



The  
Social  
Pup



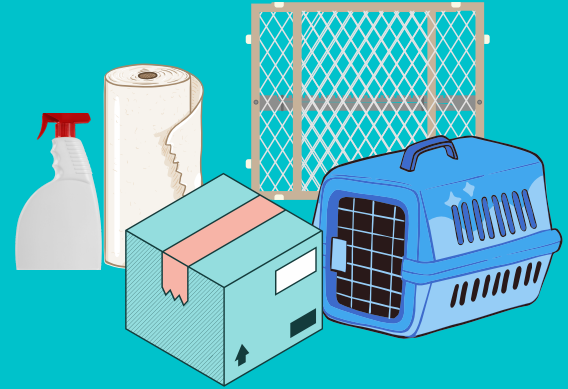
# Ultimate Guide to **PUPPY POTTY TRAINING**





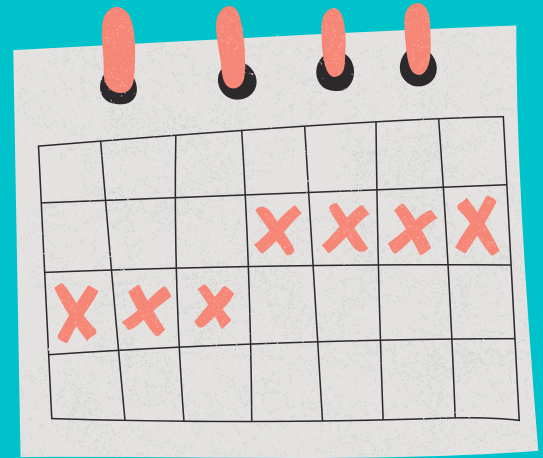
Puppy potty training can be a simple and relatively quick process, or it can be a months long, frustrating and stressful process. To get optimal results with your puppy, create a plan and stick to it. The following guide will help you create a plan that leads to success!

# 1. Gather needed supplies



# 2. Set aside time

Set aside 2 - 5 days when you first bring puppy home to do not much else except bond with your puppy and devote your full attention to the potty training schedule and routine. Both your puppy and everyone in your household will have to adjust to the new routine, and it's a lot like having a newborn baby in the house!



# 3. Set up puppy safe spaces

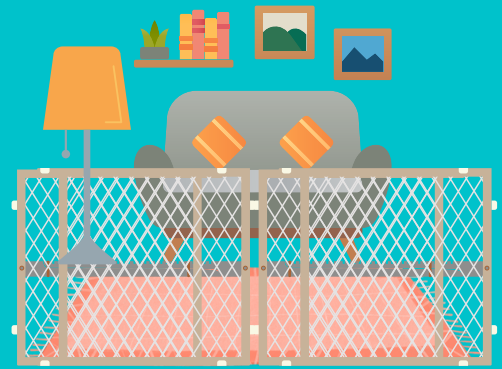
Set up short term and long term puppy safe areas, where your puppy can be when you cannot be directly supervising. See below for more information.





## 4. Block access to all carpets, rugs, and mats

Use baby gates to block access to all areas with carpet or large rugs, and pick up any smaller rugs or bath mats. Puppies tend to prefer absorbent materials for pottying, so even when you are directly supervising them accidents can happen, and cannot be adequately cleaned to remove the smell.



## 5. Teach puppy how to ask to go outside

On day one, begin teaching your puppy how to ask to go outside. This is a critical step that is often missed. See below for links to videos with step-by-step instructions.



## 6. Put your puppy on a consistent schedule

Put your puppy on a consistent schedule of food intake, potty breaks, playtime, enrichment and training, and rest, so he will know what to expect, and so you will know when puppy is likely to have to go potty.





## 7. Put containers of treats or kibble by the potty place

Have a container of treats right by the potty place, and reward your puppy every time she goes potty there. Praise your puppy, too, for going in the right place.



## 8. Use cue words to help your puppy learn the right actions

Use cue words "outside" for going outside, and "go potty" or "hurry up" for doing their business. When you are first teaching the cue words, you will say the word AS your puppy is doing the behavior. For "outside", that means saying the word AS you are walking towards the door to go out. For "go potty", that means AS your puppy is doing their business in the yard (save rewards for immediately after they are done).



Outside



Go  
potty

Do not repeat these cue words over and over, and be sure to use them in a happy voice!

## 9. Keep puppy on leash for potty breaks

In the beginning, keep puppy on leash when going out for potty breaks. This helps prevent puppy from wandering off and getting distracted with sticks or smells or other things of interest in the yard.



## 10. Create a cycle of 5 out, 15 in



When you are directly supervising your puppy and you know it's likely that she needs to go, do potty breaks on a 5 out, 15 in cycle. If your puppy needs to go, she will go within five minutes. If your puppy doesn't go, take her back in and keep her on leash and watch her like a hawk for 15 minutes before going out for another 5 minutes. Repeat this cycle until puppy goes outside, so that you can be sure to see the signs that she needs to go and get her back out quickly. A common scenario is puppy doesn't go outside, but then goes immediately after coming inside. You can avoid this situation by keeping them on this schedule when they are not in their safe spaces.



