



PEOPLE 4 PETS

Ultimate Guide to **PUPPY POTTY TRAINING**

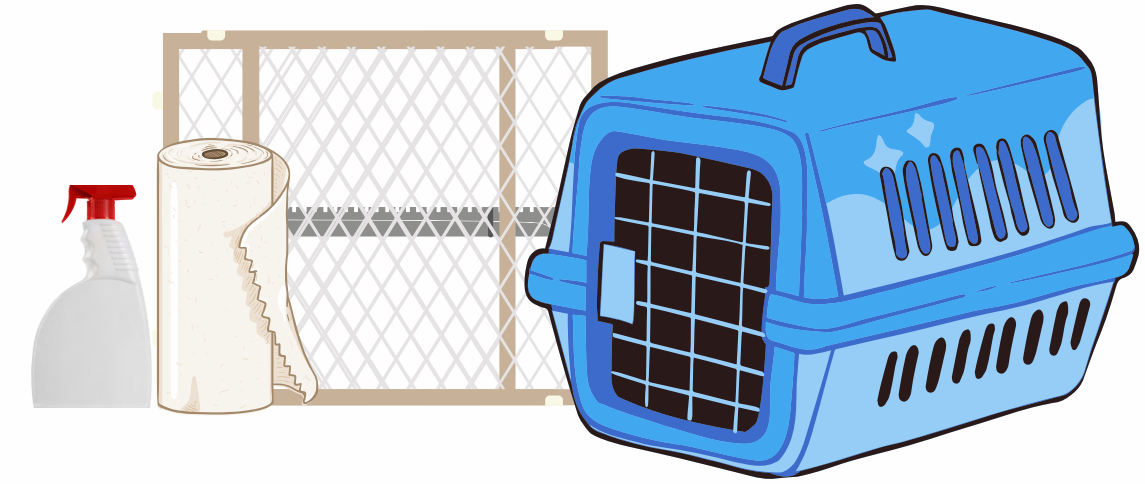


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Puppy potty training can be a simple and relatively quick process, or it can be a months long, frustrating and stressful process. To get optimal results with your puppy, create a plan and stick to it. The following guide will help you create a plan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

