



*Caring for those no one else will...*

# POTTY TRAINING 101

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The thought of housebreaking a puppy or new dog brings groans from some and complaints from others: but take heart, new owners -- housebreaking need not be a difficult or painful chore. With the right approach and some consistent effort, your puppy or dog can be housebroken faster than you ever dreamed possible ... it just takes a little patience.

## **Understanding your puppy or dog:**

There are many different methods in which you can housebreak your pet. Whichever way you choose, it is important to understand your dog. Dogs want to please; the trick is to make them understand what it is you want from them.

Dogs do not think the way humans do. When you are unhappy with your dog, it assumes that whatever it is doing at the exact moment you show disapproval - is the thing that is upsetting you. For example:

If your dog relieves himself on your floor and you show your disapproval five minutes after he has committed the act, the dog will think that the mess on the floor is bad. He will not relate to the fact that it was the act of relieving himself on your floor that you disapprove of. The dog will eliminate, see the mess and get worried; you are now going to be unhappy. This is the reason so many dogs will relieve themselves in inappropriate places and look really guilty about it, yet they continue to do it. Dogs want to please, right?

Some owners start to think that their dog is being sneaky when really it does not fully understand what it is doing wrong. It knows the mess upsets you but does not understand that it should stop making the mess. To your dog, these two things are unrelated:

- the mess, and
- the act,

The trick is to catch your dog in the act and make him understand. You do not need to hit your dog. The tone of your voice is enough to make the dog see you are unhappy. A firm "No! You are not allowed to go in the house. No! No!" is all that is needed. Immediately take your dog outside to the appropriate place. Wait for your dog to go again and when and if he does, *praise him*.

You should begin to housebreak as soon as you bring your new puppy or dog home. NOTE: Puppies need to relieve themselves approximately six times a day. A puppy is not physically able to control the muscle that allows him to "hold it" until he is about 12 weeks of age. Before this time, good housebreaking routines should be practiced to avoid having your puppy urinate and defecate all over your house. Take your puppy out often.

A dog should be taken out immediately after each meal since a full stomach puts pressure on the colon and bladder. Watch for signs of urination or defecation, such as turning in circles. Using a crate is the

smart to ensure your dog does not urinate all over your house. It is much harder to housebreak a dog if he smells urine in places you do not wish him to relieve himself.

Finally, you must be willing to invest time and energy for just a few short weeks in housetraining. The effort you put in now will last for the rest of your pet's life.

## **CRATE TRAINING:**

Before we get further into this subject, let's dispel any horrible thoughts of putting your dog - that trusted member of the family - that faithful companion - into a cage. As you've no doubt noticed, c-a-g-e is a four-letter word. You don't put family into a cage. FORGET that word! From now on, think of the crate as the dog's very own den.

Canine species are den animals. That's why the family dog likes to relax in an out-of-the-way spot, such as under the kitchen table, under the bed or in the back of a closet - any place that has the feel of a den. If a dog has a crate in its very own den-like spot, it derives a feeling of security from being in its crate.

Some animals use cages, such as hamsters, gerbils, and mice. These pets live their entire lives in cages for their own protection. Your dog is not going to live in its crate. It will rest in it, sleep in it, travel in it, possibly even eat in it. When it is not doing those things in its "den", it will be with the rest of its "pack" - its people.

The crate's first use is as the dog's bed, but it is also an excellent natural training tool. You wouldn't try to raise a baby without a crib. Why not give some thought to providing your puppy or dog with a similar "safe place" while it learns? Providing only a rug or mat, or an open dog bed gives a new dog too much freedom to find trouble. By putting the bed in a crate, the dog is protected from such lures as electric cords and your new shoes. A crate will protect both your possessions and your dog.

Dog beds look wonderful, but most puppies (up to 2 years of age) chew the pretty ones to pieces! The attractive baskets and even the cute beds for toy breeds should be provided only for supervised napping while the dog is a puppy or until you can trust it. Later you can extend their usefulness - but they will never replace the crate. When a dog needs a den, it needs a crate, not an open bed.

