House-training Your Puppy

When you are away from home or unable to watch your puppy

Confine him to a “safe” room which you can easily clean if there are accidents (a room without carpeting or rugs.) Provide a comfortable bed in one corner, papers in the opposite corner, toys, and water. If he is crate-trained (see below), he can stay in a crate for up to 4 hours at a time. While you sleep at night, he can be put in a crate in your bedroom (we recommend this), in a crate in another room, or he can stay in his “safe” room. Many puppies can make it through the night without walks, but some have to be taken out 1 or 2 times during the night.

When you are at home AND can watch him/her:

1. Keep your puppy with you and confined to a small area. You can use:
   - A crate (for no more than 4 hours at a time)
   - A leash attached to him and also tied to your belt
   - A leash tied next to a dog bed (but you must supervise all tied dogs!)

2. Select a spot outside where you wish him to eliminate. This should be close to your door, so as to be convenient in the pouring rain or the dead of winter.

3. Every hour (to start) and 10 minutes after every meal, run him outside to the chosen spot and stand still for several minutes.

4. If he eliminates, say a phrase you’d like him to eventually learn (“go potty!”, etc.), then praise him heartily and give him three REALLY GOOD treats, and play with him or go for a walk. (Try to avoid taking him inside as soon as the dog eliminates; he may learn to hold it to make the fun last longer.) If he produces nothing after 5 minutes, go for a walk if it’s due, or return to the house if he has been walked recently. Try again in an hour.

5. When he has accidents in the house and you catch him in the act, immediately clap your hands or make just enough noise to startle him, and take him immediately outside to the appropriate spot (no treats or praise unless he eliminates outside as well.) DO NOT yell at him or rub his nose in the mess, or he may become anxious, afraid of you, and afraid to eliminate in your presence! DO clean up the mess thoroughly, and apply an odor neutralizer, available at pet stores, to the spot. You can put some soiled paper towel outside in the appropriate spot, to give him a reminder of what you want him to do.
6. If you're making progress, gradually increase the amount of time between trips outside. A six to eight-week old puppy may need to urinate every two hours. A three-month old may need to go every three hours. (Many puppies can make it through the night without eliminating, as long as they are sleeping.)

7. When your dog is eliminating outside reliably, gradually increase his freedom within the house. If he backslides, go back to step one. Gradually replace the food rewards with praise.

Please note: Dogs absolutely do not eliminate inappropriately out of spite!!! Try to use as much positive reinforcement as you can (treats, praise, walks, play and affection). House-training a puppy or an older dog can be very time-consuming and frustrating. These instructions are intended for the "average" dog, but every dog is unique! Please call us if you need further help.