



Potty Training Solution

*“Nothing is neither right nor wrong,
but thinking makes it so”*

-Shakespeare

Who knew that Shakespeare had anything to do with potty training???

I love this quote because your dog doesn't actually know the difference between the “right” place to potty vs. the “wrong” place to potty, so it is 100% our responsibility to TEACH them where we would like them to potty.

Contrary to popular belief, dogs don't naturally know to go outside or to “signal” to us that they need to potty. So, just as we do with kids, we need to help them learn how to a) hold their potty and b) where the “right” potty spot is. In order to do this, we need to do three things:

STEP 1: Decide Where Their Potty Spot Will Be

Depending on your schedule and living situation, you may need to implement an indoor potty solution in addition to an outdoor solution. There are lots of varying schedules and ways to go about potty training, but I prefer to keep it simple. If you will be gone most of the day, and can't hire a reliable dog walker/pet sitter to take your puppy out frequently, then I suggest creating a

A Note on Indoor Potty Options:

I prefer grass patches or turf patches over potty pads because then I only have to train them to one surface: grass. However, dogs can get accustomed to all sorts of potty surfaces. For example, city dogs may learn to potty on concrete, and in fact, some city dogs have a challenging time learning how to eventually potty on grass! Likewise, dogs trained on grass will rarely potty on concrete. But don't worry, regardless of where you live, with proper socialization and practice, your dog can adjust and acclimate to a variety of surfaces. It is truly your preference as to which surface will work best for you.

If you are only going with an outdoor spot, choose a particular spot, and stay consistent. Take your dog to that spot every time so your puppy knows where you would like him/her to go every time. Try to avoid walking BEFORE your puppy potties, or your puppy will learn that the walk comes first, and THEN it's potty time. You want it to be potty time, and then the walk follows as yet another fun reward for going potty outside!

spot inside where your dog can potty. If you will be able to be home most of the day with you puppy, then I would forgo the indoor potty option completely.

STEP 2: Create a Long Term and/or a Short Term Success Area

Many trainers will refer to these areas as “confinement” areas, but I prefer to call them “success areas” because you are truly setting your puppy up for success by creating these areas because by limiting the amount of trouble your puppy can find! Your puppy won't be able to potty in the “wrong” spot, and won't learn how fun it is to chew on your baseboards and your shoes! For short term success areas, I prefer the crate. Your puppy only needs enough room to get up, turn around, and lay back down comfortably. If your puppy has enough space to go potty in one corner of the crate, and lay back down in another corner, your puppy has too much room. Many crates come with dividers so that you can get one crate, and use the divider to limit the space as your puppy grows. As far as how long your puppy can stay in the crate, a simple rule of thumb for knowing how long your puppy can be in the crate is:

8-10 WEEKS: 30-60 MINUTES

11-14 WEEKS 1-3 HOURS

15-17 WEEKS 3-4 HOURS

18+ WEEKS=4+ HOURS WITH 6 BEING MAXIMUM

LONG TERM SUCCESS AREA

If you're going to be gone for longer periods of time than is appropriate for your dog to be in the crate, then create a long term success area.

I love play pens or small exercise pens WITH the crate in the area. You can even attach many exercise pens to the sides of the crate! That way your puppy can still sleep and love the crate, but has enough room to roam and potty around the other parts of the area.

You can even have a long term success area with a little door that leads to the potty only area if you really wanted to be fancy. Some people choose to use a bathroom or a laundry room for a long term success area, but I typically try to avoid this because puppies explore their world with their mouths so chewing on the baseboards or scratching the cabinets is totally fair game until they are old enough to discriminate proper chew toys from the walls of your home.

That happens quite frequently, and it's really not the dog's fault-Your Puppy is just exploring the environment! Needless to say, I much prefer to create my own space using exercise pens or puppy gates to avoid any potential puppy training pitfalls...like coming home to a kitchen without cabinets.

By the same token, make sure that the height of your success area is high enough so that your puppy can remain in there safely...or in other words, so your puppy can't jump or climb out. Yes. That happens too. Regardless of which space you choose, you will want plenty of your chosen indoor potty surfaces down at first.

So whether you choose a fake grass patch or potty pads, be sure to cover almost the entire space (excluding the crate). When your puppy is successfully using your indoor potty surface consistently, start reducing the amount of surfaces until your puppy is successfully going potty on only 1 indoor potty patch.

STEP 3: Create a Potty Schedule

THE 4 KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL POTTY TRAINING SCHEDULE

1. Keep your dog on a rotating schedule of potty, Treat, play, rest(napping in success area), repeat.
2. Keep your puppy supervised 100% of the time when not in the success area or crate.
3. Make sure your puppy is in the right spot at the right time, and prevent your puppy from being in the wrong spot (i.e. your persian rug) at the right time (i.e. when your puppy has to potty)
4. Supervision

Potty training is all about supervision, supervision, and supervision with a sprinkle of management and scheduling in there. Just to reiterate: puppies don't know to potty outside, and they explore the world through their mouth.

