



POTTY TRAINING 101

By Larissa Stanton, Founder of Project Pawsible

Supplies

- Crate
- X-pen
- Leash
- Collar/harness
- If an indoor spot is needed for potty training, potty pads <https://amzn.to/3ZHqWv>
- A pheromone diffuser if pottying is caused in part by stress Adaptil calming pheromone diffuser <https://amzn.to/4pxXq34>
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Preparation

- Have all appropriate supplies at home and set up ahead of time
- Read <https://vetexplainspets.com/how-long-can-dogs-hold-their-pee-by-age/#> for an explanation on how long a dog can hold their bladder.

Potty Training: The Routines

The following steps are from when you first bring your dog home through until potty training has been achieved. Some of these steps your dog may easily skip over!

Arriving Home

- When you bring your dog home, go to the place you want your dog to do their business and encourage them to circle and sniff using leash pressure and patience.

- When your dog begins to eliminate, say whatever word you want to be the cue for relieving themselves. I use “business!”. When your dog eliminates, say “business!” then when they are done relieving themselves, give them a treat!
- Bring your dog inside. Don’t let them have free run of the home until they are potty trained. Either:
 - Keep your dog with you on a waist leash so you can still have your hands free, but your dog is nearby, or
 - Have your dog tethered to something sturdy nearby where you spend most of your time.
 - Crate your dog (see crate training manual)
- If the dog didn’t eliminate in a timely manner before you needed to go inside, set a 15 minute timer and then take your dog out again. Repeat the process until your dog has eliminated outside.

Daytime Routine:

For young puppies (8-10 weeks), set a 1-2 hour timer during the day. When your timer goes off, take your puppy out to eliminate. Adjust depending on food and water intake.

For puppies up to 6 months: set a 3-4 hour timer. Adjust depending on food and water intake, as well as their own routine.

Adolescents: set a 4-6 hour timer, heavily dependent on food/water intake and your dog’s routine/personal ability.

Make sure you are taking your dog out anywhere between 15 minutes and 60 minutes after they’ve had a meal and water.

Nighttime Routine:

Take your dog out for their last potty break. Once they’ve eliminated, have your dog on a waist leash with you while you finish your bedtime routine. Then crate your dog (or put them in their pen) for overnight. If they are in a pen and are a young puppy, potty pads may be useful. Set an alarm for 3 hours (adjust as needed by age, an adolescent may be able to hold it overnight, an adult dog should be able to no problem), and wake up during the night to take the puppy to the appropriate potty spot.

Morning Routine:

Wait until your dog is quiet, then let them out of their pen or crate. Try not to make a big deal out of this, as (especially with puppies) this can lead to accidents. Bring your dog out to their potty spot and have their first potty break.

Routines V.S. Schedules

A routine and a schedule are often used interchangeably, but they're not the same thing. Your routines are your general behaviors, while your schedules are restricted by dates and time. For example, you have a morning routine when you wake up regardless of what time you wake up, but you have specific hours you're at work. That's the same for dogs. They can learn on a routine, they don't have to learn on a schedule. If you always feed your dog at 6:00pm sharp, they are going to learn that they need to pester you for their food at 6:00pm sharp. If you feed them after you have dinner, your dog is going to learn that regardless of the time, once you finish eating it's their turn for food. If you are a person who thrives on schedules for every day, your dog will learn your schedule. Otherwise, your dog is going to learn your routines. Make sure you have routines for them too. Consistency is king when it comes to training!

Accidents Happen

No dog is perfect, and you won't be perfect either (no one is)! If you keep your dog tethered near you, or attached to you, you can interrupt accidents. Just walk your dog quickly outside and ask them to do their business. Yelling, shoving their nose in their urine, etc. doesn't teach the dog what to do, only teaches them that you get scary when they pee. That doesn't teach them where to go, just not to go around you--which makes it much harder to potty train!