



# Potty Training your Puppy

House training your puppy requires patience, commitment and lots of consistence. Accidents are part of the process but following these basic guidelines will help get the newest member of your family on the right track. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn where to go.

## Establish a Routine

- Puppies do best on a regular schedule. Take your puppy outside frequently, at least every two hours and immediately after waking up, before and after a play session, and after eating and drinking.
- Pick a bathroom spot outside and always take your puppy to the same location. Choose a location not too far from the door. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he has eliminated. While your puppy is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like “go potty,” that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he’s supposed to be doing.
- Reward! Praise or give treats to your puppy every time he eliminates outdoors. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he’s finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he’ll know that’s what you want him to do.
- Put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he’ll eliminate at consistent times as well. This makes potty training easier for both of you. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day.

## Supervise

Don’t give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house and keep an eye on them whenever indoors. You can tether him to you with a four or six-foot leash or use baby gates to keep him in the room with you (while supervised). Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise and reward with a treat.

## Confinement

When you’re unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won’t want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around. This area could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room, blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your puppy and use the crate to confine him. Take him directly to his bathroom spot when you let him out of his crate/confined area and praise him when he eliminates. See our handout [Crate Training Your Dog](#) for more information

## Oops!

Expect your puppy to have an accident in the house – it’s a normal part of housetraining.

- When you catch him in the act of eliminating in the house, say “oops” (be careful not to scare him). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there.
- Never punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your puppy’s nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other punishment or discipline, will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence which, going forward, can make potty training very difficult.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. Use an enzymatic cleaner to help ensure the scent is gone.
- It’s extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to minimize the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he’ll get confused about where he’s supposed to eliminate which will prolong the housetraining process.