



Housebreaking 101

Follow these guidelines for success!

- **Use a Crate & an Exercise Pen** to train your dog – limiting your dog’s space is the single most important factor in housebreaking success. Please **do not expect** a puppy under the age of 6 – 7 months to exercise total control of their bodily functions. Remember – To a dog, the world is a bathroom and if you do not have your pup under direct eye contact - put him in his crate/x-pen.

Use of these tools not only guarantees success in house breaking, they assist in aiding in deterring unwanted habits such as such as chewing inappropriate or dangerous items. The X-Pen allows for a bit more room and creates a “play-pen” area for your dog. This helps your dog to learn to amuse themselves and to self-soothe and will contribute to a quieter, calmer dog in the future. Be sure to place toys, Kongs and Marrow bones in to keep your pup occupied.

- **ALWAYS** take your dog to the same designated Potty Area. A small puppy should be carried directly to the area and a larger puppy or dog can be walked on lead.
- **Maintain a firm, consistent schedule.** Dogs under 3 months should be taken out at least every 2 hours. 4 – 6 months should go every 3 – 4 hours. 7 months – 1 year at least every 6 – 7 hours. As your dog’s skill set builds – you can then increase the times.
- **Check your dog’s diet and feed on a STRICT SCHEDULE.** High fiber diets contribute to a higher volume of waste. Feed your dog a high quality, medium level protein diet.

Go to www.wizardofpawzil.com/Grade%20Your%20Dog%20Food.pdf for a chart and graded foods. Offer free access to water during the day.

Excessive consumption of water can be a sign or disease and if your dog seems to “drink more than they should” contact your veterinarian. In addition, excessive urination can be a sign of urinary tract infection. Your veterinarian should treat this immediately.

Follow this simple procedure in conjunction with the points above to set your puppy up for success!

1. Take your puppy to his “spot” at his scheduled time. Keep him in this area giving him 10 minutes to use the “potty.” If your pup potties – add your cue words such as “go potty” as they are eliminating. Now go to him (do not call him to you – he’ll think you are rewarding the recall) and have a “potty party” with tons of treats and lots of praise for doing such a good job. Now – this puppy has earned “free time” and can then and ONLY then – be taken for a walk off property, or have a game of fetch, or free time in the house UNDER SUPERVISION.

Just remember, that play time or free time in the house must be supervised and it is helpful to your pup if you place him back in the CRATE about an hour before the next scheduled potty break.

If your pup has not used the potty within the SPECIFIED time of 10 MINUTES he goes BACK IN THE CRATE and the door is closed. Just pick him up or take him back indoors. There is no need to say anything – your pup is not being punished so remain neutral– you just need to confine him to help him produce the behavior that you can then reward. Try again in 30 minutes and repeat as needed until you get a behavior you can reward. Remember – NO walks – NO play time – NO reward unless the pup has been successful.

It is very important to stick to the 10 minute rule for a variety of reasons. The main one is that you want your dog to “stay on task” and this is how he understands the process. If you allow him to wander and play in this area – you are giving him the wrong message. Potty time is work and the effort you put into this now will pay off in huge dividends later when your dog has learned to “potty” on a verbal cue. Another critical point is that – later you don’t want to wait in inclement weather for your mature dog to find the “perfect time and spot” to eliminate. You’ll also appreciate this skill when you are in hurry or not feeling well.

If you then take your dog for a walk in the neighborhood it is critical that you DO NOT allow your dog to use the bathroom ANYWHERE except his potty place.

If you have a fenced yard – YOU must supervise your young pup to be sure he has taken care of business so that you can reward him. Later as he matures, he won't require so much supervision and guidance.

What about Accidents?

Should your puppy or dog have an accident AND you CATCH HIM IN THE ACT – CLAP your hands together loudly to startle and stop the process. Immediately scoop him up and take him to his designated spot to finish. When he finishes, praise and reward.

If you find the evidence and missed the opportunity to catch him – YOU CANNOT PUNISH this. The dog has no clue that he even did the mess and could care less since he has no concept of his body functions as being undesirable. Smack yourself with a rolled up newspaper and promise to keep a closer eye on your pup in the future.

Punishing a dog for a normal bodily function will do more harm than good. You may even succeed in creating a dog that is “afraid” to use the potty or one who “hides” his treasure for you to find later. In either case, you will set your housebreaking efforts back by months – if not years.

For more information or additional guidance contact:
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