



Housetraining Your Puppy

There are four basic components to housetraining; maintaining a schedule, supervision, crating when unsupervised, and rewarding your puppy for eliminating in the right place. Crate training is a very valuable tool for housetraining your puppy and protecting her, and your home, from accidents and damage. Follow these suggestions and your puppy will be housetrained before you know it! If your work schedule or lifestyle doesn't allow you to follow these recommendations, than an older puppy or adult dog might be a better fit for your family.

Establish a routine

- Provide your puppy with bathroom breaks at the same time every day and feed her at the same time every day. Providing exercise in the form of daily walks/runs or retrieval games at the same time is also useful to help your puppy learn the routine.
- A general schedule would include a bathroom break first thing in the morning, after every meal or snack, after a nap or rowdy play session, and right before bed time. In general, a pup can only hold it for her age in months, plus one, in hours. For example, a two month old puppy can hold it for about three hours.
- Choose a specific location to be your puppy's bathroom and take her directly to that spot, on leash, to eliminate. You want the spot to be close to the door and of absorbent surface (most dogs do not like to eliminate on non-porous surfaces like a driveway or parking lot).
- Only remain in the bathroom location for 5-7 minutes. If she does not eliminate during that time, return indoors and supervise her closely, or crate her, and let her out again in 10 – 15 minutes. You want her learn to go as soon as she gets outside.
- Remember, puppies under four months of age often need to pee and poop twice every time they go to the bathroom. After your young puppy eliminates the first time wait about two more minutes before going inside to ensure she is completely done.

Supervise your puppy

- Actively supervise your puppy when she is exploring your home. Shut doors to rooms that you cannot directly supervise. This is to prevent accidents and protect your pup and your belongings.
- Use a tether, baby-gates, ex-pen or leash your pup to yourself to keep her in sight. Control her movements so that you can actively supervise her, and crate her or put her in her room when you cannot.
- Watch for signs that your puppy needs to eliminate. These include sniffing, circling, pacing, and walking towards the door (especially when focused in corners or when your puppy had been resting or engaged in an enjoyable activity previously). Be sure to take her out when you see these signs, use a cue word ("go outside"), and praise her for letting you know she needs to go out.
- If your puppy is sneaking away to another room to have accidents, decrease the amount of space she has access to. Accidents are due to a lapse in supervision or forgetting a bathroom break. Your

young pup wont understand how to tell you she needs to go out so it is your job to create a schedule to set her up to succeed.

Confine your puppy when home alone

- Giving your puppy too much access can lead to problems. Restrict your puppy to an ex-pen in a room that has been puppy-proofed or crate train her for times when she cannot be supervised.
- Crate training is very helpful because dogs do not want to eliminate where they sleep. By crating your puppy when she isn't supervised, she will learn to hold it until you provide access to the appropriate bathroom space. Keep in mind that a puppy can only hold it for, at most, her age in months plus one in hours (a two month old puppy can be in her crate for three hours).

Reward your puppy for going in the right place

- If your puppy urinates on the carpet, she gets relief. If she urinates outside, she gets relief. So where does the desire to go outside come from? You! Right after your puppy eliminates in the correct spot, provide her with a tasty treat and ample praise.
- While she is eliminating, calmly say a cue such as "go potty". Over time she will learn what this means (this will be helpful during inclement weather or when traveling!)
- Play a quick game of fetch or tug-of-war or walk around the yard/block with her before returning inside. You don't want her to learn that going to the bathroom ends the fun outdoors or else she may not eliminate as soon as she goes out.

What to do when she has an accident

- Clean the stain thoroughly with an enzyme-based, pet specific, cleaner found at any local pet store. Follow the directions on the label.
- Increase your supervision and consider the use of a housetraining log to determine patterns in accidents and make adjustments to your supervision or her bathroom break schedule.
- Do not use punishment or scold your dog. If you rub your dog's nose in her urine after arriving home, she doesn't understand that your anger stems from her accident. She associates your anger with your arrival home and begins to posture in an appeasing way when you arrive home. This is misinterpreted as a "guilty look". If you catch her in the act and scold her she is likely to believe she is wrong for eliminating in front of you, not indoors. Instead of her learning the right place to go she is likely to avoid going in front of you. This will make housetraining even more difficult and become a real problem when you need her to go on leash in the future.

We Can Help! The Training and Behavior Department at the Humane Society of Western Montana has a variety of resources available to help you and your pets live in harmony. The Humane Society has several dog trainers and a behaviorist on staff to provide affordable group and private training lessons and free behavior consultations.

- Contact Jean, our Animal Behaviorist for a free pet behavior consultation by emailing behavior@myhswm.org or calling the Behavior Helpline at (406) 549-9295.
- Contact Mariah, a Certified Professional Dog Trainer, to inquire about private lessons or a group training class. Email outreach@myhswm.org or call (406) 549-HSWM.
- Check out our website at www.myhswm.org for a complete listing of dog classes, rates and additional information.