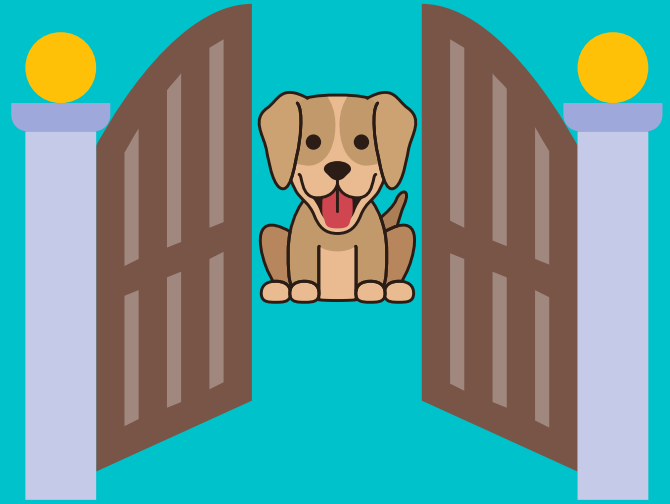


## **11. Use potty pads (optional but recommended)**

Use potty pads by the door to the outside, so your puppy will learn very early to go towards the door. Once they are going reliably on the pads by the door, you can start saying your cue words "outside", having your puppy hit a doorbell or paw at the door, and then opening the door to go out when you see your puppy going towards the pads. After practicing this way for a couple of days, leave your door open with the pads just on the outside, and reward puppy for going on the pads on the outside of the threshold. At that point you can remove the pads altogether from the inside of the door.

## 12. Gradually allow more freedom

When your puppy is reliably going potty outside and not using pads inside or having accidents inside for at least **two weeks**, you can begin allowing puppy more time outside his safe places. At first you will need to continue direct supervision. Continue to prevent access to carpeted areas for an additional two weeks. If accidents happen, reduce access again until he is two weeks free of accidents again.



## 13. Seek help if you need it

If you feel like you are following all these recommendations and frequent accidents are still happening, consult with a certified professional dog trainer and/or your veterinarian. These professionals will help you assess the execution of your plan, and can often identify what's going wrong.





# Potty training supplies



Playpen



Crate

AND



Potty pads



Potty patch

OR



# Potty training supplies



Baby gate(s)

Yaheetech Panel Heavy Duty Pet Playpen Do...

Sponsored

Brand: Pebble Smart

★★★★★ 512

Pebble Smart Doggie Doorbell

Amazon's Choice in Dog Doorbells by Pebble Smart



Doorbell

Potty bells

OR







## Puppy Safe Spaces: Short term space

Your puppy's short term safe space is a crate where ideally they will sleep at night, where they can take naps after playtime, and where they can stay for limited periods of time during the day. The crate should not be used for longer than is age appropriate during the day, because it is a smaller space, and can cause anxiety and stress if used for confinement for longer periods of time while puppy is awake. Your puppy should have enough room to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Since dogs don't want to eliminate in their immediate area, it helps puppies build bladder and bowel control. (See our crate times by age page below)

# Puppy Safe Spaces:

## Short term space



- Before going in the crate, puppies should have had all their needs met: food, water, potty, and playtime.
- If you have a wire crate, place an old towel or sheet over the top of the crate, to create a den like feeling to the space (leave the front of the crate open to provide adequate air flow). This helps puppy feel safe and calm.
- If you think your puppy will grow into a large or medium size dog, try to get a crate that comes with a divider panel. That way you can adjust the size of the space your puppy has as he grows, rather than having to upgrade to a larger crate.
- Since your puppy will not be in the crate for longer than 1 - 2 hours, she should not need water or food (or a bed during the day). All she really needs is a towel or blanket, and a durable, safe chew toy such as a Nylabone or a Kong smeared with a little bit of canned food or peanut butter. Beds or toys that have stuffing or squeakers will get chewed up and can be a choking hazard.
- Remove collars that have tags hanging, as they can get stuck in the side of the crate and the collar can get twisted.
- Most importantly, the crate should **NEVER** be used as a place for punishment, or to put your puppy when you can't or don't want to deal with them.







## Puppy Safe Spaces: Long term space

Your puppy's long term safe space is either a pen with sides high enough that your puppy cannot jump out, or a small room such as a bathroom or laundry room that has been puppy proofed to make sure they cannot get into, ingest, or chew up anything that could harm them. Be aware that a room is not as good an option as a pen, because puppies often chew on baseboards or cabinets. This space should have a water proof floor, such as tile, wood, vinyl, laminate, or linoleum, and no area rugs or bath mats. The space should have an area for the puppy to sleep, to drink water or eat food, to play, and to eliminate. Ideally you will have a second crate to put in this area, which will be the puppy's sleeping area.

This space should be used for puppy when you have to be gone for longer than 1 - 2 hours during the day, or for anytime you are home but cannot be directly supervising your puppy.



