

THE SECRET

to houstraining your puppy



There are a lot of myths out there about properly houstraining your fur baby. Here's the real secret to making sure that your puppy's eliminating (peeing and pooping) properly—and both you and your pup are happy in the end.

Here's the good news: Your dog's wired to make houstraining possible. But it's up to you to set her up for success. Wild canines bed down in a den together with their mom. When they're really small, their mom cleans up after them, but as they grow, cleaning up after six to eight kids can become daunting! Because of this, nature has provided. As a puppy's brain matures, she starts to instinctively resist soiling the den. Humans can take advantage of this tendency and use it as a tool to teach a puppy when and where to eliminate.

A place to call home

Simulate a “den” experience for your puppy with a crate or safe zone. Keep in mind that it should be small enough to trigger her brain to recognize that it's her den, but obviously not so small that it's uncomfortable. Make it a happy place with special toys and treats. Whenever you cannot be there to supervise, she should be safe in her happy place.

Frequent outings

Puppies can't typically hold their bladders for extended periods, so make accommodations for her to get outside regularly as often as you can. Whenever she eliminates outside (it might help to take her to the same place every time until she associates that spot with peeing and pooping), reward her with praise and treats.

A predictable outcome

Your puppy's elimination can be predictable—as long as you help:

- Don't leave food out for around-the-clock snacking.
- Practice mealtimes and make sure you'll be available for a walk about 10 to 15 minutes later. A full stomach can trigger the bowel to empty, and you can reinforce this tendency with rewards and praise.
- Make sure you can be counted on too. Don't leave your puppy alone in the crate for longer than she can “hold it.” Every time she's forced to soil the crate, she's sending her brain the wrong message.

Punishment is a no-no

Never strike your puppy or rub her nose in an accident. She can't sort out her fear of your handling from what you're trying to convey, so she'll just learn to fear you when you seem upset. If you see her start to posture for elimination, quickly scoop her up, place her on the spot you prefer and reward her when she finishes there.

Accidents will happen

Clean up mishaps with an enzyme cleaner to keep your puppy from going back to that spot. Don't depend on the puppy to warn you of an impending incident—just take her out every two hours or so. Eventually, she'll learn to let you know when she needs to go. Hang in there. Remember, the idea of selective elimination is natural to your dog. If you're being consistent and still can't seem to houstraining your puppy, ask your veterinary team. They can make sure there are no medical causes for the problem and offer more tips.