

TIPS ON HOUSETRAINING

Congratulations on your new puppy! Now that you have your new furry friend, are you wondering how to housebreak him or her? Don't despair! Housetraining your new puppy can be relatively easy and very successful if you devote the appropriate time and patience. A successful puppy training plan includes supervision, confinement and plenty of encouragement.

Elimination

Your first task will be to teach your puppy where you want him to eliminate (go to the bathroom) by accompanying him every time he goes outside. Select a specific area where you want him to go that is easy to get to, i.e., close to the door! Your puppy will become familiar with this place as he recognizes his odor from previous eliminations. You should gently praise his sniffing and other pre-elimination behaviors. Make sure to energetically praise your puppy after he eliminates in the proper area.

Mealtimes

You can help control your puppy's elimination routine by also controlling his feeding schedule. Most puppies should eliminate within an hour after eating, so it is best to avoid feeding him a large meal right before confinement. You should offer him food two or three times each day at the same times and only make the food available for a maximum of 30 minutes. Your puppy's last meal of the day should be finished between three and five hours before bedtime so he has plenty of time for elimination.

Make sure to take your puppy outside for elimination after eating, drinking, sleeping or playing. Develop a schedule of mealtimes, play sessions, confinement periods (for sleeping or rest) and trips outside to the "bathroom" to adjust your puppy to a fairly predictable elimination schedule.

Prevent Mistakes

You'll find the most challenging part of housetraining your puppy is preventing accidents indoors. To avoid this, you need to constantly supervise your puppy. When you are not able to directly supervise your puppy, confine him to a small, safe area. Always take him outside to eliminate just before you confine him. You may want to use a wire or plastic crate to confine your puppy when you can't directly supervise him (see the article Crate Training).

If you are leaving your puppy home alone every day for long periods, you may want to confine him in a larger area such as a small room. This area should be large enough for your puppy to eliminate, if necessary, and lay down several feet away from the mess. Place newspaper at the places where your puppy is likely to eliminate.

Help your puppy become comfortable in his confinement area by playing with him there or simply being in the room with him while he rests.

Correcting Mistakes

Most importantly, be prepared for your puppy to make mistakes! No puppy has ever been housetrained without making a few mistakes. Punishing your puppy is the least effective way to correct his behavior. When your puppy has an accident and you catch him in the act of eliminating indoors, you should correct him with a mild, startling distraction, such as clapping or shaking a can containing a few pebble or coins, and then immediately take him outside to finish eliminating.

Correcting your puppy more than a few moments after he eliminates is ineffective because he will not understand why he is being corrected. And if you are too harsh with

your correction, you will teach your puppy not to eliminate in front of you, even when you are outside.

This harsh punishment could damage your bond with him. Never rub your puppy's nose in his mess – you will only teach him to be afraid of you.

Some pets that “squirt” or urinate when they greet people may do so out of nervousness or excitement and scolding will always make the problem worse. Rather, do not greet your pet right away. Ignore the pet until he settles down and then greet him.

If (and when) your puppy has accidents inside your home, he may continue to eliminate at the same spot if he can smell the odor from his previous mistake. Use an effective commercial product to remove urine and fecal odor from the spot so he is less likely to return to this area.

If your puppy continues to eliminate in certain areas of your home, do not give him access to these areas by closing doors, using baby gates or moving pieces of furniture over the soiled areas. Many pets will not eliminate in areas where they eat, play or rest, so try placing food or water bowls, beds and toys in areas where they have previously soiled to discourage future elimination.

Housetraining your puppy can be a rewarding and bonding experience for both you and your puppy. Be sure to contact your veterinarian with any questions or concerns you may have during this important training process.

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