

## Understanding Potty Training

- Schedule
- Supervision
- Specific potty area
- Work with natural instincts
- Physical factors
- Positive techniques

### **SCHEDULE**

- When creating a schedule there are many things to consider.
  - Food
    - High quality food has more nutrients, allowing for less food consumed and less waste produced.
    - How often do you need to feed? Usually puppies will eat 3 times per day and dogs over 6 months will eat twice per day.
    - Don't free feed. This eliminates the benefits of a schedule and can cause behavioral issues or resource guarding.
  - Water
    - Since it is difficult to determine when your dog is thirsty, leave water available throughout the day.
    - Limit water before bed, during the night, and in the crate to decrease accidents.
  - Nap time
    - Puppies will need to go potty after they wake up.
    - Best to have puppies sleep when you are busy so you do not need to supervise.
    - Encourage puppy to nap in crate or puppy pen.
    - Puppies need a 3:1 (sleep ; awake) ratio.
  - Play time
    - Puppies will need to go after they play vigorously.
    - Puppies will often nap after playtime.
    - Don't play too rough right after eating, as it may cause bloat or other physical conditions.
    - Use playtime as a reward AFTER the puppy potties.
  - Bed time
    - Best to have puppies go right before bed.
    - Feed and water at least 2 hours before bed so puppy has time to digest.
    - Most puppies will wake up 2-3 times per night to potty at first, but soon that will decrease to 1-2 times, then 1 time, then sleeping through the night. Be patient!
    - Do not play or feed puppy when they potty at night. Reward elimination and immediately return puppy to sleeping location.
- Your puppy will most likely need to go within 15 minutes of waking, eating, playing, or napping. Create a schedule that works for you and that you can stick with.
- Most puppies need to relieve themselves about every 30 min while awake. As your puppy ages, their ability to "hold it" will increase as well.



These materials are provided for you as a way to review behaviors previously discussed in training sessions. It is important for the success of both you and your dog, that these materials are used for reviewing, not for teaching. Do not skip ahead, even if you think your dog is ready. Every dog, every owner, and every situation is specific and requires a training program catered to fit; because these handouts are very general, please talk to Kelsey before attempting any of these training techniques on your own.



- Your puppy will respond to your schedule by needing to go potty at specific times throughout the day, this will boost your success rate since your puppy will be more predictable.

## SUPERVISION

- If your puppy is constantly monitored, it is much more likely that you will know when he needs to relieve himself, or that you will catch him BEFORE he has an accident.
- Most puppies have subtle cues that indicate they are ready to relieve themselves.
  - Sniffing, circling, whining, pacing, sneaking away, immediately stopping previous activity, etc.
  - Pay attention to your puppy to learn their cues.
- Only give your puppy access to certain areas of the house until fully potty trained. Don't allow puppy to be in rooms where they can hide behind a couch, under a desk, etc; it is important for you to be able to see your puppy at all times. If the puppy has access to large rooms or to a majority of the house, they often have a harder time learning where they are supposed to potty.
- There are 3 levels of supervision:
  - CONSTANT
    - During constant supervision, your puppy can have access to any area in the house that you are comfortable with. Allowing the puppy to drag a light weight leash will enable you to easily catch him if he needs to go outside.
  - MODERATE
    - During moderate supervision, your puppy may be able to sneak off if you are momentarily distracted. Use management tools to assist you.
      - The "Umbilical Cord Method" -- use long light weight lead and attach puppy to your belt loop, now puppy can never sneak off TOO far.
      - The "Tether Method" - attach puppy to tether that is anchored in an area where puppy can practice settling. Make sure tether doesn't get tangled and is short enough to limit the puppy's movement (4-6 ft). Give puppy a good chew to work on and a comfy bed to settle on.
      - The "Puppy Pen Method" - set up a pen for the puppy that includes their crate, a potty area, their water bowl, and some great chew toys. Provide a comfy bed if puppy will not potty on it or chew it.
        - Ex-Pens and baby gates work well.
  - NONE
    - When puppy is unsupervised they either need to be in a place where they will not potty (crate) or a place where they are allowed to potty (pen with pad/litter box, outdoor area, etc).

## SPECIFIC POTTY AREAS

- Outside
  - Pick a specific potty area.
    - Example: Certain ground cover (lawn, bark, etc.) or in a corner of yard.
  - Take them to the area on leash every time to avoid pottying in other spots or becoming distracted in the yard.



These materials are provided for you as a way to review behaviors previously discussed in training sessions. It is important for the success of both you and your dog, that these materials are used for reviewing, not for teaching. Do not skip ahead, even if you think your dog is ready. Every dog, every owner, and every situation is specific and requires a training program catered to fit; because these handouts are very general, please talk to Kelsey before attempting any of these training techniques on your own.



