



## Housetraining

For as pleasant as possible a housetraining experience for you and your dog, encourage proper potty habits, and prevent mistakes (which can greatly slow down progress).

### Develop a Routine that Encourages Positive Habits

When you first start potty training, take your dog outside every hour on the hour. It helps to set a timer so you don't forget. When outside, give your dog a verbal prompt (for example, "go potty"), give them a few minutes to take care of business, offer a reward (verbal praise, plus a treat if you like) if they do go, and then go back inside. If your dog did go potty, let them run around free. However, if they did not go, take them outside again in 30 minutes. In the meantime, either confine them in a small area (such as a crate) or attach them to you with an "umbilical cord" which is made by wrapping a long leash around your waist, putting the end through the loop, and then attaching the leash to the dog. Please note that for small dogs or puppies, an umbilical cord may be too heavy and if so should not be used.

As your dog gets older, the length of time between outside visits can gradually be increased. A rule of thumb for puppies is that they can hold it for one hour for each month of age, but smaller dogs will need to go outside more frequently and will probably take longer to housetrain. You may find it helpful to keep a log to track their progress.

Feed your dog a premium food on a regular schedule. Look for foods that contain primarily meat, and avoid high-fiber fillers (especially corn). Puppies need to eat 3-4 times a day, but for adult dogs, twice a day (morning and evening) is plenty.

### Prevent Mistakes

- Dog Door: If your yard is dog-proof (securely fenced, no dangerous plants), a pet door is a terrific way to let your dog go outside whenever they feel the need.
- Crating: Crating works well for the short-term, as your dog will naturally not want to soil their bed area. However, a crate should never be used to force your dog to "hold it" for an uncomfortable length of time.
- Paper Training: If a dog door is not practical and your schedule doesn't allow you to take your dog out as often as they need, then paper training (with newspaper or pads) may be the ticket. Using a litter box also works well with small dogs. Choose a room with floors that are easy to clean as your puppy's "play room." Equip the room with fresh water, a form of entertainment (see our sheet "Activities for Your Home Alone Dog" if you need ideas), a dog bed in one corner of the room, and the doggy toilet in the corner farthest from the bed. Until your dog has learned to use their doggy toilet consistently, they will need to be confined to this room while you are out of the house.

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The Austin Dog Alliance, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, provides the following programs:

- Rescue: Our foster parents provide a nurturing home environment for dogs.
- Youth Outreach: Dog-related educational programs for area schools and youth groups.
- Deaf Community: Uniquely tailored youth and adult dog training taught in sign language.
- Dog Training: We provide a wide variety of fun and educational dog training classes.
- Pet Therapy: We provide seminars, classes, evaluations, placement, and support to therapy teams in local schools, hospitals, and nursing homes.

