

HOW TO:

POTTY
TRAIN
YOUR
PUPPY

BY DENAE GEMMRIG

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Denae has created thousands of happy families in her 7 year career.

She is highly skilled working with companion dogs, families, puppies, blind or disabled handlers/dogs, fear and socialization cases, obedience and therapy work.

She has been certified by The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers, is a former member of the Association for Professional Dog Trainers and an evaluator for The American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Program.

Denae Gemmrig
Phoenix, Arizona
www.crazydaisydogtraining.com

PROLOGUE

Potty training may likely be the very beginning of your journey with your puppy. All training, including potty training, if taught well, will create trust and strengthen the bond you have with your dog. Consequently, this makes it important to know what you are doing and along the way why not make it a positive experience for you and your dog?

Potty training can set the tone for the relationship you build with your dog. Being positive, patient and consistent with your dog from the start will encourage him/her to view training as a happy experience.

Through this process, you will learn to clearly communicate with your dog. While the process can sometimes be frustrating, this guide will make the experience better and you'll achieve results more quickly.

This potty training book is for dogs of all ages and sizes. The book covers common potty training questions, methods and tools. For additional questions please reach out to the author.

1.

INTRODUCTION

How do you know when your puppy is house trained? If your puppy has been accident free for about 6 weeks and is over 4 months of age you can rest assured that your puppy is getting the hang of potty training. At this stage you can offer your puppy more freedom inside the house. A perfect week or two is more likely the result of proper supervision rather than understanding. Please resist the urge to test your dog too early.

HOW LONG CAN A PUPPY HOLD THEIR BLADDER?

AGE IN MONTHS + 1 =
HOURS

Generally a puppy 2 months old can hold their bladder a maximum of 3 hours in the proper setting. This means a correct sized crate with no absorbent material and properly supervised when not confined. If the puppy is out and about in a larger area or has something absorbent in the crate it is more likely that accidents will occur. Keep in mind that puppies will first make it through the night before they can hold it longer during the day.

Adult dogs can control their bladder for the duration of a regular work day and can be crated for 6 to 8 hours a day, although this is not ideal.

With **small dogs**, parents may experience different challenges with potty training. Some possible causes:

- Unseen accidents due to smaller eliminations make it difficult to teach the behavior you want.
- Crate size too big for the small dog and a room too large can invite your small dog to eliminate inside.
- Uncomfortable in a large outside space could invite your dog to go inside so taking time to introduce your dog to the potty area is crucial.

Adjusting your schedule in the beginning so that your puppy gets the necessary bathroom breaks may be needed. These adjustments however are only temporary once your dog is potty trained.

2.

BASICS

Let's get started on potty training basics. **Preventing mistakes** is key to successfully potty training your puppy. With proper management and constant supervision, you'll have a well trained pup in no time. When you are able to supervise your puppy, it is important for your puppy to be with you and out of his confinement area. Supervising your puppy means having an eye on him or her at all times. Restrict your puppies access, with gates, shutting doors, or you can tether him to you to make the job easier. You'll be able to see the signs that your puppy needs to eliminate if you are supervising. When you see a sign immediately take your puppy out to the potty area. You can also set up potty training breaks throughout the day.

**PREVENTING MISTAKES IS
KEY TO POTTY TRAINING**

Next we will discuss how your dog signals a need to eliminate.

ALL PUPPIES COMMUNICATE THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE

The **signals** vary from dog to dog. With a little observation, you'll quickly learn how your puppy signals you.

- Squatting: at this point, it is too late. Options are to make a noise to get your puppy's attention and immediately take to the potty area. This interruption noise should not scare your puppy.
- Sniffing: most dogs sniff out the perfect spot before elimination.
- Circling: if you see your puppy circling, get her/him outside quickly! Circling is a sign of number two, usually.
- Wondering off: if your dog starts to wander off from where you are hanging out, playing, or sleeping, they may need to go.

Experience: I had a client's puppy that would bark, jump, and growl around the room before he had to

poop. Sometimes he would growl, like it was his pee pee dance. Remember every dog has different signals.

