

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:

- [The Find. Love. Train. Potty Training Guide](#)
 - [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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Crate Training Basics

Crate training is one of the most misunderstood subjects in your pup/dog's world. Folks may think that a crate is a horrible punishment – a jail used to confine your dog when he has been bad. In reality, dogs, like their wolf ancestors, are den animals. They feel secure



and cozy in their dens, and the crate acts as a safe harbor in times of stress when dogs just need a break from us and all the frantic activity that seem to follow their humans.

Crates also serve a practical purpose of keeping your dog safe from harm when you are unable to be with them, and they can be an invaluable aid during potty training.

FAIRNESS IN ALL THINGS

Although the crate is a wonderful training tool, when used incorrectly it can actually be detrimental to your pet.

1. If you are at work all day and then come home and only let your dog out for short periods of time then the den becomes a prison.
2. If you keep your dog in a crate all the time and do not let it exercise and interact with the family, it will soon become frustrated. This can lead to destructive behaviors.
3. It is never fair to leave a puppy or dog in its crate past the amount of time that he can control his bladder.

CHOOSING THE PROPER DEN

Selecting the right crate for your pet is critical to your success. Too small and your pet will feel trapped and uncomfortable; too big and it loses its den-like appeal. Here are some basic tips to help you pick a crate:

1. The crate should be large enough for the dog to sit, stand, stretch out and turn around comfortably.
2. Choose a crate that can accommodate the puppy when he is full grown. (So you don't have to buy another crate every few months.) While your puppy is small, create a barrier within the crate to make it temporarily smaller. Some wire and plastic crates come with a divider, but it is also easy to create a makeshift divider by blocking excess space with a box or bedding.
3. Keep in mind that if a puppy has enough room to go to the back of the crate to potty then return to the front to eat and sleep, he will have accidents in his crate. The space should be limited.

PROPER INTRODUCTION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

Most dog crate nightmare stories are caused by taking a new dog and just putting him into the crate without a proper introduction. Making the crate a place the dog wants to go – rather than stuffing the dog into its new home and closing the door – is critical.

This is an “Any behavior that is rewarded will be repeated moment.” So use this to your advantage.

1. Place your crate in an area where your family will be spending a lot of time.
2. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Never use a dog pillow until you are sure that it will not become a chew toy. If your dog eats its bed, you may have an emergency vet visit in your future!
3. Have lots of toys and soft yummy treats on hand.
4. Sit about 2 feet from the crate and encourage the dog to approach. Say the dog's name, clap your hands, make kissing noises – whatever it takes to get the dog's attention.
5. Do not use the word “come” unless you are sure that the dog will respond to it. We want praise the dog for approaching the crate not for “coming”. If your pet does not come toward you when called, you can try to lure him in with treats, praising every forward advance.
6. When your dog is comfortable being in close proximity to the crate, place the treat on the floor next to the crate. Every time your dog gets near the treats praise or click. Do not wait for him to take the treat.
7. The next step is to get your dog comfortable with touching the crate. Start by placing a treat that touches the crate.
8. Make a trail of treats to the open door. Praise every forward motion as your dog is scarfing down the goodies.

9. Next, toss a few goodies in the crate door. Your dog should follow them in even if they are a bit shy; just give it time. Do not force the behavior, and praise every forward movement.
10. Now that your dog is familiar with the crate, let's make going in a lot of fun! Start a game with your dog's favorite toy by tossing the toy into the crate. You can add treats, if necessary. Continue this process until your pup is running happily in and out of the crate.
11. After your dog has mastered going in and out of his crate, you can add a word/command. Some people use "crate" or "kennel". It does not matter what you call it but add a word to all behaviors. It will help you communicate with your friend.

Whew, this has been a lot of work. This is probably a good time to take a break and do something else for a few minutes. When you are ready to resume their lessons go back a few steps and toss a favorite toy or treats into their crate. Make a fun game out of this, as what puppy can resist playing a game with you. You're just reinforcing your earlier lesson.

The next hurdle is teaching your dog to be comfortable in the crate with the door closed.

1. Once your dog is running in and out of the crate reliably, toss in a cookie and a great chew toy.
2. Close the crate door and wait about 30 seconds. Open the door and reward your pup.
3. Never open the door while your dog is whining or trying to get out as he learns very quickly to howl longer and louder until you give in and open the door. If your dog exhibits this behavior and is not stopping then actually get up and leave the room until the temper tantrum subsides. Always wait until your puppy is quiet before you open the door.
4. After you let your dog out, play for a moment letting him start running in and out of the crate again. Close

the door again and wait two minutes to open it.