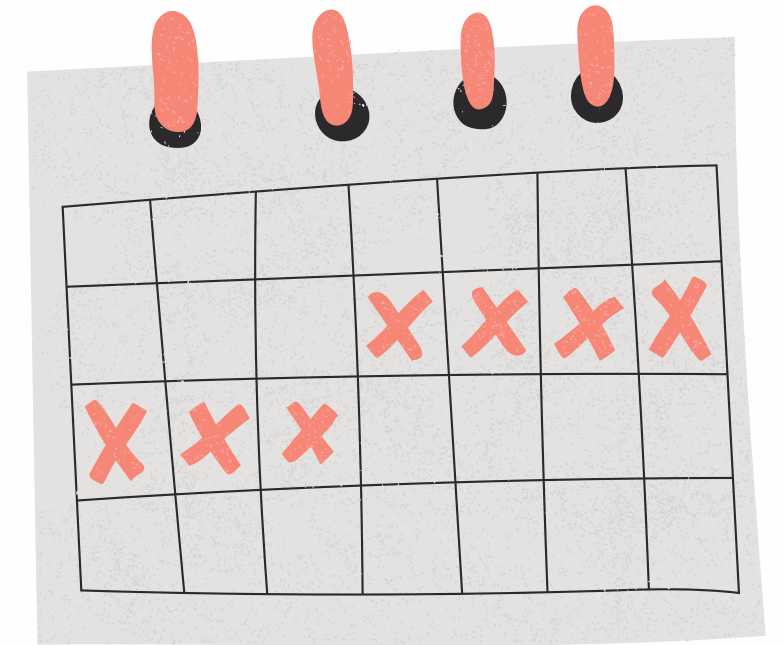


1. Gather needed supplies



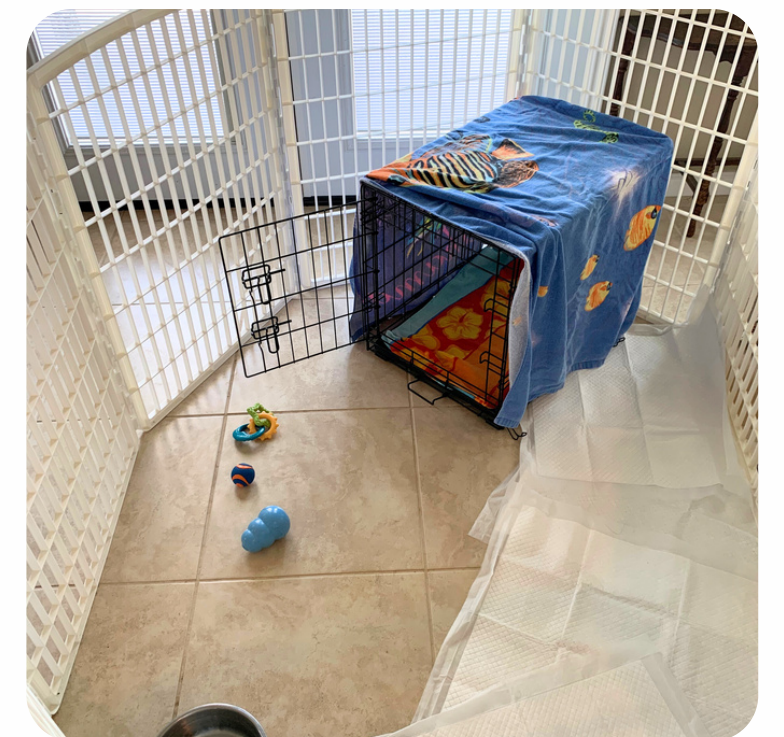
2. Set aside time

Set aside 2 - 5 days when you first bring puppy home to focus on bonding with your puppy and devoting your full attention to building a 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).

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 closely for 15 minutes before going out for another 5 minutes. Repeat this cycle, using a timer, 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 when 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 or a fake grass patch

Your puppy will need a place to potty indoors for the short term, unless you are home most of the time and can take puppy out often enough to prevent accidents. Confining a puppy to a crate for more than two hours max during the day can lead to mental and behavioral health problems. Therefore, you will need to provide a larger indoor space for times when you have to be gone longer, or for when you cannot directly supervise your puppy. This space will need an area where your puppy can relieve themselves.

As your puppy gets older, and can hold their bladder and bowels for longer, you can phase out the indoor potty area.



11. Use potty pads or a potty patch (continued)

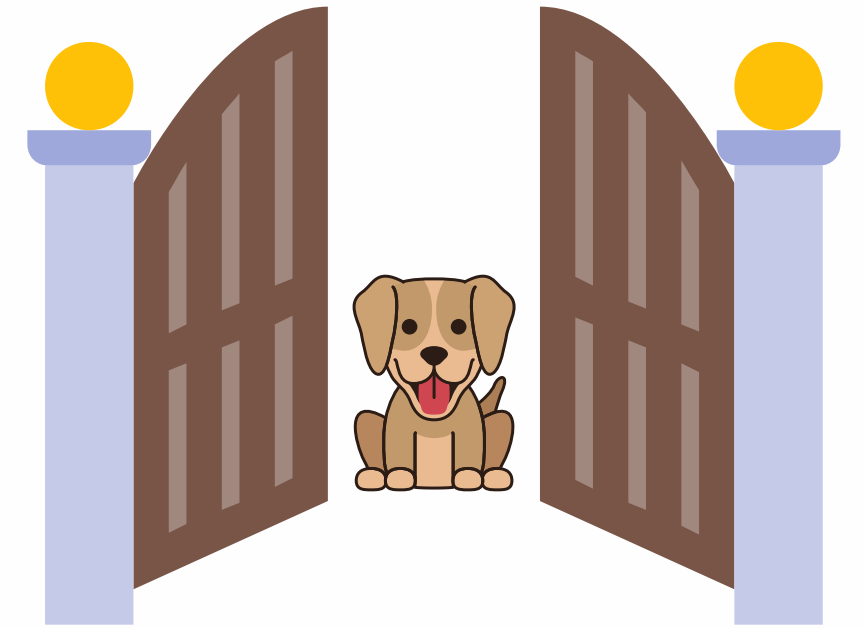
Another great way to use potty pads or a potty patch is to place them right by the door to the outdoor potty area. Once your puppy has learned to go potty on the pads, they will automatically learn to go towards the door. This also gives you a heads up that your puppy needs to go, and you can quickly open the door, say the cue words "outside", and run outside so your puppy will follow you. You can put pads down in the outdoor potty area as well, and then gradually fade out the pads by cutting them down into smaller sizes.

