

# **DOG TRAINING 101**

## **THE BASICS OF DOG TRAINING**



## Introduction

First thing's first: despite the title of this report, **there is no such thing as a perfect pooch** (just as there is no such thing as a perfect human). The closest you can come to picking the perfect pooch is to pick one that's best for you and your family.

You know what's weird? Dog owners all believe their dog's personality is distinct and unique. Even if they own two dogs of the same breed, perhaps even from the same litter, they'll say each dog has a personality all his own. And they'll be right. And yet many of those same people believe that dog personalities are determined by breed. They'll say things like "Golden Retrievers don't bite," or "Pit Bulls are vicious." And they'll be wrong. A dog's personality, like that of a child, is determined more by "nurture" than "nature." Depending on how he's raised, a Golden Retriever will bite and be vicious; a Pit Bull will be a gentle coward.

It is true that dogs of a certain breed may share some behavioral characteristics (e.g., most Labrador Retrievers enjoy swimming and are crazy about fetching a ball). There are exceptions to every rule, but knowing behavioral (as well as physical) characteristics will help you to decide on a dog that will likely be a good fit for you and your lifestyle. We'll cover that later in this report.

But looking beyond the breed characteristics and picking a dog based on his individual personality is a very important—yet often overlooked—step in finding a dog that's best for you and your family.

Keep an open mind about what type of pooch to pick until after you've done your homework. You and your soon-to-be best friend will be much happier with the results.

**First step: read the rest of this report!**

### **Puppy or Adult?**



Should you get a puppy or an adult dog? This is the first decision you need to make before picking a pooch. Please give this some serious thought. If you do, your final decision may surprise you.

Most people don't even think about the adult dog option—they just go out and get a puppy. They're so cute! Adorable! Fun! Just the word "puppy" makes most people feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

But perhaps you should at least consider the benefits of an adult dog before making your decision:

- The habits, manners, and temperament of an adult dog (at least two years old) are already established and easy for you to evaluate. Most dog rescue groups,

shelters, adoption services, etc., will allow you to take a dog on a trial basis. You can take him home for a few days to see if his personality is compatible with you, your family, your other pets—in other words, you can find out if the dog fits what you’re looking for in a new furry companion. If not, you can usually take him back. With a puppy, on the other hand, you won’t necessarily know what kind of dog he will turn out to be, because this will depend very much on you and the time you spend with him.

- Adult dogs typically require less care, attention and training than puppies. An adult dog doesn’t need to go to the bathroom as often as a puppy. They are usually housetrained, and often know the difference between a chew toy and a your favorite pair of shoes. An adopted adult dog may be an ideal “out of the box” companion that is so well trained, affectionate and “perfect” that you’ll wonder how anyone could give him up. But there is the possibility of the other extreme, as well. Each dog is unique. (Hence the importance of the trial adoption period.)
- Adult dogs are less likely to be adopted from shelters than puppies. If you want to rescue a dog, picking an older one is more likely to save a life.

The key to finding a good adult dog is to take plenty of time to evaluate his habits, behavior, and personality. Proper training can correct many bad habits and teach good ones (yes, you certainly can teach an old dog new tricks!); but not all behavioral problems can be overcome.

A puppy, on the other hand, is like a lump of clay waiting to be molded by you. You can raise him to be your ideal companion. This, of course, presumes you know how to train a dog properly and have the time—and the desire—to do so. But because you’re reading this report and have subscribed to the Happy Mutt Training System, we know you’re one of those rare humans who realize what’s involved and is willing to go through it anyway—and that whatever pooch you bring home is going to be one lucky, well-trained, well-adjusted dog!

Keep this in mind: An adorable puppy will become an adolescent dog with a few

months; that adolescent will quickly become an adult dog that can live from 10 to 20 years. So when considering a puppy, put a lot of thought into the grown dog it will become, and the long-term commitment you will make.

**All adult dogs were once adorable puppies, and all adorable puppies will grow into adult dogs.**



## **What Kind of Dog?**

### **Mixed-Breed or Pure-Breed?**

After deciding to get a puppy or adult dog, the next question is: What kind of dog is best—mixed-breed (mutt) or pure-breed? There are fans on both sides of this question who would never consider owning the “other” choice. Then there are people who just want a great companion and don’t care whether he’s a mutt or an AKC champion.

[Note: We use the term “mutt” with affection. We have a warm spot in our heart for mutts. But we love all kinds of dogs!]

As with the puppy or adult dog decision, there are pros and cons to both mutt and pure-breed options.

Pure-breed puppies are more predictable in terms of behavioral and physical characteristics. In many cases before picking a pure-breed puppy, you can check out the appearance, friendliness, basic manners, and general health of his parents. Sometimes too much breeding/inbreeding, or breeding to achieve a desirable physical characteristic (such as the flattened nose of a Pug), can create health problems. Pure-breed dogs can be expensive. Depending on the breed, a pure-breed puppy will typically cost several hundred dollars.