**BEFORE YOU CRATE TRAIN, REMEMBER:** A dog that is left in a crate all day long, gets let out in the evening after work for a few hours and put back in the crate for the night can become neurotic, destructive, unhappy and noisy. If you work all day, it is recommended you find someone who can take your dog out for a long walk in the afternoon. If this is not possible only use the crate at night. If you must leave your dog all day long every day and you have nobody to let the dog out during the day, please see our section below on paper training. It is said that dogs are den animals and like the crate, but even a den animal would go crazy if it was lock up all day long.

## **LOCATION OF CRATE**

Whenever possible, place the crate near or next to you when you are home. This will encourage the dog to go inside it without his feeling lonely or isolated when you go out. A central room in the apartment (i.e.: living room or kitchen) or a large hallway near the entrance is a good place to crate your dog.

## FURNISHING YOUR PUPPY'S CRATE

- **Toys and Treats:** Place your dog's favorite toys and dog treats at the far end opposite the door opening. These toys may include the "Tuffy", "Billy", "Kong", or a ball. Toys and balls should always be inedible and large enough to prevent their being swallowed. Any fragmented toys should be removed to prevent choking and internal obstruction. You may also place a sterilized marrow bone filled with cheese or dog treats in the crate.
- **Water:** A small hamster-type water dispenser with ice water should be attached to the crate if your dog is to be confined for more than two hours in the crate.
- **Bedding:** Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft, comfortable bed for the dog. If the dog chews the towel, remove it to prevent him from swallowing or choking on the pieces. Although most dogs prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface, and may push the towel to one end of the crate to avoid it. If the dog urinates on the towel, remove bedding until he no longer eliminates in the crate.

## INTRODUCING THE CRATE

Your pup's first experience with its crate should be pleasant. Place the crate on the floor and allow the dog to check it out. Don't force the dog to go inside until it has had time to sniff every corner of the strange object. Prop the door open and place a few treats just inside the door. As the dog develops more and more courage, toss the treats to the back of the crate so that he must go inside to retrieve the goodies.

When the dog is comfortable in the crate, close the door and leave it shut for a few minutes. Let the dog out without ceremony. Repeat the process several times, gradually extending the length of the closed-door sessions.

The pup may complain a time or two about being confined. Do not reward the dog for whining by opening the crate door. There is no need for punishment but do remain firm! Ignore the protests and they will soon stop. The dog should learn from the start that there is no punishment connected with its bed and that life is more pleasant when it complies with the rules.

If the dog is at all hesitant about entering the crate, do not force him through the crate door. Try feeding the pup in the crate for a day or two, and cheerfully chat with the dog while it is eating. Lure the pup into the crate with its food dish. The pup will not feel trapped if it faces the open crate door.

When the puppy is comfortable in its crate, you're ready to take advantage of all the wonderful uses for this marvelous invention.

## CRATE SCHEDULE:

If you follow this easy schedule, you will find housetraining is as easy as falling in love with a puppy.

**Morning:** Let's begin first thing in the morning. Being fully aware that "first thing" may be earlier than you had in mind! At the first peep, whine or bark in the morning, open the crate door and immediately get the dog to the exact spot you want him/her to use. Attach the leash as you go. Just stand and let the pup wander about on its leash. This is not a walk; it is a "business trip".

Make up a term that means "potty" to the dog. Some common ones are "potty" "go-pee" or "go outside". Once you have chosen a word or phrase, everyone in the family should use it. As the dog finishes, say "good dog" followed with more standing on your part and more exploring on the part of the pup - but only in that one small area. If you find that you are just staring at each other, move the leash back and forth to get the pup moving again. When the dog has a bowel movement, give more praise - just an approving "good dog" - not a standing ovation - and then take the dog back inside.

Using a leash, even inside a fenced in area or while paper training, has many advantages. You are there to express immediate approval; your dog goes in the place you have chosen; your dog will be at ease to relieve itself on leash away from home.

