll reinforce desirable behavior. When he's been naughty, a very firm "No!" is far more effective than a slap. Remember, dogs are people-pleasers. They will do what you ask them if you communicate it to them.

## Set Up a Routine

Dogs, especially pups, thrive on routine. If you stick to a schedule of eating, walks, sleep and play, you'll both know what to expect. Be prepared to get him out in plenty of time, avoiding accidents and instilling good habits. As you set up your schedule, remember that puppies run like clockwork, and they have to relieve themselves at specific times. If you take your puppy out and he doesn't go, put him back in his crate and try a little later. Potty Times:

1. When they first wake up in the morning or after a nap
2. After active play
3. Within 20 minutes after eating
4. Before they go to sleep

## Deal With Accidents

Accidents happen, especially with a new dog--allow about 6-8 months. Remember not to punish unless you catch him in the act. When there is a mess, it's important to clean it up quickly removing any odor. When odors linger, they're a signal that it's a place to go. Be sure not to use an ammonia-based cleanser (it's a component of urine, attracting their attention). Use a commercial cleaner, odor neutralizer or white vinegar.

## Start Taking Risks

After 2-3 wks of a strict schedule, you can start to introduce some flexibility. Try to:

1. Stretch out times between walks by 30 min. or even an hour and allow more time out of the cage.
2. Slowly introduce him into other areas of the house.

Your puppy will inevitably slip up (just as children do), but don't be discouraged. If you're a diligent and dependable master in the first few months of your puppy's life, you'll be rewarded with a lifetime of good behavior! There's no excuse for an un-housebroken dog; they are only as good as their teacher! Call if you have questions!