A mutt, on the other hand, is pretty much a one-of-a-kind dog. If you're adopting a mutt puppy from a friend, you might see what the mother is like, but the father is often a total mystery. If you adopt from a shelter, you can only guess about both parents. Mutts generally have fewer health problems and tend to live longer than pure-breed dogs. And mutt puppies are much cheaper (often free).

You cannot simply select the "perfect" breed or the "perfect" individual puppy and have him automatically grow up to be a "perfect" adult dog.

**Any puppy (mutt or pure-breed) can become a wonderful companion if properly raised and trained. Conversely, any puppy can become a canine nightmare if not properly raised and trained.**

Regardless of pedigree (or lack thereof), you should pick a pooch that is best suited to you and your lifestyle.



## **Big or Small?**

Whether you want a mutt or pure-breed, the next thing you should think about is the size of the dog.

If you live in an apartment, you may think it's best to limit your pooch possibilities to small dogs. But you don't have to. Large dogs can make wonderful apartment companions as long as they receive regular exercise during walks or dog park visits. Large dogs are often calmer and quieter than small dogs (less barking for neighbors to complain about). Dogs of any size will make great apartment pets as long as they are properly trained.

If you have small children, would a small dog be better? Not necessarily. Any dog, regardless of size or breed, may be frightened and irritated by children. A dog that feels threatened is more likely to bite. Of course, the bite of a Chihuahua will be less severe than that of a Rottweiler. Dogs of any size can make good companions for children if they are properly trained and socialized around children (but also make sure your children are taught how to act around dogs).

Small dogs eat less (so are cheaper to feed); and you'll have smaller piles of poop to

clean up, of course. They can be easier to control (they are not physically able to drag you down the street during your walk). But again, proper training will enable you to control any dog of any size.

## **Do Breed Research**

If you've decided on a pure-breed dog of a particular size, it's time to do specific research and consider behavioral traits as well as physical ones. If you pick a pure-breed pooch without doing your homework, you may be in for some surprises.

For example, Border Collies are very smart dogs, so you might think this would be a great choice. But super-smart dogs actually require more attention and care than average-intelligence dogs. They need mental exercise as well as physical exercise. Like bright students, they tend to get bored easily—and a bored dog is not a good thing.

If you find a particular breed of dog appealing, get information about it from appropriate resources:

- Ask a veterinarian if the breed is prone to any health issues.
- Get “reviews” from people who actually own the breed. Go online. The Internet makes research easy. Just do a search for the breed and you'll find several web sites. Don't limit your reading to just one site; pay particular attention to comments made in online discussion forums (by owners and trainers as well as breeders). Look for tendencies and traits that you do not want, such as aggressiveness toward other dogs. Get several opinions. People who complain about behavioral problems—such as a Schnauzer that barks too much or a Chihuahua that still pees in the house at two years old—may not have trained them properly.

Even after compiling the results of your research, remember that every dog is different. His behavior will mostly be the result of genetics and how he's raised. And don't forget personality. Two sibling pure-breed pups raised in the same way by the same person may have totally different personalities.

Even the best breeder cannot accurately predict how a puppy will turn out.

But there are things you can do to increase your odds of finding a great dog.

## **Picking a Pooch**



Most people pick dogs based on physical characteristics. A particular color, length of hair, type of ears, etc. But just as with people, you should look beyond the “pretty face.” The plain black pooch that others ignore might be the best choice.

You want to a dog that likes you, is friendly (not shy or scared), and doesn’t mind being handled.

Don’t pick a puppy that is less than eight weeks old. Some breeders will want you to reserve a puppy at a younger age. That benefits them, not you (and not the puppy). A very young puppy hasn’t yet developed a personality. You’ll have no way of knowing whether such a young puppy will be timid or friendly, for instance. And this is definitely

something you'll want to know, especially if you're paying big bucks for a pup that you'll be sharing your life with for several years!

If you're getting a puppy from a breeder, be sure to "meet" the pup's parents. Pay close attention to their behavior. Their behavior may give you a clue to the eventual disposition of the puppy. Don't get a puppy from parent dogs who aren't friendly.

Look for puppies raised indoors around people instead of in an outdoor kennel. You want a puppy to share your home; so look for a puppy that has been raised in a home.

If you're getting an adult dog and can talk to the person giving him up, ask specific questions about its behavior. Avoid vague questions like: Is he friendly? Ask these instead: Does he like to be groomed and handled? Can you trim his nails? What happens if you take away his favorite toy? Is he good around other dogs (familiar and unfamiliar ones)? How does he react to strangers? Does he bark a lot at visitors? Has he ever growled, shown his teeth, or bitten anyone?

