

Puppy Houstraining FAQs

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How long will it take to houstrain my puppy?

The amount of time it takes to houstrain your puppy is primarily dependent upon you. Do it right and it shouldn't take long at all - perhaps just a few weeks. Dogs, like babies, are unique - some "get it" right away and others don't. The key, though, always - is you.

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What is the best way to potty train puppies?

Like most veterinarians, we strongly believe that crate training is the best way to houstrain your puppy. The concept behind crate training is that dogs do not wish to soil the place they sleep or spend time so they will try to "hold it" until they are out of their cage.

There are a few important things to remember with crate training:

1. Make sure your [crate or cage](#) is properly sized for your puppy. If it is too big, he will go to a corner to relieve himself and lay in the non-soiled part of the cage. If you have a [metal cage](#), consider a [divider panel](#), which reduces the size of the cage during training but can be removed to allow your pet more space after he is trained.
2. Do not put food or water in the cage.
3. Take your puppy outside immediately after you open the cage.
4. Whenever your puppy is not under the watchful eye of a responsible family member, he should be in the cage. This is difficult since you will want your new puppy "around," but it's well worth the few weeks it will take to train him. No puppy should have the run of the house until he is completely trained.

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Are there other training options?

Yes. Many people houstrain their puppies using puppy [training pads](#). These pads are treated with a chemical that encourages puppies to relieve themselves on the spot, making cleanup very easy and keeping carpets and floors clean. When you see your puppy go into his "pre-potty" routine - sniffing the floor, circling an area, etc., gently pick him up and place him on the pad.

When the pads are used consistently, you can move them closer to the door and/or place another pad outside where you want him to go. This method transitions the puppy from going in one place in the home to going one place outside the home. This method may take longer before there are no accidents since your dog does not *only* associate the outdoors with going to the bathroom.

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I live in a high rise and can't get my puppy outside for potty training. What are my choices?

People that live in cities, apartments, and high rises often train their puppies to relieve themselves using [training pads](#), as described above. The only difference is that the pads are used all the time instead of for a transition phase.

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How long can puppies "hold it" during the day?

All dogs are different, but generally, puppies as young as 8-9 weeks can control their bladders and bowels for up to seven or eight hours, if necessary. We would never recommend leaving a puppy unattended in a crate for that long, however, and



encourage working people to come home during their noon hour or find someone who can let their puppy out during the day.

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What is the "psychology" behind houstraining a puppy?

Like most training, it's about consistency and positive reinforcement. Use specific verbal commands to communicate what you want your dog to do, and use the same command all the time. For instance, say "Outside?" when it's time to go out to do his business, and once there, pick another word or short phrase like "Do It," or "Hurry Up" to have him do his business.

As soon as your puppy eliminates, praise him! Let him know that is exactly what you wanted him to do. Then, take him back inside right away so he only associates the word "Outside" with going to the bathroom. A few minutes later you can take him out to play.

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What is the most important thing to do when houstraining?

Unless you catch your puppy *in the act* of making an accident in the house you should **NOT** punish him, yell at him, and please, **do not** take your dog to the spot and put his nose in it! First of all, if your dog had an accident it is YOUR fault, not your dog's. You should have been watching more closely. Secondly, your puppy will have no idea why you are mad at him. He's gone to the bathroom hundreds of times before and was always praised. "Place" is not a concept he understands fully yet, so punishing him for something that is natural and no big deal for him only confuses him. Just clean it up and forget about it.

If you do catch him in the act, quickly but calmly pick him up and without raising your voice, say "No!" and take him outside or to his papers. When he finishes, praise him.

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My puppy does great sometimes, but is still having too many accidents. How can I get him to be completely potty trained?

Until your puppy is accident-free, he is not houstrained. Even though you thought you were about done with this stage, you must go back to the same level of monitoring and training (even if it means repeating crate training) you were doing at the beginning of the training, except you need to do a better job this time around since something didn't work. Be patient. Don't lose your temper. You'll get there. The better you do, the better your puppy will do.

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