

*The following information has been taken from various sources and are suggested methods only. With any puppy, it is imperative that the training methods employed are safe and do not involve negative enforcement of any kind (physical acts of aggression, any kind of violence, screaming, etc.). If you are not sure how to best train your puppy (potty or otherwise), please ask your vet for a referral to a qualified, professional trainer (who employs positive-enforcement methods).*

## 5 Points to Ponder Before Training Begins

### 1. The Puppy's Point of View

When a puppy has to go they won't wait and will simply squat in place. S/he won't understand why you're always mad when you come home. If s/he's punished but not shown what you want, the puppy will think you don't want him/her to potty at all. Rubbing their nose in it makes them wonder, "Does she want me to eat that stuff?" Punishing simply teaches puppies to potty when you're not watching or to hide deposits more carefully.

### 2. Timing is Everything

Timing is key when teaching cause-and-effect. A puppy won't understand that your anger has anything to do with the deposit s/he created five minutes ago. Unless caught in the act or pointed out within 30-90 seconds, correcting the puppy won't work.

Instead, catch the pup in the act...of doing something right. Then throw a happy-dance praise party with special treats! People work more eagerly for a bonus than a reprimand and dogs are no different. Ultimately, your puppy wants to please you and earn your praise.



### 3. Age & Size Do Matter

Pups need a bathroom break after every meal, nap, and playtime. Depending on age and breed, s/he will be fed two to six times a day. Prevent potty accidents by anticipating when the puppy needs a break.

Your pup has a baby-size bladder and limited capacity to "hold it" no matter their best intentions. Every pup is an individual. Rather than guess at your puppy's bladder capacity, use these general guidelines to anticipate his/her needs (and yes, this means potty breaks in the middle of the night):

- Two-month-old pups need a break about every two hours.
- Three-month-old pups can wait about four hours.
- Four-month-old pups can wait five hours.
- Five-month-olds can wait about six hours.
- Seven-month-old pups may be able to wait about eight hours.

### 4. Exercise Patience & a Cool Head

Don't over react when your pup has an accident. **Never, ever yell or rub his/her nose in it!** This hostility is the reason dogs "sneak" around, go behind couches, and in other rooms to have an accident. You want your puppy to relieve himself in front of you outside, so yelling at him is counterproductive! Rather TEACH your puppy where you want him/her to potty by being patient, taking him/her to the same place outside, staying with him and praising him for a job well done! And keep in mind that typically, a puppy is never completely housetrained until they are 6 months old (even later for some breeds). Accept that there will be lapses but stay focused on the progress being made.

## 5. Get Yourself Ready

Now that you're ready to start potty-training your puppy, get the items you need before choosing one of the two training options provided on the following pages. You will need:

- A suitable cleaning product to remove urine, fecal stains and odour. Place these in a central or multiple locations in your house with paper towels.
- A crate that will fit next to your bed but only large enough to accommodate your puppy when full grown. Get one that also collapses for easy transporting. You may also want to consider purchasing an exercise pen that your puppy cannot jump out of. Put the exercise pen in a central location where you spend most of your time at home. If your finances are restricted, create a safe, contained area for the puppy using a child-gate or a similar object.
- Special housetraining treats (rewards) - something small and special, reserved and used only for a housetraining reward.
- An uplifting, cheery, excited tone of voice to carry with you at all times along with a positive and encouraging attitude.

## Option 1 for Potty Training Your Puppy

### Step 1 – Create a Schedule



Base potty breaks on the pup's age, activity level, and mealtimes. It's very important to put your puppy on a regular and timely feeding schedule. What goes in on a regular schedule will come out on a regular schedule. Every pup is different; some poop immediately after eating while others take 30 – 60 minutes. Unless advised by your vet for some medical reason, do not free-feed (leave food out all the time) because:

- Your pup's elimination schedule will be random at best.
- S/he will not necessarily associate you as the provider of her food which is necessary to establish yourself as pack leader and earn your puppy's trust.

Always leave fresh, clean water out for your puppy. Check the water bowl frequently to note how much she is drinking and to make sure the water bowl is full.