### **In Summary**



Regardless of the many reasons for picking a particular pooch—whether pedigree, size, cuteness, or other traits you find appealing—the success of the relationship between you and your new friend will ultimately depend on how you raise and train him.

## Pre-Training Basics



If you have a young puppy, we recommend that you wait until he's at least 8 weeks old to begin formal training.

Before you begin the formal training lessons with a dog of any age, please plan to follow these keys to success:

1. **Be patient.** Each dog is unique, and can only learn at his own pace. Some dogs learn quickly; others take more time. Patience is indeed a virtue when it comes to effective dog training!
2. **Be kind.** This goes hand-in-paw with "Be patient." Don't lose your temper if your dog doesn't "get it" right away, or appears to be ignoring you. Please do not

punish your dog for not learning quickly enough. As a matter of fact, don't punish your dog at all. (We'll be teaching you effective ways to stop or prevent inappropriate behavior—without punishment.)

3. **Be flexible.** If your dog is struggling to learn, be willing to change your training routine. The location may be too distracting. The time of day may be too close (or far from) feeding time. The length of your training session may be too long (or too short). The training exercises may need to be broken down into smaller, simpler steps. Remember, each dog is unique. Be flexible and willing to do whatever you can to help your dog succeed.
4. **Be generous.** Be generous with your rewards and your time. Always reward your dog's correct responses generously. Don't be stingy with the treats—he's worked hard and deserves a generous reward! And commit ample time to your training lessons. We're all busy these days, but this is "quality time" for you and your dog. You'll both enjoy and benefit from the lessons, so make sure your schedule is adjusted accordingly!

## Rewards

One of the biggest keys to success with positive reinforcement training is rewarding your dog properly. This means giving him something he loves at exactly the right moment.

Your first task is to figure out what kind of reward will best motivate your dog.

### Food Treats

All dogs are unique individuals. Most dogs are motivated by food that tastes and smells good to them. Food treats can be very small, which is handy for keeping them in your pocket or a pouch to use during training—and important to maintaining your dog's caloric intake to healthy levels. So that's the form of reward we'll be using throughout this training.

Be sure what you're giving your dog is good for him. But don't rely on the packing of store-bought treats to tell you "Your dog will love it!" Strong-smelling meat and cheese treats are usually winners, but many store-bought treats are made primarily of other ingredients. Your dog may not appreciate artificial colors, tastes or smells.

Small morsels of cooked chicken are a popular home-made treat. But keep in mind that what motivates other dogs may not motivate yours. Experiment and find out what he loves to eat.

### **Non-Edible Rewards**

What if your dog isn't motivated by food (rare, but a possibility)? You'll have to find something else that motivates him. You may think a couple of pats on the head are a great reward, but your dog may not. He might not even like it (most dogs don't)! Try scratching his belly or some other form of petting. Again, experiment to find out what your dog loves.

Another form of reward to consider is play. Tossing a ball, playing tug-of-war, or playfully chasing your dog for a few minutes may be his idea of heaven.

### **The Best Reward**

**Let your dog show you what he truly loves.** He'll do this with his reaction to the reward you offer. You just need to pay attention to how he responds. Just because he accepts a piece of kibble doesn't necessarily mean he loves it. Watch him carefully when you're giving him a treat, petting, or playing with him. If he looks away or walks away, he probably isn't all that thrilled about what you're offering. But if he gets excited, stays close and begs for more, he's showing you that he loves it and will be willing to work for that reward in the future.

For initial training, we highly recommend using a food treat as the reward. It's the easiest to work with and gets the fastest results...just make sure your dog really likes it!



## Timing

After you figure out the form of reward, the second key to positive reinforcement is timing. This is critical during early training: you must give the reward immediately after your dog performs the correct action. This means within half-a-second! Your response to his correct action must be clear and it must be instant. If you pause in stunned amazement that he actually did something right, then snap out of it and give him a treat several seconds later, you've blown it. You must train yourself to deliver instant gratification to your dog. Do this consistently, and you'll be amazed at how quickly your dog learns.

Here's another important tip about timing: don't make your training lessons too long. Like humans, dogs can become bored by repetition. Bored students don't learn very well. So to keep the training sessions effective, don't make them outlast your dog's attention span. Each dog is different, so you'll need to be alert and notice when his attention starts wandering. Try for a 10-minute session and see how that goes. Shorten

it if necessary. Don't lengthen it to more than 15 minutes. Repeating a short session two or three times a day will be much more effective than having one long session each day.

## **Primary and Secondary Reinforcements**

The instant reward you and your dog choose will be your **primary reinforcer**. A primary reinforcer is something your dog inherently loves. In other words, he was born loving it (treats, tummy rubs).

