

Puppy House Training in 5 Steps



Puppies are four-legged bundles of joy. They're cute, cuddly and bring out our nurturing sides—until they leave us a little puddle or pile to clean up. At such times, raising a puppy may not seem so joyful.

But don't worry. You can teach your puppy to "do his doo" at the times and places you want him to—you just need to house train him. Follow these five steps to house training success:

1. **Make a den.** Every dog needs a den of his own. This safe, enclosed place is not only where your puppy can take a nap or just chill out—it's also where he can develop the control that's essential to successful house training. That's because no dog wants to potty in his den, and he'll do everything possible to refrain from doing so. The best den for your puppy is a crate that's made of either wire or plastic. Make sure it's big enough for him to stand up, turn around, and lie down in, but not so large that he can sleep at one end and do his business at the other. It is not necessary to have a blanket in the den. If you find your puppy is going potty in the den, remove the blanket for a week or so, until he establishes he wants to keep his den dry.
2. **Make a scent cloth.** The next time your puppy urinates, wipe his urinary area with a paper towel, and save it. The wet paper towel serves as a scent cloth that you can use to help your puppy figure out where he's supposed to potty. Just place the scent cloth in the place you want him to do his business, such as a spot in the backyard, and within seconds, your puppy almost certainly will do that business right on top of it.
3. **Pick a potty spot.** The best place for a doggy bathroom is a grassy area close to your home, such as your backyard. That way you can scoop him up and get him outside if he shows signs of needing to potty. Those signs include stopping suddenly, sniffing intensely, circling, or pacing. Whenever he unloads onto the designated spot, praise him lavishly and perhaps give him a treat. If he goofs and does his business inside, just clean it up with an enzymatic pet stain cleaner. Don't scold or punish your puppy. Scolding doesn't work because your pup might not understand why he's being scolded. Rather, praise him when he has done something right.
4. **Watch for problems.** Until you're sure that your puppy won't potty inside your home, watch his every move. When you can't watch him, put him in his crate.
5. **Follow a schedule.** House training goes much faster if your puppy has a schedule for eating, drinking, and eliminating. Most puppies need potty breaks when they wake up in the morning, after they eat a meal, after they wake up from a nap, and after they play. For very young puppies, this can mean a dozen trips to the potty spot every day. Puppies over four months of age may need six to ten trips; adults can get by with three or four bathroom breaks each day.

You'll know you've succeeded when your puppy is at least six months old and hasn't made a mistake for a month or so. Follow these steps, and your puppy can go back to being just a bundle of joy!