

Potty Training Tips from Signature Dog Training

THE ROUTINE

The key to potty training is consistency and routine. If the dog owner wants the puppy going outside to eliminate, then the puppy needs to be eliminating outside from the time the puppy comes home. If the dog owner wants to use potty pads or a doggie litter box, then that routine needs to start as soon as the puppy comes home. The owner should keep in mind that dogs are not like cats. Cats can have multiple litter boxes and use every single one of them. If dogs have more than one potty spot, then they get confused as to where to go and then they will never learn where the appropriate spot is. If the puppy does have an accident in the house, the owner should only use Nature's Miracle to clean it up. It is the only product that removes the odor enzyme from the carpet, carpet pad, tile or concrete that attracts the puppy back to eliminate in that spot again and it removes the stain. Regular carpet cleaners do not get the attractant out and neither does anything else on the market. The dog owner should expect this process to take anywhere from six to ten weeks for the puppy to understand.

THE CRATE

When the puppy comes home, the puppy needs to be sleeping in a crate. A wire crate is best because the plastic crate does not offer a full view all the way around. The Mid West Life Stages crate is best for this. The owner can purchase a crate that the puppy will fit into when it is an adult since it comes with a divider panel. The owner should set up the panel so that the puppy only has enough room to circle to change its sleeping position. As the dog grows, the owner can push the panel back. The reason for this is because it is against a dog's natural instinct to eliminate where they are laying. If the area is too big, then the puppy will walk to one side of the crate and eliminate and walk back to the other side. They may have a few accidents, but they catch on quickly. The plastic crates are better for transport since they offer the most protection from impacts. The puppy can have something soft to lay on. An old blanket is best because if the puppy gets sick on it or has an accident on it, it didn't cost any money if it is ruined and it can be washed and dried and reused. The puppy can have some quiet chew toys and a big stuffed animal to curl up with. If there are any tags or buttons or decorations on the stuffed animal, the owner should remove them. The stuffed animal should be bigger than the puppy to help re-create the litter mate feeling. Do not let the puppy have food or water in the crate. Contrary to what some dog owner believe, crating is not cruel. Whether a dog owner approves or not, crates are going to be a part of their dogs' lives. It is more fair to get them used to being in a crate, than for them to have extreme stomach upset from being in the crate for less than five minutes. When they are dropped off at the vet or the groomers, they are not roaming free. They are crated. If they are not exposed to crates early on in life, then they will be stressed out when the time comes. If they are exposed to crates early on in life, then they do not stress at all and are in fact happy to be in there.

THE POTTY SPOT

When the owner gets up in the morning, the owner should take the puppy to its potty spot and bring some treats. The owner should not let the puppy just roam the yard. The owner should give the potty command and give the puppy two minutes. Obviously, the puppy will not understand. If the puppy eliminates, the owner should give the puppy a treat in the

potty spot. If the owner waits until the puppy comes back into the house to reward it, the puppy will have forgotten why it is getting the treat. If the puppy has not urinated or defecated, then once the puppy is done, the owner should bring the dog back into the house. The owner cannot leave the puppy unattended in the house. The puppy can either go back into its crate or stay on leash with the owner. If the puppy is unattended, then that is an opportunity for the puppy to have an accident. If the owner does not catch the puppy, then the owner cannot discipline the puppy because if it has an accident, then the puppy will not remember. The owner should check on the puppy every 15 minutes until the puppy has done both. This routine may require that the owner rise earlier in the day than they normally do. The good news is that this is only temporary.

REGULATED MEAL SCHEDULE

The owner should have the puppy on a meal schedule. The owner should not put the food bowl down for any longer than thirty minutes. After that, the owner should pick up the bowl whether it is empty or not. If the owner lets the puppy free feed, then the owner does not know when the food went in and when it is coming out. This leads to accidents. If the owner is going to be leaving the house, the puppy should eat an hour and a half to two hours before the owner leaves. If the puppy eats anything, this will give the puppy time to digest and eliminate it in the proper potty spot. After the puppy eats, the owner should take the puppy to the potty spot every 15 minutes until the puppy has urinated and defecated. If the owner notices that the puppy eliminates 20 minutes, 30 minutes, or even 45 minutes after eating, then the owner doesn't have to keep taking the puppy out. The owner can just wait until that time is up and take the puppy out then.

WHEN NO ONE IS HOME

When no one is home the owner should restrict the puppy to a puppy proof area, whether it is an exercise pen or a puppy proof room. The puppy can have water in the area and some toys and a bed. The owner should not put food in this area.

THE EVENING ROUTINE

When the owner comes home, any messes in the puppy proof area should be cleaned up. The owner can offer the puppy dinner and afterwards, the owner should take the puppy to the potty spot every 15 minutes unless the owner has noticed how long it takes for the puppy to have to go to the bathroom. The owner should pull all food and water one hour before bed time and offer the puppy one more potty opportunity. The puppy should be put in the crate at bed time and the routine should start all over again the next day.