Another form of reward is known as a **secondary reinforcer**. A secondary reinforcer is something your dog must learn to love and be motivated by. Praise is an excellent example. Puppies are not born loving a phrase such as "Good girl!" After all, it's just noise to them. They must learn to associate that noise with love.

A popular form of secondary reinforcement is clicker training. A clicker is a handheld device that makes a distinctive clicking sound. That sound is basically a substitute for verbal praise. When used properly, your dog will learn to associate the clicking sound with love. We prefer using verbal praise versus a clicker, simply because your voice is something you'll always have with you. If you prefer to use a clicker, just remember to mentally substitute "click" when the lessons say verbal praise or "Good!"

## **Consistency is Key**

Regardless of whether you use your voice or a clicker, the most effective way to train your dog is to use a combination of primary and secondary reinforcers that are consistent.

If you'll use your voice instead of a clicker, choose a phrase and use it exactly and consistently. Dogs are not people, remember? Words are just noise to them. They have no idea that "Good girl," "Great job," "Way to go Molly" or other phrases all mean they did the right thing. Pick your praise phrase, and make sure you (and others in your family) use that exact phrase or word every single time.

Then, several times a day, say your praise word or phrase and immediately give your dog the primary reinforcer (such as the treat you know he loves).

Do about five repetitions, two or three times a day, for two days. You can also use your praise word or phrase when rubbing her belly, when she's eating his dinner, or any other time you're sure she's enjoying something she loves. Within a few days, she'll learn to love the secondary reinforcer (the praise phrase or word) and will be eager to hear you say it.

(Throughout the training course we'll use the example of "Good," but substitute your own choice of secondary reinforcer. Remember to use it—and only it—consistently.)

During early training, the combination of the primary and secondary reinforcers will be extremely powerful and effective... more so than using either form of motivation alone.

### **Treats Won't be Needed Forever**

Don't worry that you'll have to carry treats around in your pocket all the time to get your dog to behave. As your dog learns, her obedience will eventually become habitual. You won't need to consistently use treats or other primary reinforcers for those behaviors beyond that point. (You'll need to use them consistently whenever teaching something new, though.) It will always be a good idea to continue using the secondary reinforcer ("Good!" or whatever). You're basically thanking your dog for doing what you asked... simple common courtesy is always a good thing!

We'll tell you when you can start decreasing the use of treats or other primary reinforcers. But for now, and whenever you're teaching your dog something new, be sure to use both forms of positive reinforcements as instructed.

OK, now that you know the basics of rewards and timing, you're ready to begin training your best friend!

# Housebreaking Breakthroughs



Successful housebreaking is, by far, the most important element of a loving, lifelong relationship between you and your dog.

**If you don't teach your new best friend not to pee and poop in your house, he won't be your friend for long!**

Fortunately, housebreaking a puppy (or adult dog) isn't complicated. All you have to do is prevent peeing and pooping in the house, and reward peeing and pooping outside. While putting this simple concept into practice isn't difficult, it does require your diligence, dedication, and patience. But the rewards are definitely worth the effort!

In this report, we'll provide some general information about dogs on which our housebreaking techniques are based, explain the benefits of crate training, and then give you the step-by-step process for housebreaking your dog.

## Five Facts

Here are five facts that will guide your housebreaking training:

### **Fact 1: Adult dogs can be housebroken the same as puppies.**

If you adopt an adult dog, you may not have to worry about housebreaking if he has already been properly trained. Dogs—even the smartest ones—do not naturally know it's wrong to go potty indoors. They must be trained, and most adult dogs are. But you can't assume this is the case. If he was always kept outdoors, raised in a cage at a puppy mill, or improperly trained by a previous owner, you will need to start fresh and housebreak him using the same basic techniques as you would for a puppy. Adult dogs don't have to go as often as puppies, though, which will make the training much easier for you. (On the other hand, adult accidents will create bigger messes!)

### **Fact 2: Puppies have limited bladder & bowel control.**



A puppy younger than 20 weeks old will need to go potty once every hour when awake. A very young puppy (under 12 weeks old) will need to go more often—every 30 minutes or even more frequently.

For an older puppy, a general rule for determining the number of hours he can go without going potty is to take his age in months and add one. So a four-month-old could hold it for about five hours. Small breeds can't hold it as long; large breeds can hold it a bit longer. Remember, this is a general rule; your puppy's control may vary.

When sleeping, puppies can wait longer. But don't think a puppy who can hold it for 6 hours while sleeping can hold it that long while awake. He can't.

**Fact 3: Dogs like to sleep in a clean area.**

If given a choice, dogs, like people, will never sleep in an area that is soiled with pee or poop. In the wild, "dogs" (wolves, coyotes, foxes, etc.) sleep in a den and go outside to relieve themselves. Their pups learn to do the same.

