

# **The Find. Love. Train. Potty Training Guide**

Potty training should be a top priority as it tends to be the deciding factor in your dog's quality of life. With a little time, patience, and planning, this can be a relatively simple and painless process. Our Find. Love. Train. Potty Training Guide provides a positive plan of action that will deliver quick results.

Effective potty training is critical for puppies. At an early age, dogs learn quickly, and it is more challenging for a dog to unlearn a behavior or habit than it is to learn good habits in the first place. Most dogs want to please their owners and live in harmony, so be patient and be consistent!

## **Find. Love. Train. Basic Truths**

Before we get started, it is important to review the core tenets of the Find. Love. Train. philosophy. (Stick with us and you'll see these again and again!)

1. Accept responsibility for the success or failure during training. Never blame your dog for accidents. It is up to you to be watchful and to prevent mistakes.
2. Be patient. Dogs do not know what you want them to do, you have to teach them.
3. Train 24 hours a day and stay consistent. Dogs learn through repetition, and any behavior that is rewarded will be repeated. The more you practice the faster that you will set the behaviors
4. Use fairness in all things. If your dog does not understand what you want, you have no right to correct him. Show him what you want, and praise the right behavior.
5. Be positive. Every time you interact with your dog it is

learning something – whether it is negative or positive is up to you.

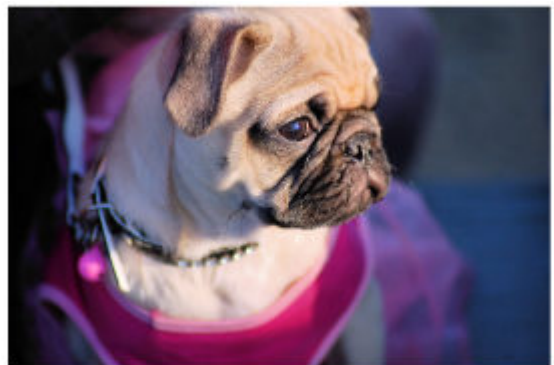
6. Practice attention lessons and commands. If your dog is not paying attention he can't learn.

## Topics:

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  - [Potty Behavior Basics](#)
  - [Prepare for Potty Training Success](#)
  - [Potty Training – Step by Step](#)
  - [Accidents happen...](#)
  - [Potty Training Signals – The Bell Method](#)
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## Potty Behavior Basics

The objective of potty training is to teach the dog to overtly signal that it needs to go and to wait until he can get to an “approved” potty location. During training, you’ll need to read subtle clues and proactively encourage your dog to potty regularly.



PUG DOG IN DRESS - © Dorceny | Dreamstime.com

It's hard to be vigilant during potty training if you don't know what you're trying to spot. Dogs have fairly standard signals and behaviors that indicate when they need to visit a potty area.

# **“Tail Tail” Signs That Your Dog Might Need To Potty**

Here are some subtle and not so subtle clues:

1. Sniffing
2. Turning in circles
3. Wandering off to potty in private. Dogs are clean animals when given the right opportunity. They do not wish to potty where they eat, sleep or play, but your home is probably big enough for them to find a “good” (for them) spot.
4. Whining
5. Pawing you, barking at you, or nudging you
6. Staring at you or the door
7. Standing by the door with a wishful look in their eyes.
8. Squatting (uh oh, you’re too late)

During training, you must not ignore these signals or your dog will give up and find somewhere nearby to do his business. Later on, we’ll talk about an alternative “alert” method using a bell, but teaching your dog to bark or whine is a good strategy – a signal that you really can’t ignore.

## **When You Gotta Go You Gotta Go**

The best strategy for rapid potty training is to be proactive. There are certain times when you can be pretty confident that your dog needs a potty break.

1. As soon as your pet wakes up! Forget your normal morning routine, and run, run fast to take your new friend outside.
2. After a long night, your dog definitely needs to go. If your dog is napping outside of its crate, make sure that you take him out immediately when he wakes up.
3. Ten to twenty minutes after eating. This includes every meal or snack time.

