



HOUSTRAINING YOUR PUPPY: TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR DOG BEHAVED AND YOUR HOME CLEAN

Few things are as exciting as bringing home a new puppy. Whether Chihuahua or Great Dane, a pup's playful antics delight people of all ages. Having a dog can bring many years of companionship and precious memories, but before you ask, "How much is that doggie in the window?" consider a few expert tips for positive houstraining.

Responsible pet parents start planning long before bringing a puppy home. "Research your lifestyle – what your living accommodations are. Do breed research into what you want the pet for," says Dr. Chris Stearns, partner at Dalton Animal Care clinic in Dalton, Ga. "It's so important to have the right environment – enough room indoors and out, and enough attention."

Talk with different people who can share insight about the breeds you are considering. Veterinarians, trainers, groomers and breeders can provide valuable information about what dogs are best for your lifestyle, and what to expect for each in regard to training.

Stearns, along with Stephanie Daughtrey, a certified animal behaviorist at the clinic, offers these important tips for houstraining your puppy and keeping your home intact in the process.

1. Know potty triggers

Start by understanding your puppy's potty triggers. What exactly stimulates a pup's bladder and digestive system? While it varies from dog to dog, triggers are typically feelings of excitement, like when visitors arrive, and particular times of day, like after he wakes up or right before bed. Keep in mind, puppies will need to go after eating and/or drinking – usually within 15 minutes.

2. Establish a routine

Find a designated "potty patch" outdoors so your dog can associate that space with doing his business. Start by leash walking the pup to that spot so he can focus before spending any time playing.

If your dog doesn't go, consider keeping him on a leash inside too. Rotate 15 minutes inside and 15 minutes outside. Stay close to your new furry family member. If he starts to circle and sniff, in that familiar way, take him outside. If he starts to squat to urinate, clap or make a sharp sound that will stop him in the act. You can transfer him outside to finish and praise him there.

"Young puppies learn through positive reinforcement – not negative. Give them a treat when they go potty outside – that reinforces the good behavior right then and there. Praise them with a happy tone of voice," says Stearns.

3. Avoid indoor accidents

Accept that a puppy will need to go outside every one or two hours. It's the owner's responsibility to provide plenty of time outdoors, otherwise if left unattended for extended periods, a puppy will find a place to piddle.

"Close the doors out of the room where the puppy is – get baby gates to seal off other areas. A puppy will seek out areas of the house that are not part of the 'family den,'" says Daughtrey.

4. Clean messes immediately

"Accidents will happen," says Stearns. "Expect it and work with it when it happens. You must deodorize it, so he can't use it as a scent-marking area. Use a product that does more than just mask the odor – it needs to enzymatically destroy the chemical in the urine."

Start by blotting to absorb as much liquid as possible. Then treat the mess with a pet stain and odor remover that has the Carpet and Rug Institute Seal of Approval. Each certified product that features the national trade association's seal goes through rigorous testing in an independent laboratory, so you can be confident you're treating the stain, removing the odors, and protecting the integrity of your carpet.

If your carpet becomes deeply soiled from multiple accidents and dirty little puppy paws, you may want to consider hiring a professional carpet cleaner. For those with allergies, frequent vacuuming and regularly-scheduled cleaning will remove virtually all embedded allergens and pet dander. Certified CRI Seal of Approval service providers have the experience needed to treat stains, remove odors and leave carpet looking like new. Visit www.carpet-rug.org to find a provider near you. .

5. Spay or neuter

Finally, spay or neuter your dog at the appropriate age according to your vet's recommendations. Unneutered dogs typically urinate more in the house as an action of marking their territory, so it's something every caring pet parent should consider.

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