Sleeping  
area

Play  
area

Potty area

Water/food

**Puppy Safe Spaces:  
Long term space**

# Long term space: Go slow and keep it positive

- To create a potty area in this space, begin by completely covering the floor with potty pads. Try to put your puppy in the space right after eating or drinking, and watch closely for them to go potty. When they do, praise them and give a treat immediately after they go. On day two, remove one potty pad by the door of the pen. Continue to remove one pad each day, until only two pads remain on the side farthest from the door of the pen. This way, your puppy will not step in any messes when you are letting them out.
- Puppies do not like being separated from other members of their household, and if it is not introduced gradually and with lots of rewards, puppies will whine, bark, and sometimes howl when put in this safe space. You can help prevent this separation anxiety by feeding your puppy lots of food reward when they first go in the space, and limiting the amount of time they are in there, especially the first few days.



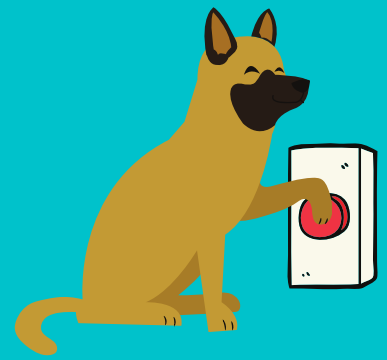
# Long term space: Troubleshooting and tips



- If your puppy vocalizes while in the pen, and you know he does not need to go potty or need water, food, etc., ignore the whining or barking until you get at least five seconds of silence, and then let puppy out.
- If your puppy is getting adequate mental and physical exercise and enrichment, vocalizing should be minimal. If your puppy seems stressed, very frustrated, or panicked in this space, he is not getting all his needs met outside the pen, or is spending too much time in there. This can cause long term harm to your puppy's emotional health.
- Like the crate, this space should not be used as a punishment or a place to put puppy when you just don't want to deal with him. If you do not have the bandwidth to provide for all of puppy's basic mental and physical needs, you should get help from a family member, friend, or dog sitter to help out with the care of the puppy.



# Teach your puppy how to ask to go outside



Your puppy will not know how to ask to go outside if you don't show her how. You can accomplish this by teaching your puppy to push a doorbell button or potty bells with her nose or paw, or by scratching at the door with her paw. Here are two videos showing how to teach these behaviors:

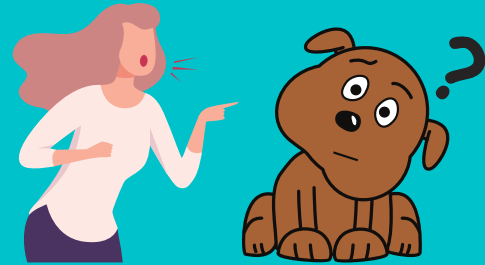
[Doggie doorbell training](#)

[Paw target \(paw at door to go outside\)](#)

# POTTY TRAINING DON'Ts



DON'T scold or punish puppy for having accidents in the house.



DON'T allow puppy access to your home unsupervised.

DON'T stay outside for potty breaks for longer than 5 minutes.

DON'T leave puppy in either of their safe spaces for too long.

DON'T believe your puppy "knows better". It's a myth that animals purposely go where they're not supposed to, out of "spite".



# POTTY TRAINING

## DOs



DO reward your puppy for going potty outside (or on potty pads) with treats and praise.

DO put your puppy in his long term safe space (pen) when you are home but cannot directly supervise.

DO put your puppy in her short term safe space (crate) to sleep at night and when you leave your home for a max of two hours.

DO supervise your puppy DIRECTLY when she is outside of her safe spaces. That means eyes and mind on her at all times, observing for signs that she needs to go.

# POTTY TRAINING

## DOs



DO keep your puppy on leash when he is outside his safe spaces, so he can't wander off and have accidents.

DO positively interrupt accidents that happen in front of you, by calmly walking over and picking up puppy and taking her straight to her potty spot. Say your cue word "outside" as you are carrying puppy outside.

(If you are using potty pads by the door)  
DO reward your puppy for going on the pads, and then gradually transfer the pads to the outside.



# POTTY TRAINING

## DOs



DO have a family member, friend, neighbor, or dog sitter let your puppy out for a potty and playtime break from their long term safe space if you have to be gone for longer than 4 hours at a stretch. Puppies that have to stay by themselves for long periods of time will become stressed and develop behavioral problems from extended isolation.

DO analyze what's going wrong with your plan if your puppy is having a lot of accidents.

DO get help from a canine professional that uses positive reinforcement methods if you are struggling with potty training.

# Daily crate time by age

8 - 10 weeks: 30 - 60 minutes

11 - 14 weeks: 1 - 3 hours

15 - 17 weeks: 3 - 4 hours

18+ weeks: up to 4 hours at a stretch,  
OR up to 6 hours total, with a 60  
minute potty and walk break after 3  
hours.





Once your puppy is age one year or older, you should begin to transition to allowing your dog to be loose in your home when you are gone, if they are potty trained and no longer chewing and have no separation anxiety. Start with very brief departures and see how they do (5 - 10 minutes). Gradually work your way up to longer times.



# Celebrate your success!





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