*****WARNING:** if you live in an apartment or condo, you should not walk your puppy in outdoor areas until they are fully vaccinated (around 16 weeks). Use an indoor potty patch exclusively until then.



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 who uses positive reinforcement methods and/or your veterinarian. These professionals will help you assess the execution of your plan, and identify what's going wrong.





Playpen



Crate

Potty Training Supplies



Potty Patch

AND/OR



Potty Pads



Baby Gate(s)

Potty Training Supplies

Sponsored

Brand: Pebble Smart ★★★★☆ 512

Pebble Smart Doggie Doorbell

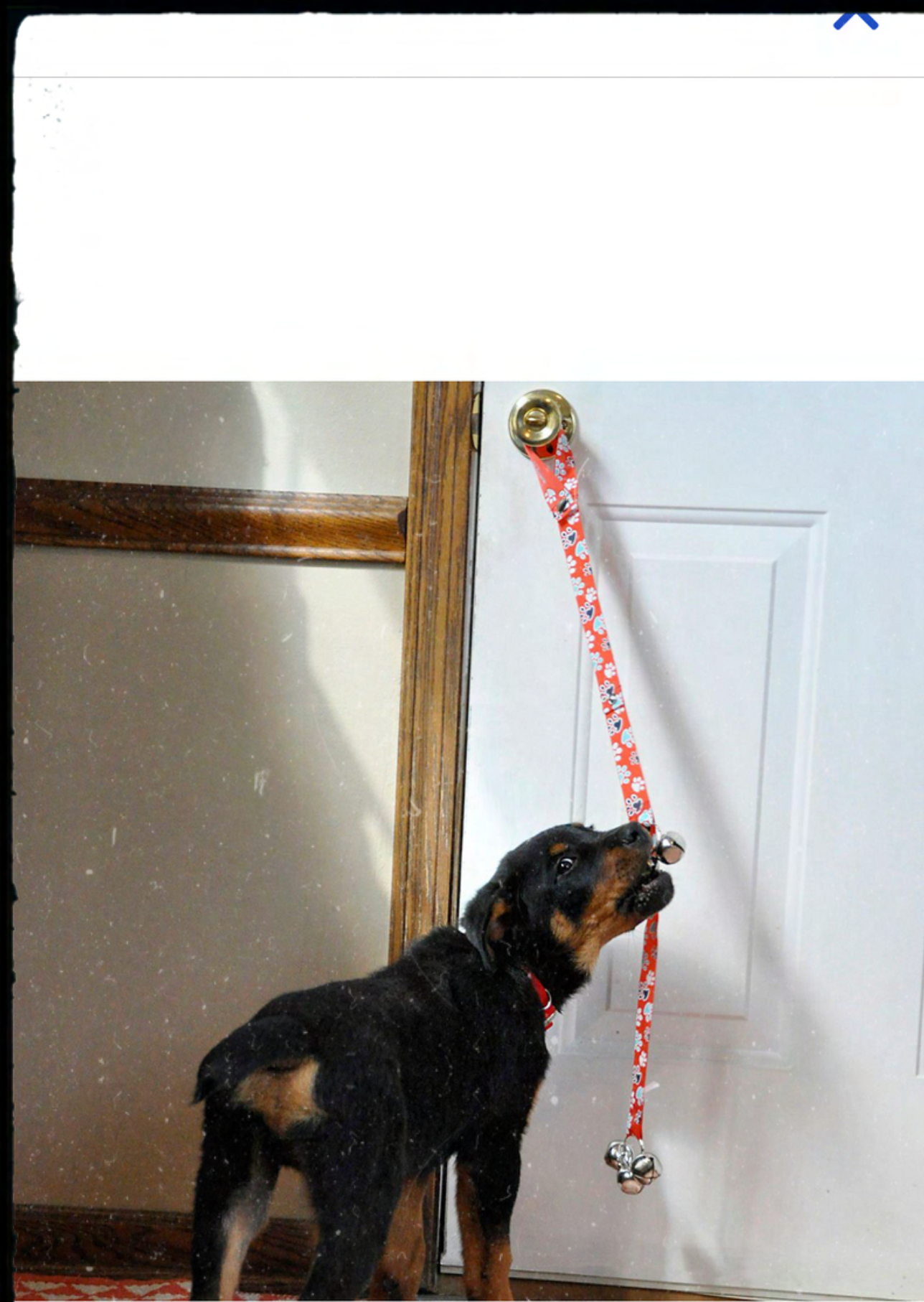
Amazon's Choice in Dog Doorbells by Pebble Smart



