

Location, location, location

So far so good? The accidents your puppy has had are a matter of being in the wrong place at the right time. Dogs are naturally clean animals: given a choice, they will urinate and defecate away from their sleeping and eating areas. However, it is not obvious to puppies that carpets and floors are inappropriate elimination sites. They must be systematically taught to discriminate indoors vs. outdoors and to exclusively use the latter. The key to house-training is getting a solid history of rewarded trials in the desired area.

Make sure you establish a reward history for your puppy by taking him out to the same place on leash at frequent intervals and rewarding with exuberant praise and a treat when she has eliminated. A small area outside is the best spot. Keep a container of treats in the area so that you can immediately reward him for elimination in that area. There must be a training effect with an immediate reward, as you will later be reprimanding for any elimination inside the house-- you don't want him to associate that with you. The dozens upon dozens of times you have rewarded him for going in front of you while outside will make later reprimands easier to interpret. You can also reward him with a walk and a play session either with a toy, or with you. When she puts the connection together, you will notice that she will eliminate more quickly. These are the laws of learning in action, and dogs are loyal to them. By no means should you reprimand after the fact. Puppies must have immediate (within 1 second) consequences (reward or reprimand)

Focus on providing immediate consequences for your puppy

Avoid accidents inside at ALL COSTS. Every accident inside is one you could not reward outside, you catch inside and must be reprimanded which sets you up as the bad guy, and two you failed to catch inside which gets the habit rolling.

When you have established a strong reward history of eliminating in the right place, you may now reprimand for any mistakes in the wrong place while you are present. If there is a mistake, you must catch it in the act. Any later and you could be reprimanding something else. Say your puppy pees then takes a few steps and sits down and you reprimand, guess what you just reprimanded--sitting! Be extra conscious of what you are rewarding and what you are reprimanding!

If you have done a good job at rewarding outside elimination, it will take between one and three reprimands to finish the job (most of the time--every is different). That is if you catch three in a row. Big mistake, if you catch one, miss one, catch one, etc...housebreaking will become a protracted process

The hardest part is making sure your pup is being watched at all times or in his confinement space. There is the "blink factor"--once you blink or turn your back, even for a moment--your pup WILL have an accident.

Housebreaking laws...keep this page handy

- Make sure you have treats on you when you take him out to pee.
- Buy a leash that you can leave on him while she is not confined to the crate.
- Decide precisely where his bathroom will be in the yard. Bring him directly to that spot at least every 20 to 30 minutes awake times.
- Go there regularly: first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, 10 to 20 minutes after meals and water, each and every time she comes out of his confinement, and frequently (every five minutes or so) during playtime.
- Cheer your puppy and reward the moment she goes in the appropriate place.
- Cheer and reward at the right moment, Cheer and reward at the right moment, Cheer and reward at the right moment
- Confine to one room: never, ever give him access to more than the kitchen or easily cleaned area
- Pick up food and water—do not allow free access to food and water. This is the key. If you control “in-put” you are better able to predict “output”
- Supervise whenever she’s uncrated, especially if she’s “full”. If you must take your eyes off her, even for a minute, crate him or bring him with you.
- Interrupt mistakes immediately with a fast verbal reprimand. Catch him as she starts to go, not afterwards. After interrupting her, hustle him outside to the bathroom area: praise if she finishes there. Then clean up the indoor mess
- Never punish late: if she made the mistake 1 second prior, you are too late. You must catch him in the act to reprimand effectively
- Catch him in the act of doing it right: follow these rules so you can be the good guy most of the time.