5. Repeat this increasing the time to five minutes with you sitting beside the crate.

Depending on your pup and the amount of time this has taken you to get the five minutes quiet in their den, it might be beneficial to take another break.

1. When you begin the exercise again just repeat the above procedure but this time after closing the door leave the room for a couple of minutes. Be sure that you are out of sight.
2. Wait to be sure that your pup is quiet and return and release them.
3. Do this on and off during the day increasing the time your little buddy is left alone in small increments.

HELPFUL TIPS

1. If your dog starts to whine and cry to be let out you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving him in the crate for a shorter time period.
2. Do not release your dog from the crate until he is quiet. Dogs learn very quickly, and they will know that tantrums work and are the best way to get you to open the door.
3. Have high value chew toys to use just at crate time. A frozen stuffed kong can keep your pup happy for a very long time.
4. Keep the crate door open when your dog isn't in it. Your dog may use this a space to rest or recuperate during the day.
5. Implement a 2-foot-rule so that when your dog goes into the crate no one is allowed to go within two feet. This is a courtesy to your dog.
6. Reduce liquid intake before long periods of crate confinement. A puppy that is healthy can be taken off

water about an hour before bedtime to reduce the likelihood of needing to go in the middle of the night, but if you feel that your dog may need water during the night, you can put ice cubes in a dish to regulate the amount of fluid intake.

7. Feed your dog in it's crate. This makes the crate a very desirable space.
 8. If you leave your dog in a crate when you are away from home, it helps to continue to crate him for short periods of time when you are home. This prevents them from associating the crate with being left alone.
 9. It may be useful to crate your dog ten to fifteen minutes before leaving the house. This prevents separation anxiety behavior in the crate because the dog will not equate being put in the crate to leaving him alone.
 10. Do not make a big deal out of coming home or leaving the house as this will increase the possibility of separation anxiety.
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Clicker Training Basics

Many dog trainers recommend the use of a "clicker" to improve communication between you and your dog. Until your dog learns a particular command, words mean nothing! Teach the behavior, then teach the command... Dogs learn quickly that the clicker sound means "good!".

When you use force to achieve a behavior, you are doing all the thinking for your dog. Your dog will learn to avoid the correction rather than figure out on his own what you want.

WHAT IS A CLICKER?

A clicker is a small gadget that easily makes a distinct and consistent noise. Your dog learns that this particular noise has a meaning – “good dog!”. There are three basic clicker types, and which one you choose is more a matter of personal preference and budget. They all work the same.

1. [The Box clicker](#): This is the most common clicker and can be found at any pet shop. The cost is under \$4.00. (You can often find promotional box clickers for around \$1.00.)
2. [Star Mark clicker](#): This clicker’s shape and size make it a very user friendly model. The cost is under \$6.00.
3. [Quiet Clicker](#): This clicker is best used for dogs that are sensitive to noise. They have adjustable volume settings and can adapt to your dog’s needs.

CLICKER TRAINING BASICS

No matter what trick or behavior you are trying to teach your dog, the clicker can help. Every time you click, you “mark” a behavior. The click tells your pet “YES, you have done the right thing.” Research also indicates that the click sound activates your dog’s mind and helps your pet learn to think and to focus.

Your goal is to click immediately when your dog does the desired action or behavior. Timing is critical – you only have 1.5 seconds to let your dog know that he has achieved the behavior that you wanted.

Here’s a simple clicker training example:

1. Lure your dog into “sit” using a yummy treat.
2. When he sits, click. Your dog might stand immediately after the click. This is normal. When you clicked, you told him that he did the right thing and is finished with the behavior.
3. Give you dog a treat after every click. If you make a mistake and click at the wrong time you must give your

dog a treat anyway. It is not your dog's mistake and it will only confuse him if he is not rewarded.

Your dog will quickly learn when he hears a click, good things happen. All clicker training follows the same pattern.

NOTE: Never click to get your dog's attention. The clicker should only be used to mark a behavior. If you click indiscriminately, you will confuse your pet.

Some dogs may find it difficult to learn new tricks and behaviors. Adding a "jackpot" reward can supplement clicks and treats and help your pet better recognize success.

1. When your dog accomplishes the desired behavior, click, say "jackpot" enthusiastically and give multiple treats and praise. This will let your dog know that he has done something really special and that you are really pleased, so he will be more likely to offer the behavior again.
2. Click only once and never give extra clicks. Only give your dog extra rewards and praise.

Beyond the basics

Your clicker is very handy for advanced training, as well. Using the techniques below, you can teach your dog all sorts of tricks!

Lengthening a behavior – hold that position!

After your dog learns a trick or behavior, you may want him to "hold" the position or to wait for further commands. This is called "lengthening the behavior" and it's pretty simple.