If you see your dog signaling to go to the bathroom, take your puppy out immediately. As you are learning your puppy signals set up a schedule throughout the day to take your puppy out. These times will vary from puppy to puppy, but here are some **general times** a dog will need to eliminate.

- Waking up
- Confinement
- Eating or drinking
- Chewing
- During or after play

At first, it is best to take your puppy to the potty area using the same route, same door, and in the same area each time. Set up a phrase before you take your puppy through the route to the potty area. For example, this phrase could be time to go potty or do your business. Say this command each time you take your puppy to the potty area. Your puppy will eventually understand this means we're going outside to eliminate.

Take your puppy out on leash to the appropriate spot. Then stand still and wait for your puppy to eliminate. Once your puppy is eliminating, you can verbally add your verbal cue. Remember to say the cue calmly as to not startle your puppy. When your puppy is done eliminating reward with a treat.

It is important to reward right after elimination is complete so your puppy will understand what the reward is for. When you reward your puppy after you are inside the

house you are rewarding for coming inside and not for elimination. This protocol will encourage your dog to eliminate in the potty area you designate, and with repetition your puppy can eliminate on verbal command.

After rewarding with food, you'll want to praise your puppy. Also, you'll want to get your puppy in the habit of eliminating as soon as they go outside and allowing for play time after he/she eliminates. Not the other way around.

Accidents will happen and punishing your dog for a potty accident can damage your relationship and setback your training. Do not punish your dog especially if you don't see the accident occur. Dogs learn the consequences of their actions with good timing. If there's a delay in **punishment**, your dog will not understand what triggered that consequence. Your puppy may understand that you are not happy, may present submissive body language like a look of guilt or even hide during elimination, but your puppy does not clearly put the pieces together. Think about when your supervision and management skills broke down and do better in the future.

Using punishment is how you can end up with a sneaky dog that you never see having an accident. This unfortunate situation occurs when your puppy is trying to do what he thinks you want, which is not eliminate in front of you. In this scenario, it can be difficult to reward the correct behaviors. Your response should be pretty much the same whether you catch your dog in the act or finding a surprise on the floor. Calmly clean up the mess and supervise your puppy closely next time. I'm sure you've heard the phrase practice makes perfect and this is also correct for puppies and adult dogs. If your puppy practices eliminating in areas you don't want it becomes more difficult to re-teach in the proper potty areas.

3.

POTTY TRAINING TOOLS

Next, you'll need to decide where your puppy will stay when you cannot watch him or her. In the previous chapter we discussed what to do when supervising your puppy now we will go over times when you are not around. Choose a safe area to keep your puppy. Either an area where they won't eliminate or in an area with a designated potty spot if you are going to be away for a while. One area will be the "hold it" area and this will teach your puppy some bladder control and will help you to be able to predict when he needs to go next.

There are many advantages to using a **crate** to train your puppy. A crate is a good area for your hold it space. When your puppy is in their crate, it is important to give them adequate potty breaks. If you are going to be away longer than your puppy can hold their bladder it is important to create a safe area with the ability to go to the bathroom.

This next section will go over choosing a den. If you must leave your puppy alone for a longer period of time, it is important to have a **long-term confinement** area with an approved elimination spot. This area should be set up

providing water, play, sleep, and elimination areas. It is recommended that the elimination area be away from the water, food, and door. Setting up your long-term confinement area like this will allow for a cleaner environment.

This long-term confinement area can be organized with an exercise pen to form a small enclosure or you can use a laundry room or spare bathroom. If you use a small room, be sure the floor is easy to clean and that the room is puppy proofed and safe. Another idea is to set up a small enclosed area just inside the doggie door allowing your dog access to a small outside area for elimination and the inside area for sleeping, water and play. This set up is not recommended for dogs that are barking, digging or displaying other unwanted behaviors or in environments that are not safe. The long-term management area does not encourage bladder control and a crate is still recommended for shorter confined times. Your puppy should sleep overnight in their crate or somewhere that encourages bladder control.



