



## Housebreaking

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Housebreaking is an important learning phase during puppyhood. It can be a challenging and frustrating one, though there are some helpful tips to make the process and smooth, successful and quick as possible.

1. It is important to supervise your puppy at all times. This means that they are either with you (and being supervised), or are in a "safe" area where they can't make a mistake, such as a crate or very small room with a baby-gate.
2. Confinement of some sort is necessary to keep the dog from making mistakes that will form the wrong housebreaking habits. A crate should be big enough for the dog to stand up, lie down, and turn around in a circle. Dogs have a natural instinct to keep their resting area clean. If the crate is too big they will establish separate resting and relief areas. The crate should be utilized when you are unable to supervise your puppy.
  - A crate is a humane and helpful way to aid in housebreaking most dogs. It is important to introduce the crate slowly with treats to make it a **POSITIVE** experience so that your dog does not panic when you put him in the crate. Baby gates can be effective, but they are not as secure as crates. \*See Crate Training Handout\*
3. When your dog goes outside during the houstraining process you need to go with them **EVERY** time so you can praise them or give them a treat reward as soon as they are finished urinating or defecating. This allows for a positive connection to be made when eliminating outside, but it needs to be done quickly, **RIGHT** after eliminating, in order for the connection to be made.
4. Make sure all spots in the house where your dog might have relieved him/herself have been cleaned well. If you don't do this, the scent may draw him back to go in that spot again. Bacterial enzymatic odor eliminating products can help on both fresh spots, or spots that were not treated promptly.
5. Never punish your dog for a housebreaking mistake. He won't understand and the punishment can create new problems. Instead, keep him in the room with you at all times when he is not in his crate, and if you see him start to have an accident, just say "outside" or distract/interrupt with another word, a clap, or a gentle tap on the nose and rush him/her outside. The goal is to get him/her to finish eliminating outside, and then you can praise or give a treat reward.
6. Houstraining a dog of any age requires diligence, consistency, commitment, patience, and good-nature from the owner. Most dogs can learn relatively quickly if you are consistent and patient! And know it will get better, and easier, as time goes on!

