

How to Potty Train ANY Dog!



Before we get into the step-by-step, let's just define what *potty training* really is. Most dog owners are generally satisfied if their dog simply does not eliminate in inappropriate areas, such as the home, in pet friendly stores, or in other people's homes. However, you can always strive for more.

This potty training guide will actually help you get to a standard of potty training where you can tell your dog in any situation when its appropriate to go potty. So, the next time you are traveling with your pup and you get stuck in a snowstorm at a hotel and you just want your dog to go potty, they will go potty on command and you won't have to stand out in the snow or rain waiting for your dog to do their business.

Training may take anywhere from 2 to 7 days. Be prepared to be patient!

What you will need:

1. An appropriately sized crate

The crate should be slightly longer than the length of your dog and should have just enough room for you dog to turn around and lie down in the crate.

If you are working with a puppy that will likely need more room to grow, you can use a large crate that has a divider so you can section off a smaller area for these purposes.

You generally shouldn't have any items in the crate with your dog such as blankets or pillows, especially if you will be leaving your dog unsupervised. There is always a possibility your dog could destroy whatever is in the crate with them and ingest the material.

2. A Leash

We prefer the Mendota Slip Leash 6' x 1/2" because it is very easy to slip onto the dog as the exit the crate and you don't have to worry about putting multiple pieces of equipment.

If you are using a leash and collar, that will work as well. You just need some type of leash to be able to walk your dog.

3. Treats or a Toy

You will want to have something that you dog really really loves! If your dog loves food, find something high value to have handy for the purposes of this training such as lunch meat for cooked chicken. If your dog isn't that interested in food, but loves a special toy, then that is something you should have hand for this training.

Notes: You can also apply crate training during this process. See the Alpha K9 Academy Crate Training Guide for more information.

A good quality slip leash can be an essential training tool as well as the best piece of safety equipment for your dog.

Every dog is different, really think about what your dog really values when choosing a reward for this training. If your dog gets cold in the winter and you are trying to reward him with an outdoor play session, it may seem more like a punishment to that specific dog.



Let's get started!

Day 1

Step 1:

The dog should start this training in the appropriately sized crate. If this is the first time bringing home your dog, he should go straight into the crate. Even if you've had the dog for a while and maybe he's just been having some accidents, the training still begins with your pup in the crate.

Step 2:

Once the dog has been in the crate for about an hour, take the dog out of the crate, put on the leash and take the dog directly out to where you want him/her to go potty. If the dog is small enough to carry, we recommend carrying the dog for the first several times you do this part. If the dog is too big to carry, move quickly from the crate out to the potty area as to not allow for any accidents along the way.

Generally with adult dogs, moving quickly from the crate to the outdoor potty area isn't too difficult unless they have made it a habit to potty somewhere along the route to get outside. When in doubt, carry your dog.

Step 3:

Once you are in the area where you want your dog to go potty, hold the very end of the leash by the handle and don't move. This will allow your dog to investigate just within the limits of the length of the leash. Your dog should be able to investigate everything within that area within a few minutes.

Now, If your dog does not go potty within about 4-5 minutes, take your dog directly back inside and put them back into the crate for another 45 minutes to an hour. After the appropriate amount of time has passed, repeat the beginning of Step 3.

Step 4:

At this point you've taken your dog out to the potty area and they went potty outside, in the appropriate potty area, while on leash, and in your presence! Now we give them a good reward! If they like treats, give them a few treats, if they like toys, now is a good time for a mini play session. You can tell your dog "Good Job!" "Yes!" "Who's a good dog?!" And let your dog know that you are happy about what they just did!

Step 5:

Now that you have rewarded your dog for going potty in the right place, at the right time, and in your presence, its important to give your dog the opportunity to finish doing their business. If your dog urinated they may still need to

It is tempting to want to let your brand new puppy explore the house and play as soon as they get home, but you'll be glad you followed these instructions in the end.

The goal of this training is to not give any opportunities for accidents and to build reward history with going potty appropriately.

During Step 3 you are going to be very boring! Do not talk to your dog, do not walk around, do not pet your dog, do not even talk on the phone. You should stand like a post.

The process of rewarding your dog should not take longer than about 1-2 minutes.

If you create too much distraction during this portion of the training, your dog may actually hold it in because they are having so much fun.

defecate and vice versa. You should allow for about 10 - 15 minutes of casual walking around and not too much excitement.

Step 6:

Even if your pup didn't do any more urinating or defecating outside, now it is time to go straight back into the crate for another hour. You can give your pup some water and some food if they want it before they go back in the crate. Even if they eat and drink they should be able to hold it for up to an hour.

See our feeding and hydration guidelines to know how much water and food your dog needs on a daily basis!

Step 7:

Repeat Steps 1 thru 6 throughout the day.

Note: If you are not available to do this every hour, just complete this process as often as you are able.