4. After playtime. Look for the “tail tail” signs during any break in play and rush your dog outside.

We recommend using a crate during potty training, dogs typically will not potty in their crates, and it is easy to take the dog outside after any period of confinement.

## **How long can you leave a puppy confined without a potty break?**

Keep in mind every dog is different. A small puppy will need to go more often than a big dog. Think about how much smaller their bladder is compared to a bigger puppy. The general guidelines for crating your dog are:

1. 2 months old = 2 hours of confinement without a potty break
2. 3 months old = 3 hours of confinement without a potty break
3. 4 months old = 4 hours of confinement without a potty break

These are just guidelines. If your dog is struggling, take him out more often. This can be an issue especially for smaller breeds and puppies.

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# Prepare for Potty Training Success

From the moment you decide to bring another new family member into your home you must set them up for success. Those first hours or days with a new pet are stressful for both you and the dog!



1. Bring your new pet home during a time that everyone in the home can spend a couple of days with him. Bringing a puppy or dog into your home and leaving him on his own to acclimate to new and sometimes scary surroundings never works well for you or your new friend.
2. Choose your new friend wisely. A puppy takes much more time to teach appropriate behaviors and will not have the ability to hold his bladder as long as a mature dog. A dog that is rescued from a foster home or similar program will already have many of their basic house skills in place.
3. You cannot expect a puppy to be able to wait for 6 or 8 hours to be let out. Even homes that have a doggie door are useless unless your dog has been taught to go in and out when necessary.
4. Always go with your puppy outside to potty. Once he's finished, let him run and play.
5. Remember that with any change in environment even the best trained dog may have an accident. Even if your new pet was completely housebroken in his old home, he will still need to be shown where to eliminate, and you must learn to read the signals that tell you when your dog

needs to potty.

## What you'll need to get started

1. If you are crate training, have the appropriately sized crate ready and take the time to introduce your dog to the crate properly. (see our [Crate Training Guide](#))
2. Pick a spot in your yard for your dog to eliminate in your yard and always take the same path to get there. Do not have your pup go potty right next to your house or your door because this will create a life-long habit. A secluded or out of the way area will make cleanup easier and reduce the chance of tracking unwanted waste into your home.
3. Stash a 6 ft. leash and soft treats on hand by the crate or door. You'll use these each time you take your dog out to potty. The leash will keep your dog focused on the task at hand.

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# Potty Training – Step by Step

## Step 1: Introduce the Potty Spot



Once you have picked an elimination zone for your pet, it's time to make some formal introductions.

1. When you arrive home with your new dog, put on his leash and collar and take him to the designated "potty" spot. This sets the dog up for success immediately by giving him a chance to eliminate in the correct place.
2. It is best to carry a new puppy the spot, if possible. Many puppies have never been on a leash, and you do not want the first experience with such an important training aid to be a negative one. Carrying the dog also alleviates the problem of your puppy stopping on the way out the door to go potty.
3. If your dog weighs more than you do then just lead them out to the potty spot using a happy voice and cookies if necessary.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If your new dog has not had puppy shots and at least two boosters do not take him to an area where other dogs play or potty. This could be detrimental to his health. Puppies have little protection against many diseases until at least a week after their second booster.

## Step 2: Add a Few Commands

Choose a single a word that will mean "Go potty". The obvious choice here is "potty", but feel free to get creative or use an alternative word. You'll also use the command "Outside".

When it's time to go:

1. Walk to the door and say, "Outside!".
2. Lead the dog to your potty spot, and say "Potty!"
3. Place your dog on the ground, and hold the leash loosely.

Dogs learn by repetition so if you repeat it every time you take them out they will add a new human word to their vocabulary.

### **Step 3: Let's go Potty**

About now, you and your dog are milling about the potty area. It's time for a little patience!

