

House Breaking — A Few Guidelines

- The best way to house train a puppy is to prevent accidents, take him out MANY times a day: after eats, wakes up, has been playing for a while. In other words (and this is not an exaggeration) maybe 35 times a day.
- When you take him out (carry a pup initially if really small, especially if he has been in the crate for a while), take him to the same place, wherever you prefer that he go.
- Walk around with him, to get him sniffing and think about it, then stand still. When he realizes this isn't a hike, he'll get down to business.
- As he is going (in a gentle voice so you don't startle him), say "YES, good BUSY" or whatever word you choose to associate with relieving himself. If you do this religiously, you will reach a point where you can say "go busy" and he will.
- Do not take him directly back into the house or he will get the idea that he needs to hold it if he wants to stay outside. Play with him a bit and then go back inside.
- NEVER reprimand the puppy for accidents. The old "rub his face in it" advice just leaves your puppy thinking you've lost your marbles. The second he is done going, it's over as far as he is concerned. He has no memory or interest in it.
- You may say "no" pretty emphatically if you catch him in the act. Then pick him up and head for the great outdoors. If you are lucky enough that he decides to finish up outside, PRAISE enthusiastically.
- Any accidents in the house must be cleaned up thoroughly including the scent. All pet stores carry products for this. A good one is NATURE'S MIRACLE. Thoroughly soak up as much urine as you possibly can, and then SOAK the area with Nature's Miracle.
- One last reminder, if you take the pup out and he doesn't go even though you are certain that it must be "time," take him back in and cheerfully put him in the crate (remember the cookies) and leave him alone for a bit. Come back later and try again.
- At about 4 or 5 months old, just about the time you think it's done, the puppy is housebroken, it is not unusual to have a series of accidents. This just means you need to back up and watch more carefully. Any young dog (under 8-12 months) should not be loose in the house unless you are actively supervising him.

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Crate Training — the why and the how

Although the majority of dog owners now crate train their dogs, some still resist it as cruel — they view it as putting the dog in a cage like a zoo animal. The truth is, if we look honestly at our pups, we will note that they love to find a "den" — often that turns out to be under a couch (until they outgrow it) or under a coffee table, etc., etc.

They naturally feel safer when they are tucked back into a small space. If they are carefully introduced to a crate, they readily recognize it as a "den." If you attend a major dog event, you will see dogs snoozing stretched out on their backs in their crates in the middle of an enormous convention center or arena. Inside their crate, they feel safe. A crate trained dog is a secure and happy dog.

Modern crates are collapsible and easy to fold-up and transport. After a pup is grown and trained, you can even use a lightweight fabric crate which you can put over your shoulder like a collapsible beach chair.

Crates help with.....

- Housebreaking — a pup will not soil his crate if he can help it (bear in mind, young pups cannot hold it very long). Also, if you take a pup out to potty and he doesn't go, cheerfully put him in the crate when you come inside. Give him a cookie and let him chill. Pretty soon he'll remember he needs to go and let you know, and you can take him out again.
- Saving your "stuff" — your pup should never be wandering the house unsupervised. You wouldn't let your two-year-old "hang out" alone. A crated pup cannot eat the couch or tear down the door or ingest socks or underwear (leading to an expensive foreign body surgery).
- Travel — a crated pup cannot eat your mother-in-laws furniture or soil her rug. A crated pup cannot run out of a motel room. A crated pup cannot jump on the dashboard or in your face as you drive.
- Staying at the vet — if your pup needs to spend some time at the vet, the trauma is dramatically reduced if he is accustomed to staying in a crate.
- Disasters — shelters that allow dogs usually require that they stay in a crate.
- Recovery — after surgery of any kind, the vet often recommends "crate rest." This is no problem for a crate trained dog. It's a trauma for a dog who has never been introduced to a crate.
- TRAINING — you can practice "wait" every time the pup exits the crate (just gently close the door to push him back if he breaks the wait). If your pup becomes "possessed" (my son-in-law's description of their Golden Retriever puppy when he started "butt-dragging" around the room some call this the "zoomies"), just cheerfully run to the crate calling "cookie, cookie" and gently shut him in. Toss a few more cookies in and leave him alone till all those arousal hormones settle down. This also works when the pumped-up pup begins biting everything and everyone. There is no solution except time to settle down (while you go apply Neosporin and a band aid to your dripping hand).

Think about purchasing a piece of furniture, quality wood and make a lovely top for the crate. Keep it in the living room most people won't even notice the crate in it, just a handy and attractive table. Try just saying "kennel", throw some treats in it and close the door. Pretty soon all the family dogs will try to run into it at once! Of course, there is always a cookie jar handy on the top of the crate for easy access.