



Housebreaking



The keys to house-training the puppy/dog are judicious use of confinement (when indoors) and scheduling. Confining the puppy/dog in a small area such as its crate or a part of the kitchen will encourage it to "hold it" until taken outdoors. Keeping it on a regular schedule of feeding, watering, and walking outside will make it much easier for the puppy/dog to keep clean indoors. After the puppy has successfully completed its business when and where it is supposed to, it can be allowed some freedom to play inside before its next period of confinement.

Confinement works because dogs, like wolves, have a natural instinct to keep their own dens clean and to go outside the den to defecate. (See article on "crate training"). Until training is completed, the pup/dog should be confined whenever it is in the house, except for those times immediately after it has done its business when you can be fairly sure an accident won't occur.

When the puppy/dog does make a mistake in the course of training, harsh methods of correction are not necessary. If you catch it in the act, merely say in a disapproving tone, "Wrong" or "No" and then bring it outside and show it where he/she should have gone. If you find the evidence after the fact, just clean it as soon as possible, but not in the presence of the dog. Be sure to use a product available at pet stores that will remove all the odor from the spot so the dog is not attracted to go in the same place again.

Following each feeding, don't merely turn the dog out, but rather take the dog outside yourself and stay with it. When he/she does its business, always say the same designated word (example, "potty" or "do it") that s/he will learn to associate the word with the act. Later, when you take it out or go for a walk and say the word, s/he will know what to do! When s/he does what s/he is supposed to, don't forget to show it how delighted you are by telling it in ecstatic tones what a good dog s/he is!

The above suggestions will work, even if you work outside the home. While a dog may remain in your fenced yard during working hours, very young puppies will probably have to remain indoors. Crating a puppy for 8 hours is too long — the puppy does not have this much physical capacity. Instead, confine it in a small area such as a bath or laundry room. (Make sure that you "puppy-proof it for safety) or buy an exercise pen (small kennel). Next, place a box or large dishpan in the area and fill it with cedar shavings. Wipe up a small sample of the puppy's urine and feces with a paper towel and place in the cedar box so the smell will attract the pup and give it the idea of what to do there. Scooping out the dropping just as a box of kitty litter is cleaned can clean the box.

Later, as the puppy matures, and you want to teach it to go outside, take some of the smelly cedar shavings and place them in the area of the yard that you want the puppy to use. During the evening hours when you are home and on weekends, carry the puppy outside to prevent it from going "on the way" and follow the steps outlined above for training.