If the puppy messes in the crate before waking you, don't scold. Set the alarm for 15 or 20 minutes earlier and be certain the dog relieves itself before going into the crate at night. You may even try changing its feeding schedule and removing its water dish a little earlier. This should help the pup to make it through the night. Your goal is prevention, not punishment.

When you have the time, go for a walk right after the dog has eliminated. Or, if you have a fenced yard, the pup might like to run around on its own for a while. Then, it's breakfast time for your canine baby.

Place the dog's food dish and water bowl side by side in the crate. Allow 15 - 20 minutes for the dog to dine before removing the dish. Remove it when the time is up, whether or not the dog has eaten all the food. Now, take the pup back outside to the same spot. If after 5-10 minutes it shows no sign of wanting to eliminate, go for a short walk. Then go back to the same spot again. It is extremely important to be right there to say "good dog" as the pup eliminates; at least for the first couple of weeks. I never said this would be interesting! It is basic potty training, however, and will last a lifetime!

Now is a good time for some supervised freedom to explore other parts of the house. In a working household, this may be a weekend luxury. If you are occupied, getting family or self-ready to meet the day, place the dog back in its crate with some chew toys to amuse it while you finish your morning rituals.

**DAYTIME:** Be sure to monitor your pup's activities throughout the day. When the pup sniffs, walks in circles, and appears anxious, it is your cue to take the puppy to "potty". The success of housebreaking depends on your quick response to the cue. If the puppy is successful again and again, it will soon begin to head for the spot when it feels the urge. If you can't constantly supervise the puppy, put it in a crate when you are busy. Don't just let it make a "mistake".

If the pup must be left alone, place the crate in a restricted area such as the kitchen or the bathroom, with a gate across the door, and leave its crate door open. Turn the radio on low (dogs have super hearing), put some safe toys in the crate and leave just one patch of newspapers on the floor in for an emergency. If you put the newspapers all over the floor, the pup will decide where to go, which could be just about anywhere. By putting 3 or 4 layers of newspapers in one spot (maybe beside the outside door) you have taken charge!

If you plan to be gone for only a few hours, take the dog outside to eliminate before you leave. Then put the dog in the crate with a small treat and a couple of toys. Latch the crate door, turn the radio on, and leave. (just take off, no speeches!). If you'll be gone more than two hours, confine the pup in a restricted area as described above. Older dogs can remain in their crates a little longer; ask your veterinarian for an opinion on how long the pup can be expected to go without "going potty". When you return, immediately take the puppy out to its very own spot.

**BEDTIME:** A young puppy's last meal should be no later than 8 p.m. followed with a drink of water. Then remove the water. An hour or so before your bedtime, take the pup out for the last time. Put the crate in the bedroom before putting the dog to bed for the night. Then put the pup into the crate with a toy and a plain puppy biscuit.

Your mere presence will be comforting, but don't fall into the trap of talking to the puppy when you are going to bed or it will try to stay up to keep you company! If you go about your business of calling it a day, the pup will too. Don't fall for that old "ticking clock and hot water bottle routine" either. The pup was weaned before you got it so it doesn't need "mother's heartbeat". All you end up with is a destroyed clock, a hot water bottle full of tiny tooth pricks and a soaking wet puppy. The important thing is that you'll be there to hear the very first sound that signals the first of many trips outside.

When you put your pup in the crate and say goodnight, mean it!! No going back to say goodnight later. No response to crying, whining or barking if you are certain the pup relieved itself before entering the crate. Don't even punish the pup if it fusses. Your angry shout of "quiet" is (to the pup) a response to its cries. The puppy reasons that any reply is better than none, so it will be encouraged to keep it up. things will get better each night. A well-socialized puppy will likely be sound asleep before you turn out the light, and you'll be the one staying awake as you watch your new pride and joy.

