



AKC S.T.A.R. PUPPYSM

Socialization★Training★Activity★Responsibility

HOUSETRAINING YOUR PUPPY

Housetraining will be one of the most important skills your puppy will learn. There are some very simple tips that will help with this process.

- 1. Crate training.** By nature, dogs are very clean and they don't like to eliminate where they sleep or eat. The first step to housetraining your puppy is to crate train the puppy (see crate training lesson). If you choose to not use a crate, you'll want to have a way to confine the puppy to an area such as a small room or a section of a room. Baby gates across the doorway can be a good tool.
- 2. Timing.** Remember, timing is everything when it comes to housetraining. The key to predicting when your puppy will need to eliminate is having **very consistent feeding times**. You should feed a consistent diet because changes in food can affect your puppy's bowel habits. If you feed the same food at the same time each day, you can predict approximately when your puppy will have a bowel movement.
- 3. Scheduling.** Trips outside should be frequent and **the schedule for outside trips should be consistent**. It is commonly recommended that young puppies be taken outside to relieve themselves at least once an hour. If you have a work schedule that won't facilitate you taking your puppy out this often, understand that young puppies don't yet have control of their bladders and bowels and they may have accidents. They can't help this. Be patient when accidents happen. Quietly clean up the accident with cleaning products that will remove the smell.
- 4. Reinforcing desired behaviors.** Rewards are important. When you take your puppy outside, be sure to **reward the puppy for eliminating (urinating or defecating) outdoors**. A treat and lavish praise will increase the likelihood the puppy will continue to eliminate outside.
- 5. Providing exercise.** Activity plays a critical role in housetraining. Activity (such as running, playing, or walking on a leash) will increase your puppy's motility, meaning that exercise stimulates the bowels to move. A good walk in the morning or starting the day by playing with you in the yard will get your puppy off to a good start in the morning.

What Not To Do

Never punish your puppy for a housetraining accident. Rubbing a puppy's nose in urine or feces is abusive and will not help the training process. If you are having housetraining problems, your S.T.A.R. Puppy instructor can give you some advice. Your veterinarian can assist you with selecting the proper food and feeding schedule for your puppy.