1. Stand with a relaxed posture and tell the dog to "Go Potty." Your dog may not show a lot of interest in transacting business at first – everything in a puppy's world is distracting. This is where patience comes in. It does not matter if they roll in the grass, try to chase a butterfly or bark at your foot. Ignore everything except the behavior that you want – completing business.
2. Do not stare at, walk around with, speak to or play with your dog. This time is used to let him think about what you want him to do.
3. Glance at your dog occasionally and say, "Go Potty" in a happy yet calm voice. Do not use an excited let's play voice or a "GO-POTTY-before-I-strangle-you" tone. Neither will help your puppy focus on the task at hand.
4. After your dog starts to potty, wait for him to just about finish. Praise enthusiastically. "Woohoo, Good Potty!" Praise and treat your dog for doing the right thing. Be very careful with timing your praise! Your dog might stop in the middle of business and you will be stuck outside waiting for act two. Worse yet, you will go inside thinking that potty training is completed, and



you will have an indoor accident.

5. Remember that just because your dog urinated, the job is not complete. Give your dog a little more time to finish. Dogs will not need to poop every time that they urinate so watch for signs that they still need a bit more time to finish their business.

## **Step 4: Learn the Signals**

In an [earlier section](#), we listed the “tail tail” signs that your dog needs to take care of a little business. These included sniffing around, loitering by the door, barking, and other attention getters. Usually, the more set the potty training behavior, the more overt the dog’s signal, but early in the training process you’ll need to look for subtlety.

Many people complain that they have done all the right things yet their dog still has accidents by the door. Their dog knows to go to the door but does not seem to signal that it wants to go out. The truth is that most dogs will signal their owners in some way; they just may not be especially vocal about it.

1. Different dogs have different potty cues.
2. All dogs have little habits that can let you know what they need. It may be difficult to catch subtle clues such as sitting quietly and staring at the door or just looking pitiful. This is especially true if you are in the bedroom making your bed and the door is on the other side of the house. This makes it impossible to catch his behavior unless you can see through walls.

Your best bet is to show your dog a way to effectively let you know they need to go out. A personal favorite is to [teach your dog to ring a bell to signal potty time](#). It’s a relatively easy skill to teach and can make a big difference, and you can also train your dog to stand at the door and bark to go out.

## Step 5: Set the Behavior

Most dogs pick up on new commands and tricks rather quickly. A new behavior will take only minutes to teach, but may take up to six months to become set. A set behavior is one that has become ingrained as a way of life. Unless extraordinarily tempted or under great stress, the dog will stick to the routine. Before a behavior is set, you need to be vigilant with your dog and try to never let them make a mistake.

Here are a couple of tips to help you set the potty outside behavior quickly:

1. Be sure that your new friend understands the difference between potty and play time. Your dog is much happier to go out and play with you or explore, but you need to distinguish between the two behaviors. Play is a reward. After your dog finishes his business completely, say "Play, you want to play!" in a happy voice. Your dog will quickly realize that nothing good happens until after he potties.
2. During the training process, do not just open the door and let your dog go outside to potty alone. Your dog may just go outside and play or investigate – not potty. So, he realizes that he still needs to go when he is back inside.
3. □Some dogs need to walk around a bit before getting down to business. If this is the case with your dog, take a short walk around the yard, returning to your potty spot occasionally. Stand and wait using the technique described above.
4. Once your dog is vaccinated and can safely go on walks, it is best to go directly to a place, away from your home and stop, let them sniff and continue with the same procedure.

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## Accidents happen...

... even to the most diligent pet owners and best trained dogs... Often accidents can be linked to extreme need and/or stress; sometimes you've just missed your dog's signals.



## Whoops There Goes the Rug

No matter how vigilant, there are times when you will step in a puddle or find a present on a favorite carpet. How you react in this situation determines how your dog views you and your leadership.