- Take puppy to potty area first, then unclip leash to allow yard exploration as an additional reward.
- Paper/Pads
  - Can be used in combination with teaching to potty outside.
  - Paper vs. pads = Pads are pre-scented to encourage puppy to use them.
  - Pick a room (no carpet) or an area that can be puppy proofed and secured. Cover area with paper or pads. Place crate with bed in one section, food/water in another and leave the area farthest from the bed for 'bathroom'. Clean frequently when puppy goes potty but save some slightly dirty paper/pad in the area you want him to use.
  - As puppy begins going in that place more frequently slowly remove other paper/pads throughout the area.
  - If he goes on floor, thoroughly clean, then re-cover area with paper/pads.
  - Disadvantage: any paper can be fair game. If you are eventually teaching to go outside it may add an extra step. May not be good with large dogs or male dogs that lift leg, since they may miss the target. Puppies may shred paper/pads.
- Litter box
  - Can be used in combination with teaching to potty outside.
  - Always take puppy to that spot to relieve itself. Keep box in same spot in the house. Keep some soiled litter in box to add scent.
  - Pick a room (no carpet) or an area that can be puppy proofed and secured. Place crate with bed in one section, food/water in another, and place litter box farthest from the bed for 'bathroom'.
  - Disadvantages: may add extra step if eventually going to train to go outside. Need to clean frequently. May not be good with large dogs or male dogs that lift leg since they may miss the target. Puppies may eat litter material.

## WORK WITH NATURAL INSTINCTS

- Your puppy naturally has many instincts that will make the training process much easier, if you understand how they work.
- Scent
  - Puppy will return to specific locations based on the smells. If puppy goes to the bathroom on the carpet, for example, he will continue to go to that same spot because it smells like the bathroom.
  - Use this to your advantage!
    - Always take puppy to the same location to potty. Whenever you bring the puppy back to that location, he will know what is supposed to happen there and the smells will trigger his urge to go.
  - Always use an enzymatic odor remover thoroughly to eliminate any remaining smells.
  - Block off areas of the house where puppy continues to have accidents.
- Den
  - Puppies will not go potty where they sleep. (usually)
  - This behavior is based on not wanting their dens to scare away prey or lure in predators with the scent.
    - Use this to your advantage!



These materials are provided for you as a way to review behaviors previously discussed in training sessions. It is important for the success of both you and your dog, that these materials are used for reviewing, not for teaching. Do not skip ahead, even if you think your dog is ready. Every dog, every owner, and every situation is specific and requires a training program catered to fit; because these handouts are very general, please talk to Kelsey before attempting any of these training techniques on your own.



- This is why I prefer crate training. When puppy cannot be supervised, put them in the crate. Follow hour/month rule (1 hour in crate/month of age). When you bring puppy back out. Take him to potty location to relieve.
- You can apply this to litter box or paper training as well. Have their bed in one location and encourage them to potty in another. Usually they will go in the area farthest from their bed.

## PHYSICAL FACTORS

- There are many physical factors to consider when potty training. Any number of these may contribute to challenges while training or excessive accidents. Be sure to address any medical factors that may be effecting your dog.
  - Sex - male vs female
  - Age - young puppy, older puppy, adult, senior
  - Hormones - heat cycle, marking habits, changes related to spay/neuter
  - Medical - Urinary tract infection, a weak sphincter, bladder stones, diabetes, kidney disease, Cushing's disease, neurological problems and abnormalities of the genitalia, etc

## POSITIVE TRAINING

- Make sure to ALWAYS reward with a good treat when your puppy goes potty in the correct location. It is important to give treats and praise in the location they went potty at the moment they finished so they associate that the desired behavior is "pottying in that spot" not "coming back into the house".
- Use a cue word or phrase every time your puppy potties in the correct location (go potty, do your business, etc). Soon your puppy will associate that word with the urgency to go. Only use cue once you are ready for the puppy to eliminate, don't say cue while still inside house.
- If puppy does not potty in the correct location when asked, put the puppy away in the secure area used when unsupervised. Bring puppy back out 10 minutes later and try again. Only allow puppy to have access to the rest of the house IF he eliminates first.
- Accidents happen
  - If you are witnessing the accident
    - Say NO in stern (but not scary!) voice, pick up puppy, and take puppy to designated potty area. Say cue to encourage them to relieve (go potty, do your business). If they finish there, then praise them and give treats and lots of love. If they don't finish, don't praise or punish, just ignore. Make sure to monitor them closely so process can be repeated, if necessary.
  - If you find the accident afterward (3 second rule)
    - Do not punish your puppy; they will not connect the punishment to a past action, only to current actions.
    - Clean up the area with enzymatic odor remover—this will remove their scent from the area. If scent is not successfully removed then your dog (or others) will probably go there again.
    - Go back to more strict schedule and supervision protocol. Accidents are due to human error, not puppy error. Remember, they are still learning!

**Please contact Kelsey with any questions, comments, or concerns!!**

**[Kelsey@PawsitivelyTrainedDogs.com](mailto:Kelsey@PawsitivelyTrainedDogs.com) (916) 899-9637**



These materials are provided for you as a way to review behaviors previously discussed in training sessions. It is important for the success of both you and your dog, that these materials are used for reviewing, not for teaching. Do not skip ahead, even if you think your dog is ready. Every dog, every owner, and every situation is specific and requires a training program catered to fit; because these handouts are very general, please talk to Kelsey before attempting any of these training techniques on your own.