Because dogs will try their best not to soil their sleeping area, your puppy is less likely to pee or poop in a small "den." Confining him to that "den" whenever you can't watch him will guarantee he doesn't get a chance to begin the bad habit of going anywhere else in your house.

**Fact 4: Dogs do best when kept to a routine schedule.**

Feeding your dog on a set schedule will help him to go potty on a regular schedule. If you let your dog eat and drink whenever he wants, you'll be less able to predict when he'll need to go out. Take him out on a regular schedule, too!

**Fact 5: Punishing a dog after he has an accident in the house is pointless, and may do more harm than good.**

Your dog will not understand that you are upset about something that happened in the past—even if it was just a minute or two ago. He will think he's in trouble for what he's doing at the instant you discover the mess and go ballistic... whether he's happily coming up to greet you or sitting quietly. This, obviously, is the wrong message to give your dog.

## Common Scents



A dog relies on his nose and scent to find “the bathroom.” If a dog has gone potty in your house before, this will leave behind a chemical scent that says “this is the potty place!” This scent will be hard for your dog to resist. That’s why you should make sure there is no odor of urine or feces in the house before beginning to housebreak a new dog or puppy.

Do not use a cleaning solution that contains vinegar or ammonia (the scent is too close to urine scent). You can use baking soda or club soda... or purchase special odor-eliminating cleaners at a pet supply store.

Equally important to cleaning up the scent of past mistakes is marking rooms with the scent of your happy “pack.” A dog will be reluctant to go potty where he and his pack (you and your family) live. That’s why an unhousebroken dog who can’t get outside will often run to a rarely used area of the house, such as a guest room, to go potty.

Once you have removed the scent of urine or feces, spend time in each room with your dog (especially the rooms you rarely use). Sit on the floor and play with your dog in each room for several minutes each day. Soon the room will be marked with a scent that says to your dog, “this is a no-potty zone!”

It will be difficult to mark every area of your house this way, and even if you could, this is more of a passive deterrent than a foolproof method to prevent your dog from going potty indoors; additional action is needed, especially for a puppy.

### **Crate Training and Housebreaking Go Hand-in-Paw**

If your puppy is free to run all over the house, he'll go potty whenever he gets the urge instead of learning to hold it. You can't watch him closely enough all the time to prevent this. So set him up for success instead of failure.

Remember **Fact 3: Dogs Like to Sleep in a Clean Area**. By confining your puppy (or dog) to a “den,” you will inhibit him from peeing or pooping (teach him to hold it), since he won't want to soil his sleeping area. You'll also be able to accurately predict when he needs to go potty: immediately after being released from confinement.

**We recommend you create a cozy den for your puppy out of a dog crate.**



Make sure the crate is big enough for your puppy or dog to be able to stand up, turn around, and lie on his side—but not so big that it gives him room to pee or poop in there without lying in it.

Line the crate with a towel you've used or a t-shirt you've worn (so your scent is on it). Make the crate comfortable for your puppy.

Place the crate in a quiet area, away from distractions (not too close to a window or in a high traffic area of your house), but not away from his "pack" (you and your family).

Some people choose to put the crate in their bedroom, but this may interrupt your sleep as the puppy will likely whine (and/or bark) the first few nights.

Before confining your puppy to his crate, you first need to teach him to enjoy being in it. Say "crate" and toss a few treats into the crate and see if he goes in to get them. Praise him if he goes inside. If he doesn't go inside, put the treats on the lip/entrance of the crate, instead.

Gradually move treats farther into the crate until he goes all the way inside to get them. Do not close the door; let him go in and out as he pleases.

Make it a fun game by tossing treats into the crate a few times in a row, off and on throughout the day. Say “crate” whenever you want him to go in, and praise him when he does.

After he appears comfortable with the crate and eagerly runs in to get the treats, shut the door for a second after he goes in... then open it and let him out. Do that a few times. Then try shutting the door and leaving it shut as you feed him a few treats through the door. Then let him out.

The next step is to stuff a hollow chew toy (such as a Kong®) with something delicious. Let your puppy sniff the stuffed chew toy and then place it in the crate. Shut the door with your puppy on the outside. Usually it takes just a few seconds for your puppy to beg you to open the door and let him inside. Say “crate,” let him into the crate, praise him for going inside, and shut the door. Once he’s busy licking the treat out of the chew toy, walk away. Return before he finishes licking all the goodies out of the toy, and open the door. Don’t let him take the chew toy out of the crate; take it from him.