1. Give your dog a command, and count to three before clicking and treating.
2. Repeat this process, but count to five before clicking.
3. Wait longer and longer periods between clicks, and your dog will learn very quickly to hold his position

until you click. Like magic, your dog will hold positions longer with very little effort.

BTW, you'll want to count to yourself because speaking aloud will distract your dog!

Luring – coax your dog into the desired position or behavior

The simplest way to begin using the clicker is to lure your dog and then click as soon as you achieve the behavior that you want. To lure your dog use a treat and lead your dog into the correct position. Do not speak to your dog during this phase of training.

For example, to achieve a sit place a treat in the palm of your hand. Hold the treat under your thumb.

1. Raise your hand slowly over your dog's head and move it towards his tail. Your dog should raise his head following the treat, and his rear will go to the ground. Gravity works.
2. Click immediately then treat. Try to get a quick succession of lure, click, treat. At this point you will be teaching a hand signal as you lure your dog.

Luring is based on the show-don't-tell training principle. Your dog must learn a behavior before he learns the command.

Shaping – teach your dog in smaller increments

Shaping consists of taking baby steps towards a behavior. You can click for voluntary (or accidental) movements towards your goal.

1. You may coax or lure your dog into a movement or position, but do not force the behavior. Let the dog discover how to perform the behavior on it's own.
2. Don't wait for the whole picture of the perfect

behavior. Click and treat for small movements in the right direction. It's like playing hot and cold.

Example: You are luring your dog into the down position. Your pet will only look down toward his chest following the treat but will not complete the down. So, let's build on the little bit of forward progress your dog is making.

1. When your dog looks down, click and treat and repeating the exercise waiting for your dog to move closer to the down position.
2. For every little movement that takes him closer to the ground you will click and treat.
3. When he achieves the down position, click, treat and jackpot.

Chaining – joining multiple behaviors together into one trick

Chaining is a method that will help you achieve difficult or complex behaviors. It consists of combining small skills to teach a more complex maneuver.

A simple example is teaching your dog the old standby “play dead” trick.

1. Teach your roll over using BANG! as a cue.
2. Teach your dog to lay his head flat on the floor and to stay still playing dead.
3. Teach him to him to stand up on his back legs or sit up.

After your dog knows all of his new tricks, combine them into “Stick em up!”

- Start with him standing on his back legs or sitting up on his hind legs, then use bang to get your dog to drop to the ground.
- Finish it with playing dead and have your dog fall on

his side for a dramatic death.

There are many ways to use your clicker to it's full advantage. All it takes is a bit of effort and creativity and you can achieve anything with your dog.

Capturing – reward and name a behavior that your dogs does on his own

Capturing is a unique and fun way to teach your pet new behaviors. It gives you the opportunity to take cute behaviors that your dog does naturally and turn them into a trick.

A simple example: Say that your dog lays down and places his paws over his nose.

1. While sitting around with your pet wait for him to place his paw on his nose and click and treat. If you do this often enough he will get it.
2. Add a word like "shy" as a command, and after he learns to respond to the word ask him "Are you shy?" he will then do his trick. How easy is that?

Another use for capturing is it gives you a way to teach your pet behaviors that he is having problems with. For example, if your dog is challenged by the "down" command:

1. Have your dog on a leash, and stand on it so your hands are free. Don't give your dog a lot of room to maneuver.
2. Signal for a down. Then wait. It may take a while but with this method patience is a virtue.
3. Do not say the word, down repeatedly. Let him think about what he should do.
4. When your dog downs click and jackpot.
5. Start again. Do not give up. Wait for it. It will happen.

Keep practice sessions short. Much more is learned in three sessions of five or ten minutes each than in an hour of boring repetitions. You can get dramatic results, and teach your dog

many new things, by fitting a few clicks a day here and there into your normal routine.

The “Wait” Command

Wait is a very important behavior. It tells your dog that he must stay in one spot momentarily and that you will tell him when it is time to move on. In the lesson below, we use this to teach proper door behavior but you will find it has many everyday uses.

The training technique below uses the [clicker training method](#). If you choose not to use a clicker you can replace it with the word yes or good, but clicker training may help activate your dogs mind and help them understand a behavior quicker.

STEP BY STEP

1. Use an inside door to begin as this will prevent your dog from accidentally running out into the street.
2. Place your dog on a six foot leash to prevent running through the door. If necessary you can step on the leash to keep your dog from bolting.
3. Step up to the door, and tell Sparky to. “Sit.” (Leave about 4 ft of space between your dog and the door.)
4. Tell Sparky to “ WAIT”, using a circular motion with your hand.
5. Open the door just an inch. Wait a second and close the door. If Sparky does not move toward the door click and treat.