Therefore, puppies should not have free reign of the house until they have learned what is appropriate to chew, and where is the appropriate place to go potty. Would you ever let toddlers or young children run free in the grocery store?

Hopefully the answer is a solid NO...Because you would constantly be saying “Don’t touch that. Don’t eat those Oreos. Don’t throw that orange. Don’t hit your brother. Don’t...don’t...don’t...”

It would be a disaster. This is why we place kids in the shopping cart, we give them something to do, we redirect them when necessary, and we reward them for doing what we like. The same is true for puppies. They need to know what TO DO, rather than what NOT TO DO. So, here is what a typical puppy schedule might look like:

6:00am - Potty

THROW A PARTY FOR POTTING OUTSIDE

6:15 - Feed Puppy

SUPERVISE

6:35 - Potty

THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

7:00-8:00

REST IN SUCCESS AREA

8:00 - Potty

THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

8:30 - Potty

THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

9:00

REST IN SUCCESS AREA

10:00 - Potty

THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

10:45 - Potty

THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

11:00 Lunch

11:30 - Potty

THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

12:15 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

12:45 - Potty
THROW A PARTY

1:00
REST IN SUCCESS AREA

2:00 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

2:30 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

3:00 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

3:30 - Potty
THROW A PARTY

4:00
REST IN SUCCESS AREA

5:00 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

5:30 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

6:00 - Dinner

6:20 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

7:00 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

7:30 - Potty
THROW A PARTY

SUPERVISE

8:00 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

8:30 - Potty
THROW A PARTY
SUPERVISE

9:30 - Potty
THROW A PARTY

10:00
BEDTIME

**This schedule will vary depending on how much your puppy drinks, the age of your puppy, and the size of your puppy. Small breed dogs will have to go potty more frequently than medium to large sized breeds.*

***This is just a sample schedule to give you an idea of the rotation and timing. Do what works best for you, your puppy, and your lifestyle and adjust accordingly.*

****If you take your puppy potty because it's about that time to potty, and you know you are on a ticking clock, but your puppy does NOT go potty, then in order to prevent a potty mishap, put your puppy back in a success area with a treat (preferably a short term success area), and then take your dog potty again in another 30 minutes. Throw a party then your puppy goes potty! Utilizing the success areas with this level of management and schedule will help prevent potty mishaps in the wrong places, and will also help build bladder control.*

The DOs and DON'Ts of POTTY TRAINING

DO's

1. DO keep your puppy supervised when outside of the success area.
2. DO utilize a leash while INSIDE of the house to help supervise your dog.
3. DO throw a party when your dog has gone potty in the right spot using yummy treats and extensive praise, love, play, and petting. They should go potty and should immediately look to you because they are expecting a party to follow.
4. DO interrupt puppy going potty in the wrong spot by picking puppy up *and* DO take puppy to the correct spot
5. DO Slowly increase the amount of supervised time outside of the success area as your puppy gets older and builds bladder control.
6. DO take your puppy outside on leash, be BORING, be PATIENT, and WAIT for your puppy to potty. Take the leash off and play AFTER your puppy has gone potty.
7. DO reward your puppy with a treat after going potty, and then reward your puppy with either a play session outside (if your dog loves being outside) or by playing inside (if your puppy prefers to be inside)
8. DO leave treats and the leash on top of the crate or near the crate so that you remember to take them outside for the potty party.
9. DO carry your puppy from the crate directly outside to prevent any "accidents" along the way.
10. DO start to learn your puppy's potty signals. Puppies typically need to potty soon after eating, after a play session, after a nap, and if at any time your puppy stops what he/she is doing, such as playing, out of nowhere, or tries to suddenly dart away, then it typically means it's potty time.

DON'Ts

1. DON'T rub your dog's nose in any "accidents". It really doesn't help at all. I promise.
2. DON'T try to punish your dog if you find an "accident" in the house after the fact-dogs only learn in the moment, and by association. Your dog will not associate going potty with the punishment hours after the fact-and frankly, your puppy is still learning so punishment shouldn't be used regardless.
3. DON'T allow free reign until your puppy is completely house trained and potty trained.
4. DON'T play or walk your puppy outside until AFTER your puppy has gone potty. Let play time and walks be an additional reward for going potty!
5. DON'T leave food and giant, endless water bowls down all day. You need to know when and how much your puppy eats and drinks in order to properly time the schedule.
6. DON'T be afraid to go potty in the rain! Your puppy needs to be exposed to wet grass and wet surfaces prior to 12-16 weeks to prevent any phobias from wet grass or rain as this can create setbacks with potty training during rainy seasons.
7. DON'T use the success areas as punishment

8. DON'T start increasing free reign until your puppy has gone TWO WEEKS without an accident in the house.
9. DON'T assume that your puppy is going to automatically notify you to go potty. Stick to the schedule.
10. DON'T take your puppy potty with a ton of distractions at first because your puppy will want to play with the distractions, and will forget all about going potty until you come back inside.