In case of an accident:

- In the event that your dog has an accident in the crate, immediately take the dog out to the potty area and do the same routine as you have been.
- If you have someone who can help you, have one person clean the crate while the other takes the dog out.
- If you don't have someone to help you, if you have a spare crate, place the dog in the other crate while you clean the soiled crate.
- If you don't have a helper or a spare crate, you may need to hold the dog or keep the dog on a very short leash next to you while you clean the soiled crate.

DO NOT let your dog be free in the home while you clean the crate!

Why? Your dog may think that going potty in the crate earned him the reward of being free in the house. Also this gives your dog the opportunity to have an accident in the house.

Night Routine

We don't expect you to get up every hour throughout the entire night, and for the most part even puppies should be able to hold their bladders for a few hours at a time during the night. However, you should still get up at least 3 times or ever 3 hours the first night of potty training if you are working with a puppy less than 16 weeks old. If the puppy is 16 to 24 weeks, you should get up twice the first night or ever 4 hours. And if the puppy/dog is over 24 weeks (6 months) you should still get up once in the night to take them out.

The more often you take your dog outside to go potty, the more opportunities they will have create good habits and the less chances of an accident. Even if you have an adult dog, you can still take them out multiple times the first couple nights, just to be on the safe side.

Night-time potty breaks:
9-16 Weeks: 3 Times
16-24 Weeks: 2 Times
24+ Weeks: 1 Time

Day 2

If Day 1 was completely successful, you can start to increase the time between potty breaks throughout the day. Successful means that by the end of the day your dog had started going potty as soon as you got to the potty area. Also this means that your dog had no accidents in the home or in the crate.

If you feel that your dog still doesn't want to go potty as soon as you go outside or they maybe had an accident in the crate, you should keep doing potty breaks every hour.

If you decide your dog is ready to increase the time between potty breaks, **START SMALL!** Instead of taking your dog out every hour, increase the time to every hour and a half for Day 2. Everything else about the routine will be exactly the same!

Remember, young puppies have very small bladders and cannot hold it much longer than a few hours. As you increase your time between potty breaks, keep this in mind. Even once your puppy is potty trained, you will still need to give

Putting it "ON CUE"

If your dog is really on point, and as soon as you get to the potty location your dog goes potty, you can start to put it "on cue." What this means is giving the action a command. So the next time you go out to the potty area and you know that your dog will go potty, just before they do their business tell them their potty command, "Go Potty" or whatever

command you want to use.

Night Routine

For the first few nights you will still want to take your dog out at least once throughout the night, and more if they are a young puppy. When potty training, the most common occurrence of accidents happen over-night. Stay vigilant and a few nights with little sleep will payoff in the long run.

Success means that your dog doesn't have any accidents and starts to get the concept of going potty as soon as they come out of the crate in the right place.

Remember: Anytime you take your dog out and they don't go potty in the few 2-4 minutes, they go directly back into their crate.

If you want your dog to start going longer periods without needing to potty over night, you can take away their access to water around 7-8pm and ensure they get at least 1-2 more potty breaks before you go to bed for the night.

Days 3-7

At this point, your pup should be picking up the routine, and you may be able to even be able to tell your dog when to potty and the actually do it! If you get really consistent with using the “Go Potty” cue, you may get to the point where your dog will do the motion of going potty even when they don’t need to actually potty.

It is important during this phase not to rush the process if your dog is taking a little longer to pick it up. Some dogs can take over 7 days to pick it up, and that’s perfectly okay. It may mean a little more work for you, but again, it will be worth it. Continue to slowly increase the amount of time between potty breaks, and stay consistent with when you reward and how you conduct your potty breaks.

If your dog is picking it up really well, after your dog goes potty and you reward them, you can use the following 10-15 minutes to include short training sessions. This is the method we use with all of our client dogs. It is the best way to combine potty training with obedience training.

Things to remember while Potty Training

1. The first few days are the hardest, but it does get easier!!! Hang in there!
2. Consistency during the first few days is absolutely crucial.
3. Do not punish your dog if they have an accident, remain neutral and follow the steps outlined in this guide.

Why it works?

When you take your dog outside to go potty and you give them the opportunity to do their business, you are teaching them that nothing fun or exciting will happen until after you go potty.

Building Reward History

Your dog learns that going potty **in the right place, at the right time, and in your presence** means that they get rewarded! We believe that teaching our dogs what the correct behavior is, is imperative before correcting our dogs for inappropriate behavior. If you caught your dog going potty in the house, and you punish them, but they don’t know what about their behavior is wrong, they may think that they were punished for going potty in front of you rather than going potty in the wrong place.

We teach the dog that going potty in front of us and in our presence is good! We want our dogs to be comfortable going potty on leash and when we tell them to. Since we have taught them that going potty in front of us is good, then if we catch them going potty in an inappropriate place and we correct them, they know it was not because we saw them, but instead because it was in the wrong place.

Why is it important?

We all live busy lives and sometimes we can’t spend long periods of time hoping that our dogs will do their business before we have to leave for work for the day. Being able to tell you dog when it is time for them do go potty can be a time saver and save the hassles of needing to clean up any accidents in the home.