Next, tie the freshly stuffed chew toy to the inside of the crate and leave the door open. Your puppy can then choose whether he wants to remain outside or go into his crate and start licking the treat from his chew toy. Most puppies choose to rest happily inside the crate and work on the stuffed chew toy. He may even fall asleep in there when he’s done. Close the door.

Speaking of sleeping, you’ll also want to put your puppy in the crate when he’s sleepy. Encourage him to get into his crate with treats and by saying “crate” when you notice he’s about to fall asleep. Close the door after he goes in. If you find him already asleep, pick him up and put him inside, as gently as you can. Close the door.

With several instances of this pre-conditioning, some puppies will quickly accept being confined in their crate at night; others will whine or bark like mad to be let out. Sometimes putting a cover over the crate will help your puppy to settle down and go to sleep.

Ignore a puppy's immediate whining and barking to be let out, otherwise you'll teach him that whining and barking is the key to getting what he wants (very bad idea). Most puppies will settle down after a few minutes and go to sleep.

If he starts whining after being quiet for a while, he may need to go potty. You should take him outside, but don't let him out of the crate as he's whining. Wait a moment to see if his whining pauses, and then quickly open the door and take him outside. If he doesn't pause on his own, make some sort of noise that will cause him to stop whining and listen. Then get him out right away before he starts whining again.

Use the crate at night and during the day whenever you're unable to watch your puppy or have him outside.

Do not use the crate as "punishment." If you scold your puppy and then lock him in the crate, he'll associate the crate with being punished. You want him to think of his crate as his comfortable den—not a jail cell.

Follow these steps, and after just a few days your puppy will consider the crate to be his safe, cozy den and will happily rest inside.

### **It's All in the Timing**

Successful housebreaking is all about timing. Your goal is to have your puppy in the right place (outside) at the right time (when he needs to go); and avoid having him in the wrong place (inside) at the wrong time (when he needs to go).

This will be much easier when you're able to predict when your puppy needs to go.

Keep **Fact 2: Puppies Have Limited Bladder & Bowel Control**, in mind.

Usually, puppies need to pee right after waking up from a nap, and poop within a couple of minutes of that. If you don't want to wait around for your puppy to wake up and do his business, you can wake him up when you are ready and the time is right.

Another critical element of timing is that you immediately reward your puppy for doing the right thing (we covered this in our **Pre-Training Basics** report). When your puppy

goes potty when and where you want, your immediate and lavish rewards (praise and yummy treats) will teach him to repeat this correct behavior.



## Step-By-Step Housebreaking Process



A new puppy (or dog) that is not housebroken should be restricted to one of these three situations at all times:

1. Inside under your constant and attentive supervision.
2. Outside with you.
3. Confined to his crate/den.

Situation 3 is where your puppy should spend most of his time during the house-breaking process.

Did you notice that we did NOT include a situation where you leave your dog outside all the time? Many people mistakenly think that puppies kept outside will be less trouble—after all, they won't be peeing and pooping in your house, and they won't need your

constant supervision, right? But here is the reality: **puppies left outdoors and unsupervised for long periods of time seldom become housebroken.** They tend to bark, chew, dig, and escape from your yard. Outdoor puppies also become so excited on the rare occasions when they are allowed indoors (excited puppies tend to pee without warning), that eventually they are no longer allowed inside at all. We don't want that. You shouldn't want that.

### **Here's how to housebreak your four-legged friend:**

1. **Determine where you want your dog to go potty.** It's best to pick a doggy toilet area that's relatively close to the door, so you and your dog don't have too far to go when he's gotta go. Give the location some thought, because after he's trained, your dog will continue to use this place as his toilet. This is convenient for clean-up time, especially if you have a large yard—and your family won't have to be wary of little “landmines” when playing outside in the non-doggy-toilet areas.

2. **Know when your puppy needs to go.** Until your puppy is trained to tell you when he needs to go outside (don't worry, that will eventually happen), you have to be an expert at deducing this. Sometimes a puppy will need to go within 5 minutes of going! Don't assume you don't have to watch him just because he's just gone potty.

Here's when you should take a puppy out to go:

- Immediately after he wakes up.
- Immediately after letting him out of his crate/den.
- Every 30 to 60 minutes while he's awake, based on his age (see Fact 2).
- After he eats or drinks.
- When he's been doing something for a while (like chewing on a toy), and then gets up and starts looking around.
- When he starts sniffing the floor.

- When he goes to an area where he's gone potty before.
- When he's running around and excited more than usual.
- When he's look at or wandering near the door.
- When he's pacing, whining, or starts to squat (*duh!*). Note: Male puppies squat to pee just like female puppies (versus lifting a leg) until they are 4-9 months old.

