

## **Housetraining your puppy**

Cleanliness and being housebroken are the *first* things we want to teach a puppy. Puddles on the floor don't make for a happy life together. Being housebroken means that the dog relieves itself only during outdoor walks or in the yard and lets you know if he feels the urge between the normal walk times. It takes about three weeks during which you must be utterly consistent.

Since a full stomach exerts pressure on the bladder, the puppy has to be taken out immediately after every meal. Don't just let the puppy go where it wants but, if possible, carry it to a spot with grass or other soft ground that other dogs have also selected. If you stick to this habitual spot the puppy will soon become accustomed to it, grasp its purpose and relieve itself quickly when taken there.

### ***How to carry a puppy***

During the first few weeks a mother carries her puppies by the scruff of the neck. This method is no longer appropriate by the time we start training a puppy to become housebroken, and it's awkward to boot. Nor should you pick up a puppy under his arms like a baby. The pup's shoulders are attached to the rib cage only by the serratus magnus muscle. If you pick a puppy up under the arms, you will pull its shoulders away from the body. This hurts the puppy and you want the puppy to be comfortable when carried. The best way to go about it is to put one hand under the puppy's rib cage and the other under his rear end.

### ***Don't rush the puppy***

Check to make sure he does urinate or defecate. Don't get upset or discouraged if he refuses to do anything outside and then makes a little puddle or drops some feces as soon as you get back inside.

### ***Be lavish in your praise***

Every time the puppy relieves itself when and where it should praise him enthusiastically, but don't start praising too early, or he may retain some of his bladder's contents to distribute later.

### ***Keep the puppy on a leash until he relieves himself***

Always keep your puppy on his leash even if you have a fenced yard where the puppy can go. He will get used to relieving himself this way, which will be useful later on to keep the dog under control. Try using a phrase like "Good Job". Perhaps he will associate the words with the deed, and he may even learn to do its business on command. This is a convenient word association.

The puppy should be kept warm in its box or basket. A cold puppy has little bladder control. Take him out immediately after he wakes up so that he can make his puddle outside.

### ***During the night***

Although we try to have your puppy on a schedule by the time you take him home, it will be almost impossible for the little guy to hold his bladder all night. Put the puppy's crate close to your bed so that you can hear when he wakes up. You'll have to get up too. This is a time of disrupted sleep.

### ***When the puppy has an accident***

If the puppy relieves itself indoors and you are around, you respond with your shaker can instantly and a loud "NO". But the rebuke has to follow instantly, or it is of no use.

### ***Try to avoid melodramatics***

Housebreaking a dog is not a tragedy, but it is hard work. Remove all traces of a "mistake" immediately and scrub the spot with a disinfectant (preferably an enzymatic) cleaner. The smell of the cleanser will discourage the dog from becoming a repeat offender in that spot. Once the puppy is completely trustworthy his owner can sigh with relief.

### ***Bell hung from door knob***

Hang a bell from the doorknob so that the pup can reach it with his front paw. Literally show the pup how to ring the bell by putting his paw up to the bell. Immediately open the door and show the pup he can go outside. Often times a puppy will begin to understand that you want him to go outside to relieve himself; however, his communication to you that he needs to go out is misunderstood. Using the bell seems to make communicating much easier than trying to read his gestures. Use the same door every time you take him outside so he will not become confused. Hang the bell only low enough for him to reach it. If the bell is too small or hung too low there is a possibility he could pull it down and swallow it.