



# How to housebreak your new puppy



Follow these guidelines to make housebreaking as easy as possible for you and your pet:

**Start at the ideal age.** The best time to begin housebreaking a puppy is when it is 7  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 8  $\frac{1}{2}$  weeks old. At this age, you can lead the puppy where to eliminate before it has established its own preferences. But don't worry if your puppy is older when you start housebreaking your puppy will still learn, though it may take a little longer.

**Six to eight times a day, take your puppy outdoors to eliminate.** Choose the appropriate spot to take the puppy immediately after it wakes up, after play sessions, and 15-30 minutes after meals. If you take your puppy to the same spot everyday, previous odors will stimulate it to urinate or defecate. Many puppies need 15-20 minutes of moving around and sniffing before they eliminate. Stay with the puppy the whole time. Housebreaking problems can result if you are unsure whether the puppy has actually eliminated and you let it return to the house too soon. And remember the puppy needs to focus on the job at hand, so don't play until it has eliminated.

**Use a key phrase as your puppy eliminates.** If you repeat the same phrase (e.g. "go potty" or "take care of business") every time your puppy eliminated outdoors, it will learn that this phrase means that it is the right time and place to eliminate.

**Once the puppy eliminated outdoors, immediately reward it.** Reward the puppy by praising it, giving it a treat, or playing with it. But remember to reward it right away. The puppy will not learn to eliminate outdoors if the reward does not come until it is back in the house. Instead it will think it is being rewarded for coming inside.

**Supervise the puppy indoors as well as outdoors.** Find a room in your house that allows you to watch your puppy as much as possible. This will help you catch the puppy if it starts to eliminate indoors. You can also leash the puppy or place a bell on the collar to help you keep track of it.

**When you leave home, put the puppy in a crate.** When you can't supervise your puppy leave it in a small puppy proof area such as a crate. If the crate is large enough to accommodate the puppy as an adult, then put a partition in to avoid having the puppy soil one end and sleep in the other. And remember that young puppy's bladder and bowel capabilities are limited, so let the puppy out every four hours.

**Don't punish after the fact.** If the puppy has an accident in the house don't get the puppy and rub its nose in it. This doesn't do any good because the misbehavior has already occurred. Instead try to catch the puppy in the act. If you see the puppy getting ready to house soil, don't swat it, stomp your foot, or shake a can filled with pennies, or startle the puppy by yelling "outside!" The puppy will likely stop what it's doing and you can take the puppy outside.

**Don't leave food out all day.** Feed your puppy at set times everyday, and remove the food bowl after 20 minutes. This will create regular intervals when the puppy needs to eliminate.

**Thoroughly clean areas where the puppy has eliminated in the house.** Your veterinarian can recommend a safe and effective product that removes both odors and stains. It is important to clean a soiled area completely, otherwise your puppy may return to that spot.

**Stick with the training program.** Most puppies can be successfully housebroken by 14 to 20 weeks old. But a pet may take longer to housebreak for several reasons. Consult your veterinarian if you are having problems.