



HOUSETRAINING

Welcome To Housetraining!

Few things are more important to dog owners than teaching a new pup or recently adopted dog where the doggie toilet area is. Here are the fundamentals to get you started!

The Basics:

1. Take your pup outside ON A LEASH to his toilet area. Use a leash Even If the area is enclosed. Take him to the same place every time and say whatever phrase you want him to learn to recognize such as "Go Potty", "Get Busy", "Hurry Up", etc.
2. When your pup goes potty, praise softly, then offer him a treat after he is finished. Some pups are shy so you may need to be very quiet while he eliminates.
3. If he doesn't eliminate within a few minutes, don't stand around, and Do Not let him off leash. Go back inside; put him in his crate or Confinement Area for 15 minutes. Then try again.
4. If he does eliminate outside, and you're in an enclosed place, you can let him off leash for a brief playtime after to the treats and praise.

Keep A Regular Routine:

- ✓ Take your puppy to his toilet area first thing in the morning, last thing before bedtime, right after all meals, after all naps, after play sessions, and after he comes out of his crate or Confinement Area (described next page). In the very early stage of training this is usually every hour during the day and every few hours at night. Keep track of the emerging schedule.
- ✓ If you see your puppy sniffing and circling, take him out immediately. These may be the only indicator signals that you see in the early phase of training. Also, monitor water intake.
- ✓ Use Very Tight Management indoors until your pup is completely trained. This means No Freedom In The House At All, unless he just emptied himself outside. If so, then he earns 30 minutes of supervised time in one puppy-proofed area such as the kitchen. Don't grant access to other areas; use the Confinement Area instead. Also, monitor your pup's water intake.
- ✓ Until your pup is perfectly house-trained, always go outside with him so you can reward at the right moment, especially when the weather turns bad. Keep using a leash until he knows where his toilet is and uses it in any kind of weather. For pups who hate the rain, it helps to have a big umbrella or find overhead cover--*plus bring extra special Rainy Day treats.*

How to Handle Mistakes:

Interrupt mistakes as they are happening. Use a happy and light tone of voice (yes, fake it!). Loud or harsh tones will make your puppy afraid to potty in front of you. If you're able to interrupt successfully, then hustle your pup outside to the potty area. Praise him if he finishes there.

Never punish. If your puppy made the mistake 5 hours or 5 seconds ago, you are too late. Don't rub his nose in his mess, yell at him, or handle him roughly. He won't understand and this will only make him afraid of you. You must catch him in the act for any interruption to be effective.

Always clean up the indoor mess with an enzymatic cleaner. This removes protein residue that might attract him to potty the same place again. First blot with towels, then spray some cleaner. Spray a second time and let it air dry so the enzymes can do their job. You may need to re-apply.



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What's a Confinement Area?

A Confinement Area is a puppy-proof location for your pup when you can't provide 100% supervision. The ideal area has easy-to-clean flooring (no carpets) and can be closed off with a baby gate or enclosed with a portable pen. The best places are the kitchen, the laundry room, or an empty spare room. Furnish it with a crate, water bowl, chew toy, and temporary toilet such as a "potty grass" tray.

How to Use the Confinement Area:

- Introduce your pup to the area with a chewie or a stuffed Kong. Leave him alone for a few minutes while you go about your business nearby. Before he finishes his chew toy, let him out briefly. Supervise him closely, but don't make a big deal about it.
- Do this several times in the same day, gradually increasing the time you leave your pup in his confinement area. Vary the length of your indoor absences, from 30 seconds to 20 minutes. Repeat throughout the day after potty breaks and be prepared to clean up accidents.
- Within the first few days, start leaving the house for really short intervals like going to the mailbox or taking out the trash. Gradually work up to longer absences and short errands. Keep track of time increments as this is also alone-time training as well.
- The temporary toilet is a fail-safe in case your pup can't hold it. Your goal is to fade it out fast so your pup is not learning to potty indoors. Choose a surface texture for the temporary toilet that is most similar to the outdoor area he uses. Your pup will prefer that texture under his feet when he potties. So if you pup eliminates on grass, use a grass potty tray.
- Use the confinement area if you will be busy or gone any longer than your puppy can hold it. This means you'll use it constantly the first several weeks of training. If you must be away for long periods, have someone check on your puppy for you, or consider using a puppy daycare.
- If you are trying to use a crate along with your confinement area to housetrain your pup, see our handout on *Crate Training* for more tips on how to integrate this tool.

What Do I Do at Night?

Young puppies often need potty breaks during the night for a few weeks. If you really need your sleep, use the Confinement Area and pull up the water bowl before bed. When you put your pup in for the night he may whine or cry. This is very common. Do one last potty break, then put your pup to bed with a Kong or chewie while you settle down nearby. Once he's settled, leave quietly. If crying continues non-stop, temporarily rearrange sleeping quarters so your pup sleeps near you. This reduces stress and creates normal sleep patterns. When you're further along, migrate the areas back to normal.

When Can I Stop Using The Confinement Area?

Wait until your pup is both house-trained and chew-trained for longer periods before you attempt this; otherwise, you'll be in for a big mess and you'll undo all your hard work. When you think your pup is ready for a test run, make sure he's eliminated and had some serious exercise first. Then confine him to one full room for 1 hour with a chew toy. If all goes well, gradually increase the time over a week. Then add a new room each week your pup is accident-free. If your pup has an accident, figure out what went wrong and take away that room while you do easier test runs before trying it again.

Need More Help?

Housetraining can be frustrating and messy. Contact us if you'd like to work with a trainer privately or consult with our BravoPup Hotline. We can help get your pup on track with reliable potty habits.