By sticking with a constant schedule, you can housebreak your puppy in only a few days. But don't rush to brag to your friends yet. Continue to monitor your puppy's actions for several months. If the pup soils your house, be sure to clean the area immediately with a commercial odor-eliminator or a solution of vinegar and water. If the pup is allowed to "mark" places in the house, it will return again and again to mark that spot. It could even assume that marking the house is permissible. Do not punish the dog for house soiling - unless you catch the dog in the act. Otherwise, the dog will not understand the reason for the punishment.

### **Accidents In The Crate**

If your puppy messes in his crate while you are out, do not punish him upon your return. Simply wash out the crate using a pet odor neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle, Nilodor, or Outright). Do not use ammonia-based products, as their odor resembles urine and may draw your dog back to urinate in the same spot again.

#### Crating Duration Guidelines\*

9-10 Weeks	Approx. 30-60 minutes
11-14 Weeks	Approx. 1-3 hours
15-16 Weeks	Approx. 3-4 hours
17 + Weeks	Approx. 4+ (6 hours maximum)

\*NOTE: Except for overnight, neither puppies nor dogs should be crated for more than 5 hours at a time. (6 hours maximum!)

## **The Crate As Punishment**

**NEVER** use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand for your puppy or dog. This simply causes the dog to fear and resent the crate. If correctly introduced to his crate, your puppy should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may however use the crate as a brief time-out for your puppy as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

[NOTE: Sufficient daily exercise is important for healthy puppies and dogs. Regular daily walks should be offered as soon as a puppy is fully immunized. Backyard exercise is not enough!]

## **Children and the Crate**

Do not allow children to play in your dog's crate or to handle your dog while he/she is in the crate. The crate is your dog's private sanctuary. His/her rights to privacy should always be respected.

## **Barking in the Crate**

In most cases a pup who cries incessantly in his crate has either been crated too soon (without taking the proper steps as outlined above) or is suffering from separation anxiety and is anxious about being left alone. Some pups may simply be under exercised. Others may not have enough attention paid them. Some breeds of dog may be particularly vocal (e.g., Miniature Pinchers, Mini Schnauzers, and other frisky terrier types). These dogs may need the "Alternate Method of Confining Your Dog", along with increasing the amount of exercise and play your dog receives daily.

## **When Not To Use A Crate**

Do not crate your puppy or dog if:

1. S/he is too young to have sufficient bladder or sphincter control.
2. S/he has diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by: worms, illness, intestinal upsets such as colitis, too much and/or the wrong kinds of food, quick changes in the dogs diet, or stress, fear or anxiety.
3. S/he is vomiting.
4. You must leave him/her crated for more than the Crating Duration Guidelines suggest.
5. S/he has not eliminated shortly before being placed inside the crate.
6. The temperature is excessively high.
7. S/he has not had sufficient exercise, companionship and socialization.

## **Important Reminders**

Do not crate a puppy or dog when temperatures reach an uncomfortable level. This is especially true for the short-muzzled (Pugs, Pokes, Bulldogs, etc.) and the Arctic or thick-coated breeds (Malamutes, Huskies, Akitas, Newfoundlands, etc.). Cold water should always be available to puppies, especially during warm weather. [Never leave an unsupervised dog on a terrace, roof or inside a car during warm weather. Also, keep outdoor exercise periods brief until the hot weather subsides.]

Be certain that your puppy has fully eliminated shortly before being crated. Be sure that the crate you are using is not too large to discourage your pup from eliminating in it. Rarely does a pup or dog eliminate in the crate if it is properly sized and the dog is an appropriate age to be crated a given amount of time. If your pup/dog continues to eliminate in the crate, the following may be the causes:

1. The pup is too young to have much control.
2. The pup has a poor or rich diet, or very large meals.
3. The pup did not eliminate prior to being confined.
4. The pup has worms.
5. The pup has gaseous or loose stools.
6. The pup drank large amounts of water prior to being crated.
7. The pup has been forced to eliminate in small confined areas prior to crate training.
8. The pup/dog is suffering from a health condition or illness
9. The puppy or dog is experiencing severe separation anxiety when left alone.

