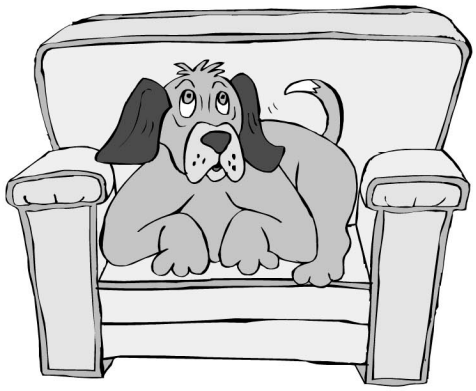
HOW TO HOUSEBREAK YOUR DOG



Patience is the key to housebreaking. Routine is also very important. Establish a definite pattern. Your puppy will make mistakes, he doesn't have full muscle control yet. Be patient and follow these tips:

- Confine the puppy when he's home alone. Use toddler's gates, a crate, or other barriers to create a "den" where he can eat, sleep, and drink.

- Try to avoid paper training-- the dog will only have to unlearn it later. If it is unavoidable, place a thick layer of paper at one end of the den. Place food, water and his bed at the other. When you get home, follow these housebreaking rules:

  1) Walk the puppy in the morning, after meals, after naps and when you see him sniffing around looking for a place to relieve himself. When you want to take him out, say "It's time to go out." Walk him to the same spot every time. Be sure he relieves himself before you return or play with him.

  2) While he's going, say "Hurry up!" and reward him with lavish praise and a food treat afterward. After he's trained. Phase out the food treat.

  3) Keep his diet consistent. Use the same brand food and no table scraps. Set his food down for ten minutes, then give him nothing until the next meal even if he didn't finish the last one.

  4) Keep this regimen until the dog has no accidents and can go on command. This shouldn't take longer than six weeks if you are conscientious. Don't get impatient — remember that training is teaching.

  5) If the dog does have an accident, NEVER RUB HIS NOSE IN IT! He won't make the connection. The punishment, a stern NO!, which must be made at the time of the crime, will be severe enough.

***NOTE**: Be sure to clean the puppy's mess with a special cleansing agent that will remove the smell (as well as the spot) from the area so he doesn't get attracted to it again.

Another helpful idea is to take the animal's solid waste that he has soiled in your home and remove it to the area outdoors where you would like to have him go to the bathroom. By leaving it there, he will recognize his scent and attempt to go in this area.

General Crate Training Tips — A crate can provide a source of security for those pets who are stressed out when left alone. Select a crate which is big enough to allow the pet to stretch out, stand and turn around in. Use treats and praise to encourage him to enter the crate. Place him in the crate for a few minutes to begin with, gradually adding more minutes to his stay each time you place him in the crate. Eventually leave the house for a short time, then longer each time you leave. If you use a wire crate remove his collar each time you put him into the crate and replace it when he is released. Since a dog will generally not go to the bathroom in the crate once he accepts it as his own, it will provide a valuable technique for housebreaking. THE CRATE MUST NEVER BE USED AS PUNISHMENT!

San Bernardino County
Animal Care & Control Program
(800) 472-5609