## **DO**

1. Claim responsibility for the success or failure of your pups potty training.
2. Crate your pup if you cannot be watching.
3. Tie him to you if you are busy around the house and you are distracted.
4. Make potty breaks your main priority first thing in the morning. This means that you may have to wait on that first cup of coffee, unless you have a friend or spouse that is kind enough to bring you one while you stand shivering in your pajama's saying, "Go Potty" to your little friend while the neighbors shake their head in wonder.
5. Remember that even though your pup went potty before breakfast he will still need to go out again after he has his morning meal.
6. Clean up any accidents with the proper product. You must use a product that has an enzyme breaker in it. If you use most common household products they will hide the smell from you but not your dog. You have to eliminate the odor completely.
7. Watch for signs that your furry little friend needs to go out. Remember that a puppy that is sniffing and circling is giving you a clue that they need to go potty. Learn the signs of impending disaster. All dogs have them.

## **DON'T**

1. Scream at your puppy. Take your dog to the offensive spot and show it to him or rub his nose in it. Or throw him outside while doing the inappropriate screaming behavior. These behaviors make your dog think that you're nuts, and he might start to question your stability. Dogs do not follow unstable leaders.
2. Bring the dog back in the house as soon as he goes potty. Wait just a minute and then tell him, "Play, Ya wanna Play." Then give him a little personal fun time.

If you take him in the minute he goes potty he may well figure out that as soon as he potty's the fun times are over with.

## **Caught in the Act (Or No Not On My Rug)**

1. It is never fair to correct you dog after an accident. What exactly is the appropriate behavior when you catch the cute little guy in the act? Right at that moment, he is not looking so cute, and you may be feeling really frustrated. Think back to five minutes before his transgression when he was upside down, letting you rub his belly. Try to remember how cute he was at that point in time.
2. When you catch your dog in the act, make an abrupt noise such as clapping your hands and give a correction noise such as augh, augh or baap, baap, baap to stop the unwanted behavior.
3. Use a firm tone of voice to indicate that this is totally inappropriate. Firm does not mean yelling like your head is going to explode. It just means firm as in "I mean business".
4. Never run at your dog and try to stop them. Your dog will want to run away and try to hide.
5. Say "Outside, potty outside."
6. Keep your body posture relaxed and do not stare down your dog. This could make your pup run or even drop and pee submissively. Neither is a great scenario and can be much worse to clean up after.
7. Take your dog directly to his potty spot, and be sure to clean the spot with the appropriate cleaning product to prevent recurrence.

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# Potty Training Signals – The Bell Method

A key potty training challenge is establishing an unmistakable way for your dog to tell you that it's time to go outside. The signal needs to be obvious. One signalling method that is easily taught and successful uses a bell.



## Equipment

1. A bell that can hang on your doorknob. This needs to hang down to your dog's level, but can be any size or style or bell. Large jingle bells are easy to come by during the holiday season.
2. Plenty of soft treats. If you use a hard treat it slows down training time as you have to wait for your dog to chew. The faster the repetitions the quicker they learn.

# Training Process

1. Teach your dog [the “touch” command](#).
2. Teach your dog to “touch” the bell.
  - To start, it may be best to tape the bell so that it does not ring. Ringing may frighten your dog. Use the “touch” command until your dog is touching the bell reliably.
  - Remove the tape from the bell and say, “Touch.” When your pup touches it, say “good touch,” and reward the behavior. Make a big deal out of this, and give lots of treats and praise.
  - Hang the bell on the door used most often to go outside to potty, and have your dog touch the bell a couple of times to be sure that he is comfortable with the sound.
  - Once the dog touches the bell reliably, add a new word. Point at the bell and say, “Outside.”
  - When your pup rings the bell then you respond with “Good outside,” open the door and go out. Repeat this step a few more times. Remember that you want to let your dog know that he has achieved something incredible. So lots of praise and rewards.
  - Every time you take your dog outside to potty, go to the door say, “Outside, Potty”. Once your dog rings the bell, reward him and take him to his potty spot. In no time your dog will understand that if he needs to go out, he just needs to ring the bell.

Of course, it is very important that you respond when your dog rings the potty bell. If you don't, your dog will not reliably use this signalling method.

This method is simple and painless! Now you can get on with the behaviors that are more fun. Your dog now knows the words

“touch”, “outside”, “potty”, “play” and “good”.

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