

Puppy Housetraining Basics

Establish a Routine

Puppies do best on a regular schedule. Take your puppy outside frequently, at least every one to two hours in the beginning. Take him/her outside after playing, eating, and when he/she wakes up from a nap. If possible, put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Feeding the puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that they will eliminate at predictable times as well.

Going Outside

When your puppy eliminates outside, praise him/her lavishly and offer them a treat. Make sure to praise the puppy immediately after he/she goes, not after coming inside. This way, he/she will know the reward was for eliminating outdoors and not for coming inside the house. Choose a location near the entrance of the house as the designated “bathroom spot.” Take your puppy to the same spot every time, and play with him/her only after they have eliminated. When they do eliminate, use a phrase such as “go potty” that you can eventually use before they eliminate to remind them of what they are supposed to be doing.

Accidents

Expect your puppy to have some accidents in the house. It is a normal part of housetraining. When you catch him/her in the act of eliminating in the house, interrupt them with a startling noise (be careful not to scare them) and immediately take them outside. If he/she finishes eliminating in the bathroom spot, praise them and give them a treat. It is important not to punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. We want to praise the good behavior, but punishment is confusing and counter productive. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it is only seconds later. If you find an accident in the house, it is too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up.

As time goes by, your puppy should be able to hold his/her bladder and bowels for longer periods of time. You can begin taking them out less frequently as they establish a normal routine. Supervision and consistency are important parts of the housetraining process.