It is important to pick a **cleaner** that is specifically made for pet accidents. These cleaners contain enzymes that break down and neutralize the odor so your puppy doesn't repeatedly go in the same location. Double check your cleaner ingredients for enzymes. Other cleaners may take care of the odor but it may not break down the proteins in the feces or urine. In this example, your dog will continue to eliminate in that spot. Always follow the manufactures directions when cleaning up soiled areas. An area that is properly cleaned won't guarantee that your puppy will never eliminate there again however it will ensure that your puppy is not attracted to the same spot repeatedly based on the smell alone. Cleaners are different than repellents. Like many dog training tools, repellents are a hit or miss based on your puppy and their preferences.

Some puppies may choose a spot to eliminate other than the smell, perhaps it's convenience of location, an area they don't spend much time in or the texture of the surface. In this case, cleaning may not deter the puppy from soiling the area. Some options to deter your puppy from using an unwanted area for elimination could be playing in the area or having the puppy eat meals there. When your puppy associates a location with his den or food they are much less likely to eliminate there. Another solution could be to keep your puppy out of the area altogether until they are ready for a larger living space.

Previously, we discussed having your dog on leash when going to the potty area. This technique will encourage your dog to eliminate in the area you designate and not get distracted along the way. This technique is a sure way to get consistent potty training results. Another, potty training tool that may help is using an attractant. Again, this tool is a hit or miss for some dogs although when it is a hit it can encourage your dog to go to the bathroom in the place you find acceptable. When choosing an acceptable potty area

for your dog, it is best to choose an area where the family will not be playing or relaxing.

Some **indoor elimination options** are potty pads, litter boxes, artificial turf patches, or even real turf patch options. The indoor elimination options are great for people who live in high-rises, have unsafe outdoor areas, or have a varied schedule. Using newspaper is not an effective potty pad since it will be hard to pick up when wet. Potty pads have some distinct advantages unless your puppy likes to play and tear up the pad. Purchase a plastic frame if this happens. A potty pad can hold a large amount of liquid, are generally scented with attractant, and they are easy to dispose of.



Finally, let's discuss a **feeding schedule** for your puppy. A feeding schedule for your puppy helps with potty and obedience training and you'll be more likely to notice changes in your dog's appetite, you'll be able to use his kibble during training and have a better idea when your puppy will need to eliminate. Depending on the age and size of your puppy, choose a feeding schedule with two or three meals per day. Smaller and younger dogs will eat about three or four times a day. As an adult, your dog will eat two times a day. Once you've decided on a schedule

put the meal down for about 20 minutes and allow your dog to eat. Pick the bowl up after 20 minutes. If your puppy didn't eat, don't worry offer him food again during the next meal time. Your puppy will learn quickly to eat when food is presented. Always leave out clean fresh water unless you need to set up a water schedule recommended by your trainer or veterinarian.

Note: A dog is considered an adult at 1 year of age.



4.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Sometimes with potty training you may hit a bump in the road. If you are diligent about supervising your puppy, but they are still having regular accidents it would be best to consult your veterinarian. A veterinarian can rule out any medical issues that your dog may have. An **older dog** that begins to have accidents inside the home that was previously house trained needs to see the veterinarian as well. Below, are different suggestions other than medical that can affect your dogs house training progress.

- **Weather:** Changes in the seasons and weather can deter a puppy from going outside. Hot weather, snow, ice, and even rain can be unpleasant for your puppy. It is important to be sensitive to your dogs needs and it doesn't mean that regression is necessary. Make sure that your dogs elimination spot is protected from adverse weather, go out with your puppy, use a sweater or have an umbrella for both of you. Once in the potty spot, wait about 5 minutes then come back inside, wait about 5 to 10 minutes with supervision or in crate and then try again. Repeat until your dog relieves him or herself.

Experience: When I got my first puppy, I worked 4 days a week for 12 hours a day. There was no way my puppy could stay in a crate that long or hold it so I used the long-term confinement strategy. Once we were doing well with potty training, we learned the doggie door but only while I was home. When Dani became reliable with using the doggie door for elimination, I removed the constraints of the long term confinement while I was working. I left the pee pad where the confinement area was previously located just in case she needed it. As time went on and she was no longer using the inside pad I removed it completely. However, I did have to bring it out again during the extremely hot summer months. Eventually, we were able to fade the pad out again.

