HOUSE-TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

THE 2 RULES FOR HOUSE-TRAINING SUCCESS.

Prevent Accidents. Supervise your puppy in the house. Use a crate when you are not sure if your puppy is empty.

Reward your puppy for going outside. Praise at the right moment, i.e. the second he starts "going." Reward with a treat after he is finished.

Preventing accidents: Long-term and short-term confinement.

WHAT IS LONG-TERM CONFINEMENT?

A place for your puppy to stay when you can't provide 100% supervision. In other words, when you are out, or busy around the house, and can't keep your eyes on him the entire time. It prevents chewing accidents, potty accidents, and teaches your puppy to be alone.

CONFINEMENT? SURELY THAT'S TOO STRICT?

Not at all. It is the best possible start for your puppy in your household. People often give a new puppy complete freedom right away. Then, when he has an accident on the carpet or chews on the legs of the coffee table, they confine him, and confinement becomes a punishment.

Instead, give your puppy a safe place from the beginning, and let him make a gradual and successful transition to his new home. He will be much happier and your furniture will be intact.

WHEN DO I USE IT?

Use a long-term confinement area if you will be gone longer than your puppy can hold it.

SETTING UP THE CONFINEMENT AREA.

The ideal confinement area is easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate. It should be mostly free of furniture and non-puppy related objects. The best places for a confinement area are the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom, or an empty spare room. Furnish with:

- A puppy potty pad or litter box
- Your puppy's crate (with the door open)
- Water and food bowls
- A chew toy or Kong

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GETTING YOUR PUPPY USED TO HIS CONFINEMENT AREA:

STEP 1. Take your puppy out for a walk or bathroom break.

STEP 2. Give him a chew bone or a stuffed Kong. Leave him alone in the confinement area while you go about your business in the house.

STEP 3. After 5 minutes or before he finishes his chew, let him out but don't make a big deal about it or make a fuss over him.

REPEAT STEPS 1-3, gradually increasing the time you leave your puppy in his confinement area without leaving the house. Vary the length of your absences, from 30 seconds to 20 minutes, and repeat them throughout the day.

Leave your puppy in his confinement area (or crate) at night. It is normal for him to try a little crying as a strategy to get out, so brace yourself for that. He has to get used to alone-time.

STEP 4. Within the first day or two, start leaving the house for really short intervals like going to the mailbox or taking out the trash. Gradually work up to longer absences, like running errands.

TRAINING TIP:

Be patient. It may take several days or weeks for your puppy to get used to his confinement area.

WHAT IS SHORT-TERM CONFINEMENT?

It means crating your puppy. A crate is a terrific training and management tool. It is useful for house-training, brief alone-time, settling, and any form of travel. Most importantly, a crate teaches your puppy to hold it when he has to go to the bathroom. A crate helps your puppy in many ways—and saves your carpets.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

If your puppy begins to howl, whine, or bark, wait until he has been quiet for at least 10 seconds before you respond. Otherwise, he will learn that whining or barking makes you appear or gets him out of the confinement area, and he will bark or cry more often and longer in the future.

IS USING A CRATE CRUEL?

Absolutely not. A crate can be your puppy's favorite place in the world. Think of it as his crib. Use treats, praise, and toys to make your puppy love his crate.

Just remember never to use the crate for more than 3-4 hours at a time, except for bedtime.

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WHEN DO I USE IT?

Use the crate for short absences. General guidelines for crating puppies:

8-10 WEEKS ..... up to 1 hour
11-12 WEEKS ..... up to 2 hours
13-16 WEEKS ..... up to 3 hours
OVER 4 MONTHS ..... up to 4 hours

GETTING YOUR PUPPY USED TO THE CRATE.

STEP 1. Begin crate training right away—preferably the first day your puppy is in your home.

STEP 2. Throw small tasty treats into the crate one at a time. Praise your puppy when he goes in to get the treat.

STEP 3. When your puppy is comfortable going into the crate, practice closing the door for 1-2 seconds, then treat him through the door. Let him back out. Repeat this step many times, gradually building to 10 seconds.

STEP 4. Stuff a Kong with something very yummy or use a special bone that will take a lot of time to chew. Put the chewies in the crate. Shut the door. Move about the house normally. Let your puppy back out after 5 minutes or when he finishes his treat. Don't make a fuss over him. Repeat this step several times, varying the length of your absences from 1 to 20 minutes.

STEP 5. Next, leave your puppy in the crate with something delicious while you leave the house for short errands, like getting the mail or watering the garden. Gradually build your absences.

HOW TO HOUSE-TRAIN.

STEP 1. Take your puppy outside on leash. Take him to the same place every time.

STEP 2. When he goes, praise. Offer him a treat when he is finished.

STEP 3. If you are in a puppy-safe place, let him off the leash for a little playtime.

If he doesn't go within 5 minutes, put him in his crate for 10-20 minutes, then try again.

A HOUSE-TRAINING CHECKLIST.

- Take your puppy to his potty place first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, shortly after meals, naps, or play sessions, when he comes out of his crate, and generally every hour or so.
- Until your puppy is perfectly house-trained, always go outside with him so you can cheer and reward at the right moment.
- Supervise whenever your puppy is not crated, especially if he is full. If you must take your eyes off him, even for a minute, crate him or put him in his confinement area.
- If you see your puppy sniffing and circling in the house, take him out immediately.

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HOUSE-TRAINING YOUR PUPPY continued...

HOW TO HANDLE HOUSE-TRAINING MISTAKES.

Interrupt mistakes as they are happening. Don't be too harsh or your puppy will be afraid to go in front of you. After interrupting your puppy, hustle him outside to the potty area. Praise if he finishes there. Clean up the indoor mess with an enzymatic cleaner to remove protein residue that might attract him to the same place again.

Never punish. If your puppy made the mistake one hour or five seconds ago, you are too late. Don't rub his nose in his own mess or smack him, this will simply make him afraid of you, and he won't understand why you do it. You must catch him in the act for the interruption to work, and again, you can't do it too harshly or your puppy will be afraid to go in front of you.

WHEN DO I GIVE MY PUPPY FREE RUN OF THE HOUSE?

Not until your puppy is chew trained as well as house-trained. This can be as late as 12-14 months old. Then…

At first, confine him to one room at a time. Choose a tiled room, like the kitchen or the bathroom, so accidents can be easily cleaned. Add a room each week your puppy is successful (accident-free), and supervise each time you introduce him to a new room.

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