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House Training Your Puppy

The best method of house training is to take your puppy out frequently: fifteen to twenty minutes after each meal, after each nap, after playing hard, and chewing. Go to the same area each time. As your puppy prepares to eliminate, praise him. Only then should he be allowed to play. You can repeat a word or phrase, such as “Hurry up,” to encourage him to learn to eliminate on command.

Feed your puppy at scheduled mealtimes and avoid snacks between meals. Do not offer food or water after 7:00 p.m. While you are housebreaking your puppy they should never be out of your sight unsupervised. If you can't watch them every second you can attach their leash to your belt so they can't wander far enough to get in trouble. Each accident they have in the house reinforces the wrong behavior.

When you can't adequately supervise your puppy, they can safely be left in a crate for limited periods of time. If you need to leave them for longer periods of time, arrange to have someone come to let them outside. As a last resort, if you must leave for longer periods put your puppy in a puppy-proofed room with his crate in one corner with the door open, toys, water, and a papered area for them to eliminate in if necessary. Let them have access to this room only when they are confined in it. Using a “puppy” room may slow his housebreaking.



Crate Training

The premise behind crate training is that puppies won't eliminate where they sleep. Most dogs become attached to their crates just as animals in the wild do with their dens. You want your puppy to consider it a safe haven.

Begin by selecting a crate that will fit your dog when he is an adult. Your (adult) dog should be able to comfortably stand and turn to change positions in his crate. You may block off the unused space and gradually enlarge it as the puppy grows. The crate should be where the family spends most of its time. If the puppy will eventually be sleeping in your bedroom it is nice to have a crate there for nighttime.

To introduce your puppy to the crate, associate the crate with positive things such as food and toys. Leave the door open until there is no sign of fear. Play with your pup, tossing favorite toys into the crate for it to retrieve. Place food and water in the crate and encourage your pet to consider it a safe place. This also decreases the likelihood that your puppy will soil inside the cage. When the puppy enters the crate without hesitation at mealtime, gently close the door while they eat. Keep the door closed for gradually longer periods. Let the puppy out when they are quiet and calm.

The crate is your dog's special place where it should never be disturbed or threatened. The crate must not be linked with punishment or your puppy will avoid it. Encourage your dog to use the crate as a resting place.