## **Other Reasons For Crate Training**

**Car Travel:** The crate physically protects the dog in the car, but it does far more. It restrains the dog in case of a small fender-bender. In the case of the serious accident, the dog will not be thrown into the windshield or out the window. The dog cannot escape from the car to become lost or even killed. The crate also enables anyone coming to your rescue to remove the dog quickly from the scene. This alone could save time needed to assist people. Two hundred thousand dogs are killed each year from falling, jumping or being thrown from cars and pickup trucks. A crate secured in the back with some form of protection from the weather means you really care.

**Traveling Bed:** If you travel with your dog, a crate is invaluable. When you take the crate along, the dog identifies with the security of this little piece of home. You can prevent nights of lost sleep if you take the crate with you to the hotel, the campsite or your friends home. If you must leave the dog for short outings while you're on the road, be sure to leave the dog in its den. You will be a welcome guest if your dog displays good manners. The dog that whines, destroys property or soils the facilities is not likely to receive invitations to return.

**Air Travel:** The crate will be the vessel that carries your dog to your destination. If your dog is already crate trained, the trip will be less stressful. A calm dog will not need tranquilizers to travel in a crate.

**Puppy Sitters:** If a friend volunteers to puppy-sit while you're traveling, the dog's crate can go to the friend's house for this stay. Your friend will appreciate the convenience of having the crate at his or her disposal.

**In Home Confinement:** There are times that the dog is just in the way. If you're cooking and the dog is under foot, it would be safer in its crate. A dropped pot caused by a in-the-way dog is dangerous to dog and you. Some friends are just not suited to enjoying your dogs company. Older people and children often better quests when your dog is out of the way. The dog won't mind spending some time in its special place.

**Separation Anxiety:** Crate training plays a major role in preventing separation anxiety. The stress of being abandoned can cause dogs to chew through doors, walls and carpets if left alone. A correctly crate-trained dog seldom experiences the panic of being left alone, even though it may occasionally try to change your mind about going to work!

**Recuperation Area:** For the injured dog, or the dog that is recovering from surgery, the crate will help the healing process. When we advise you to keep the dog quiet and still, the crate provides the way to comply with the instructions.

## **PAPER TRAINING:**

There are alternative methods to crating very young puppies and puppies who must be left alone in the house for lengths of time exceeding the recommended maximum duration of confinement (see Crating Duration Guidelines). We suggest the following:

Use a small to medium-sized room space such as a kitchen, large bathroom or hallway with non-porous floor. Confine your puppy to this room or area using a 3 ft. high, safety-approved child's gate rather than shutting off the opening by a solid door. Your pup will feel less isolated if it can see out beyond its immediate place of confinement. Puppy-proof the area by removing any dangerous objects or substances.

Set up the crate on one end, the food and water a few feet away, and some newspaper (approx. 2'x3' to 3'x3') using a 3-to-4-layer thickness, several feet away. Place layered newspaper in the corner away from the feeding and water dishes. After meals take the puppy to the newspaper. Each time the puppy eliminates, change the top layer of newspaper and leave the bottom layer. Puppies like to go where they smell urine and feces and will start to prefer the newspaper over any other spot.

Dogs are not fish. They need to find something to occupy their mind, so give your dog plenty of toys. You should set up the room so that the bed and food are at one end and the pee pads at the other. Spread the toys in the center of the room.

Make sure you take him out after every meal and play session **BEFORE** you put him back in his room. Be consistent and establish a schedule. Pay attention to your puppy's behavior so you can develop a schedule that works for you and the pup. When does your puppy naturally defecate? In the morning? 10 minutes after eating? Around bedtime? You may have to make some compromises.

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS:**

Remain consistent. Do not allow your puppy to do something one day and not the next. This will confuse him.

Never leave an untrained puppy unattended in the house.

Make your dog understand what is expected of him. Dogs want to please. Always praise your dog for good behavior. No form of physical punishment is as effective as praise and encouragement.