- Once your puppy starts to prefer going outside, that's when you'll **see signs** that your puppy needs to go. This could be sitting near the door. If your dog is quietly sitting near the door but you do not see them, this is when accidents can happen. An option could be to teach your dog to ring a bell to alert you to this need. If you would like more information on the bell option, please contact the author.
- Another common problem is giving your puppy **too much freedom too quickly**. Just because your puppy is good when he is in a penned area does not mean you can give your puppy the run of the house. It is important to slowly expand your puppies area as your dog is successful with potty training. Establishing boundaries by using baby gates or keeping doors closed until you can give him more space will set you up for success. With families with multi level houses take some extra time and introduce your puppy to the different levels. If your dog is

reliably potty trained on the first level, it's best not to assume your puppy understands upstairs and the extra distance between the areas and potty door.

- Even **small changes** can hurt your potty training efforts. A change in your schedule, guests coming over for a visit, loud noises or events can disrupt your dog's schedule. It is important to have patience during this process and provide more supervision and more chances to eliminate outside. You should see that your dog gets back into the swing of things pretty quickly.
- Some dogs have **always eliminated off leash** in their own yard. You may notice that your dog won't go potty on leash or on walks. In this case, verbally cue your dog to go potty may work. Other reasons a dog doesn't go on leash is a lack of confidence in the area or feeling uncomfortable. To overcome this, take your dog out in public more often and wait about 5 minutes then return inside for about 10 minutes and repeat. This process may take several days or weeks depending on your dog.
- Some dogs may never have an issue with eliminating without you there by their side. Other dogs, however, may **need you to step away more gradually**. As your puppy gets confident and reliable relieving themselves in the potty spot you designate, walk a little farther away from them each day.
- **Marking:** The motivation for marking comes about six months of age. Marking is different from incomplete house training. You'll be able to tell if your dog is marking because it will consist of smaller amounts and or a higher surface goal. Both male and female dogs may mark but non-neutered males tend to do this more frequently. Marking outside on walks or at a park isn't a problem, but when it starts happening inside we need to take action.

Inappropriate marking can be done out of anxiety. If marking is occurring because of anxiety, it will be important to prevent the situation or reduce your dog's overall stress. If you catch your dog marking inside the home you can discourage him with a sound or clap or redirect him to eliminate in the appropriate location. Some dogs may need to return to basic potty training techniques to overcome inside marking. Give your dog appropriate time outside to prevent marking or soiling inside.

- **Diapers:** Additionally, a diaper or belly band can help with freedom around the home when you are not able to supervise during the potty training phase. Diapers also make it easier to clean up accidents. Fade the diaper out once your puppy is more reliable with eliminating in their potty area.

- **Potty Pads:** Some puppies may tear up potty pads, if this is the case with your puppy try to stabilize the pad with a frame. Make sure the frame covers all the edges of the potty pad. If your puppy is missing the potty pad, try getting a larger potty pad area. Once your puppy is relieving themselves on the larger potty pad consistently, reduce size slowly.

- **Poop eating:** The consumption of feces is not uncommon in dogs. It is certainly a behavior you'll want to prevent. Take quick effective action by preventing your puppy from practicing the behavior. Pick up feces anytime your dog(s) eliminate. Prevention is usually sufficient to break the habit, however diet changes may be needed or purchasing a product that makes the feces unpleasant to taste. Please note products like this don't always work but you may need to try it to find out.

- **Schedule:** Every household is different. Every family is different and every dog is different. If your puppy is continuing to have accidents try this management method. From crate to potty area, use your verbal command here, then reward with praise and food right after elimination, then play and train for about an hour then place puppy in long term confinement area or crate until the next potty break is needed.
- **Document:** For some families documenting accidents inside the home helps to improve the regimen of potty training. Just like a food journal but this would be a potty training journal, write down the time, place, and type of the accident. This can be a great tool to find patterns. If you are aware of the pattern you can get your puppy out to their potty area quickly or more often during this time.

If you are consistent, supervise properly, are positive, and set up proper management techniques potty training should go smoothly for you and your new family member. Reach out to Denae Gemmrig, the trainer and author of this potty training guide for more information or support.