**3. Keep your puppy under your constant and attentive supervision, or confined to his crate, when indoors.** It only takes a couple of seconds for a puppy to squat and pee, so you must watch him very closely. Don't stare at him (it'll make him nervous), but keep an eye on him at all times when he's out of his crate. This will be easier if you limit his movements, either by keeping him on a leash or by restricting him to one or two rooms.

Don't think you can watch TV, wash the dishes, or do something else and still watch your puppy. If you become distracted or preoccupied, accidents will happen and this will make housebreaking your puppy a longer, more difficult task. It's your responsibility to take him outside when he needs to go. Accidents will be your fault, not your dog's.

**4. Take your dog to his designated toilet area every hour or whenever he needs to go (see Step 2), whichever is less, and teach him to go on command.**

- Every hour, fill your pocket with treats, release your pup from his crate and quickly take him outside to the designated toilet area. Encourage him to go quickly by enthusiastically calling "Outside, outside, outside!" (If you take your time, he may pee or poop en route. Also, hurrying him along tends to jiggle his bowels and bladder so that he really wants to go the moment you let him stand still and sniff his toilet area.)

Take your dog out every hour even if he's old enough to hold it for longer than that. This practice is as much to train your dog—in the shortest time possible—to

use the designated toilet area and go on command as it is for getting him outside in time to pee or poop!

- Use a leash (even if you have a fenced yard) to lead him to the correct place. This will also get him used to going potty while on the leash.
- Stand quietly (don't stare at him) and wait until he begins to go. (If he stares at you instead of doing his business because he smells treats in your pocket, just look away and pretend to ignore him; eventually he'll start sniffing and preparing to go.) When he does start to go, quietly (so you don't startle him) say "go potty." (You can choose another cue. Make it something you wouldn't mind saying in public. Once you decide, be sure that you and your family use only this word/phrase, and use it every time he goes.)
- After your dog is finished, immediately give him a generous amount of tasty treats and lots of enthusiastic praise. Lavish rewards mean quicker results!

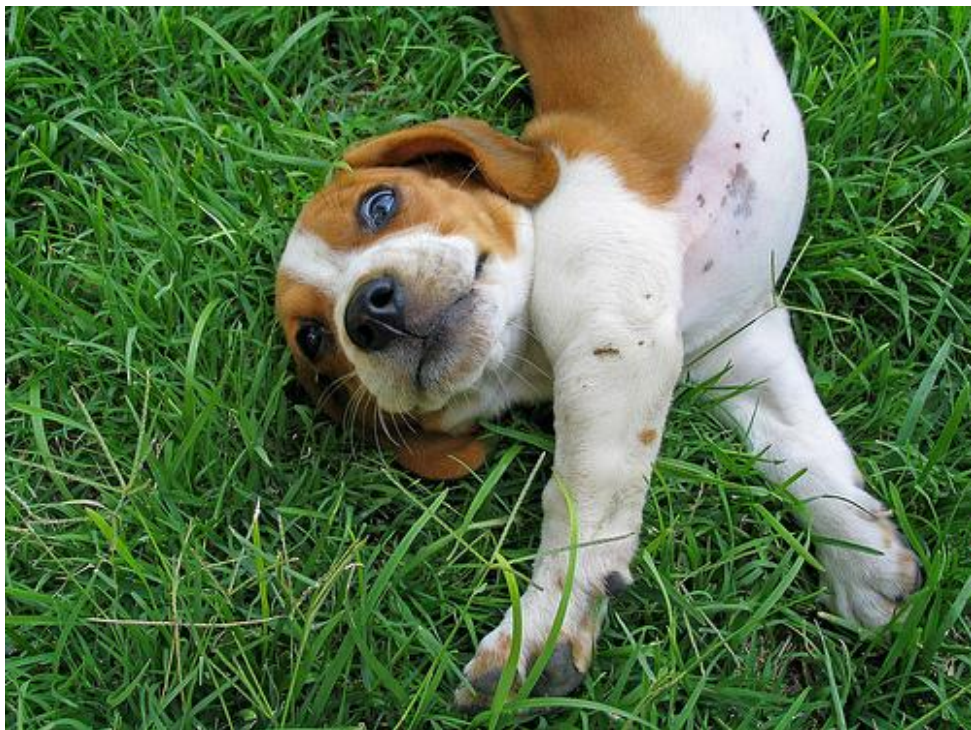
These steps are essential. If you just open the door and let your dog run out by himself to go potty, then give him a treat when he comes back to the house, his housebreaking will take longer and be less successful. Your dog will think he's getting the reward for coming back to the house (versus going potty), and you'll miss the opportunity to train him to go on command.



**5. Spend time playing with or training your puppy, or take him for a nice walk** (if he's old enough). If you take him outside to go, and then quickly bring him back in and ignore him after he does so, he'll learn that "after I go, my fun ends!" Consequently, he may become reluctant to go potty when he's outside (and end up going inside when he can no longer hold it).