6. Again tell Sparky to sit and wait using your hand signal. Open the door about 2 inches. Close the door. If he does not move from his spot click and treat.
7. Continue this pattern opening the door a bit more each time until you can open it all the way.
8. Close the door again. Tell Sparky to sit and wait using your hand signal. Open the door all the way. Step through the door. Your dog should not follow you. Step back inside. Close the door. Click, treat and praise the behavior.

Success! This would be a good time to jackpot your puppy. Tell Sparky to sit and wait using your hand signal. Open the door and step out then call him so that he will know that he is now allowed to step through the door. When he comes running to you click and treat and jackpot again.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. Remember a jackpot does not mean more clicks it just means the pup gets more treats.
2. If your dog breaks his wait at any time during the exercise make a quick correction noise, step in front of him to stop any forward motion and close the door. Go back a few steps and only open the door a small amount. Repeat the procedures above until Buster sits patiently and waits to be called.
3. Leaders lead and the pack follows. You must always go first out the door as this tells your pet that you are a responsible leader. You can also have him wait while you put his leash on him or want him to stay in one spot for a moment. Use this when going through doors inside your house as it will teach Buster not to charge a door while someone is trying to walk through it.
4. This is not a stay command. Stay is long term and position specific. What this means, is if I say, BUSTER, SIT, STAY", he must remain in a sitting position until I

release him. If I tell him down, stay he must remain in place in a down position until I release him. With the command wait I do not care if he sits, downs are stands as long as he stays where I told him to until I tell him to follow me.

The “Touch” command

The “touch” command is you and your dog’s ticket to a world of new tricks and talents. Once your dog understands “touch” you can teach him to close cabinets, fetch items and perform other “chores”. And it is a remarkably easy command to learn!



EQUIPMENT NEEDED

1. 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.
2. A clicker, if you use one.

Training Process

1. Sit in a quiet place with your dog. Get down on his level.
2. Hold out your hand with no treat in it. When your dog sniffs or touches your hand, immediately mark the behavior by saying, “Good,” and/or clicking the exact moment that he sniffs or makes any form of contact with your hand.

3. Use your I-am-so-happy-you-did-that voice, and treat immediately. Be sure to give the praise and/or click before you treat.
4. Hold out your hand again. When your pup touches you repeat the step above.
5. After your dog is touching your hand reliably, add the word "Touch". Don't use the word until your dog has thought about what you want and is touching your hand every time you present it. It is much better to show the dog the action before you give a word that corresponds to the action.

Once your dog understands the word "touch", you can start "touching" different items. It is easy to start with something simple like a post-it note or a note card. Hold up the item and ask your dog to "touch".

1. Your dog may be a bit confused, but be patient. Only use the word once and wait for your pup to figure it out. If you repeat the word again and again you are only confusing the issue.
2. When your dog touches the card say "Good Touch." and/or click the behavior. Repeat the process until your pup responds every time.
3. Repeat this process with different items to teach your dog that "touch" means to touch any item that you point to or hold up with his nose.

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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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.

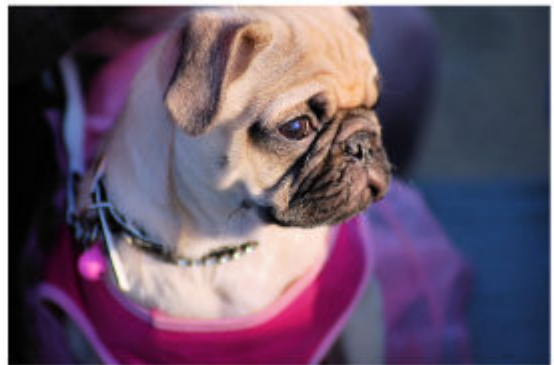
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Potty Behavior Basics

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 - © Donnelly | 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](#)
 - [Potty Training – Step by Step](#)
 - [Accidents happen...](#)
 - [Potty Training Signals – The Bell Method](#)
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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



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 your 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.

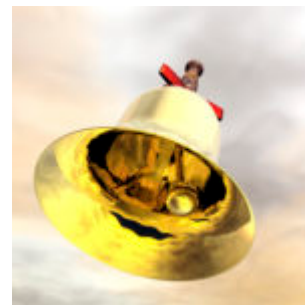
3. Use a firm tone of voice to indicate that this is totally inappropriate. Firm does not mean yelling like your head is going to explode. It just means firm as in “I mean business”.
4. Never run at your dog and try to stop them. Your dog will want to run away and try to hide.
5. Say “Outside, potty 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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