### Step 2 – Choose a Location

Dogs rely on scent cues to remind them what's expected. Whether you create an indoor toilet spot with newspaper, pee-pads or a doggy litterbox, or select an outdoor potty, take him/her to the same place each time.

### Step 3 – Concentrate on Business

Keep your puppy on leash until s/he pees and/or poops. Otherwise, the puppy will only play while outside and then have an accident inside. Take the leash off for playtime as part of the reward for eliminating.

### Step 4 – Name It

When s/he squats, say a word/phrase that identifies the action (e.g. take a break, potty, etc.). Make sure your entire family uses the selected cue consistently. Once the puppy has been productive, reward it with lots of praise, play or a tiny treat that doesn't upset his regular nutrition.

### Step 5 – Confine & Supervise

Puppies don't want to live up close and personal to their own waste, so confinement can be a great tool to teach a quick lesson. A small room won't work since the puppy can poop in one corner and sleep in the other.

If the pup isn't productive after fifteen minutes during potty break, confine him/her in a crate or in another safe area close to you for fifteen minutes and then try again. If s/he potties in that area, s/he will have to live with the mistake for a short time. The next time the puppy will be more likely to empty when offered the opportunity.

### Step 6 – Heed the Warning Signs

Puppies sniff the ground and walk in circles before they pose. If s/he squats inside, pick him/her up to stop the process and move the puppy immediately to the designated toilet area outside. Note that this should only be done with urination as a puppy can't stop pooping mid-flow (so you'll just create a bigger mess to clean up). Give your cue word and praise when he's successful in the right spot.



### Step 7 – Clean Accidents Immediately

Use an odour neutralizer to eliminate the smells that lure your puppy back to the scene of the crime.

### Step 8 – Try, Try Again

When you find an accident, it means you've not paid attention to your puppy's needs. Take a deep breath and resolve to do better next time. Like puppies, owners take time and patience to learn important lessons.

## Option 2 for Potty Training Your Puppy

### Step 1 – Understand Your Puppy



Puppies have a schedule that their little bodies follow so they need to go out right after naps/sleep, after exercise, and after eating and drinking. It's a good idea to let your puppy out every two hours (unless they are asleep) and take them to the same place each time. Quietly praise them when they potty outside and provide a great treat afterward!

When they are tiny, potty training is all about YOU – not the puppy. It is YOUR responsibility to make sure they get outside, that you monitor their success (this is crucial), and keep them with you around the house. If you can't see your puppy, chances are s/he's finding some mischief. Try to keep your puppy with you all of the time, either on a leash or with a baby gate or boundary!

## Step 2 – Small Environments Work Best

A smaller environment ensures greater success (ensure the contained area is safe and secure). Most puppies don't want to poop or pee and then be subjected to it, or lay in it.

A Great Dane in an apartment will not be inclined to relieve himself as he can't and get far enough away from it to be comfortable; he is too big and the environment is too small. But a Yorkie in that same environment has loads of places to relieve himself and still be comfortable.



In the beginning, keep your pup on a leash with you or in a small room or area. You can use both leashes and baby gates when the training is starting. This allows you to monitor the puppy and quickly catch an accident before, or as it is happening allowing you to get the puppy outside.

## Step 3 – Ring My Bell

Once you have a handle on your puppy's potty schedule and he is learning that outside is the place to relieve himself, it is time to teach him/her how to tell you s/he has to go out! The easiest way to do this is with a bell or two on a string. Tie one ribbon of bells on the door knob, so that each time your pup goes out he hears and associates the sound with going outside.



Create another ribbon of bells which you can teach your puppy to ring with his/her nose. Most pups are inquisitive and if a bell is held near nose level, s/he is liable to poke, prod or jiggle it in some way. Once s/he rings the bell, offer praise and a treat. This lets him/her know that ringing the bell is what you want. When s/he begins to ring the bells consistently when you bring them out, discontinue the treats as a reward. Instead each time s/he rings the bell, offer praise and let him/her outside. At first, s/he will ring the bell often but soon s/he will realize the bell ringing is the way to tell you that s/he needs to go outside.