It is much better to praise your puppy for going potty and then take him for a walk as an extra reward for a "job well done." This extra reward will also encourage him to go potty more quickly.

**What if he doesn't go potty when you take him outside?**



If your puppy enjoys the great outdoors but doesn't go potty within a few minutes, take him back inside, put him in his crate, and try again in 10 minutes or so. Repeat the process until he does go. Your puppy will learn that if he doesn't go potty when you take him outside to do so, he'll be confined to his crate again (no go, no freedom).

Eventually he will go in the appropriate place at the appropriate time, and you will be able to give him appropriate rewards!

### **What about putting down newspapers?**

Allowing a puppy to go potty on newspapers or some other kind of potty pad/material is a mistake. He will learn that he can go potty indoors, whenever he wants, as long as it's on the paper. He will never learn to hold it; he may never be truly housebroken.

**Control what goes in so you can predict when it will come out.**



What goes into a puppy will come out with predictable timing (depending on the age and size of your dog). Feeding your dog on a set schedule will help him to go potty on a regular schedule. Generally, a puppy will need to go potty about 15 minutes after eating or drinking. If you let your dog eat and drink whenever he wants, you'll be less able to predict when he'll need to go out.

Feed your puppy at the same time each day. Leave the food there for ten minutes or so, then pick it up and put it away if he hasn't finished it. A puppy younger than three

months should be fed three times a day; older puppies and dogs should be fed twice a day.

Do not leave water out all day and night; put it down at regular intervals and pay attention to how much he drinks. Don't let him drink water after 7 p.m.

Feeding dry food is better than canned food which contains more liquid.

## **Handling Inevitable Accidents**

If you follow the steps in this report, you'll have fewer accidents—but they will happen. Expect them. Don't get upset at your dog when an accident happens. Instead, try to determine why it happened. Did you get distracted when you should've been watching him? Did you forget to take him out at the right time? Figure out what you did wrong, so it doesn't happen again.

Despite what many people believe, dogs do not intentionally pee or poop in your house because they are angry, lonely, or want to “get back at you” for something. Dogs don't think of pee or poop as something “nasty” to be used out of spite. And the so-called look of “guilt” or cowering in “shame” when you scold him is actually your dog's way of showing appeasement and submitting to your obvious anger.

**If you do not actually catch your puppy in the act, do nothing (except clean it up).**

Do not—repeat—do not rub his nose in it, hit him, yell at him, shake him, or punish him in any way. Dogs don't think about time the way humans do. Your dog will not understand that you are upset about something that happened in the past—even if it was just a minute or two ago. He will think he's in trouble for whatever he's doing at the instant you discover the mess and go ballistic... whether he's happily coming up to greet you or sitting quietly.

**What if you do catch him in the act?**

If you catch your dog squatting and about to go potty inside the house, make a sudden, surprising sound—such as slapping the wall—not to scare him, but to get his attention

so that he momentarily stops what he's doing. Then urgently encourage your puppy to run outside with you. "Outside, outside, outside!" And finally, reward your puppy lavishly for going potty in the right place.

In any case, be sure to clean up all accidents quickly and thoroughly. You must eliminate any lingering scent so it doesn't invite your puppy back for a repeat performance.

## **How Long Before He's Housebroken?**

When can you safely start leaving your puppy or dog alone in the house for a while? It depends on many things, including his age, size and—most importantly—your diligence in training him!

In general, if you follow these housebreaking guidelines, your dog should be making good progress within two months.

But some dogs learn quickly while others take more time. Gradually increase the amount of time you allow your puppy to be indoors, out of the crate, and monitor his progress.

Adult dogs generally need to go out at least once every four hours—first thing in the morning, around midday, late in the afternoon, and before going to sleep for the night.

**If you can't get be home to let your puppy or dog out often enough, consider hiring a pet sitter.**

Expect accidents and set backs; they're normal. Continue following the above steps and be patient.

## **Be Alert for Special Circumstances**

There are a few reasons why it might be particularly difficult to housebreak a dog.

Dogs who were raised in puppy mills or pet stores, or who were regularly confined without the opportunity to go potty away from their sleeping area, will take longer to housebreak and require more patience and understanding from you.

Sudden changes in dog food brands or overindulgence in treats or table scraps can cause diarrhea.

There may be physical reasons, such as a urinary infection. Be sure to get your dog checked thoroughly by your vet.

### **In Summary**

If you're housebreaking a puppy, remember he doesn't know anything yet. If you're housebreaking an adult dog, there may be some old habits he has to "unlearn" first. Be patient, be consistent, be encouraging. A few weeks of dedicated effort on your part will result in a lifetime of clean floors and a beautiful relationship with your dog!