Color: Blue Accent

Doggie Doorbell

The image shows a Pebble Smart Doggie Doorbell product listing. It features a yellow circular bell and a white rectangular device with a dog's face logo. The text includes the brand name, product name, a star rating, and the Amazon's Choice badge.



OR Potty Bells

Puppy Safe Spaces: Short Term Space

Your puppy's short term safe space is a crate where 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 too much. Your puppy should have enough room to stand up, turn around, and sleep fully stretched out on their side. 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 for more information).



Short Term Space: Best Practices



- 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 and sides, to create a feeling of safety and security (leave the front of the crate open to provide adequate air flow).
- If you think your puppy will grow into a large or medium size dog, 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 be primarily sleeping in the crate, 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 Kong with some canned food or peanut butter (fresh or frozen). Beds or toys that have stuffing or squeakers will get chewed up and can be a choking hazard.
- Remove harnesses and collars that have hanging tags, 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 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, gated 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, 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 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

Long Term Space

Long Term Space: Best Practices



- To create a potty area in this space, begin by completely covering the floor with potty pads. When your puppy goes potty, 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.
- The best time to put your puppy in this space is immediately after an active playtime session, when your puppy is more likely to feel like napping.
- In the first few days of introducing this space, stay in the same room while your puppy is in the pen. Reward silence frequently with food (you can even feed your puppy their meals this way, a few pieces at a time). If your puppy starts to whine or bark, ignore and wait for at least a few seconds of silence before letting them out. This way they will learn that silence gets them what they want.
- Puppies should not be home alone for more than 30 minutes to an hour, even if they have this kind of larger space. Social isolation causes extreme distress and serious behavior problems, which can be hard to resolve. As your puppy grows into adulthood, the amount of time at home alone can be gradually increased, but even adult dogs should not be home alone all day without someone to check in on them.

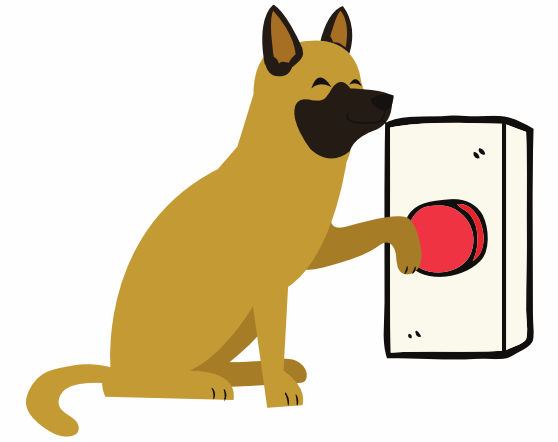
Long Term Space: Troubleshooting



- If your puppy is getting adequate mental and physical exercise and enrichment, vocalizing should be minimal. If your puppy seems stressed, 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, as well as serious behavior problems that can be difficult to resolve.
- 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 is a video showing how to teach a dog to use the Pebble Smart Doggie Doorbell, but you can use the same steps for a different doorbell, or for potty bells:

[Doggie Doorbell Training](#)

POTTY TRAINING DON'Ts



- DON'T scold or punish puppy for having accidents in the house. Animals have potty accidents inside the home because they have imprinted on that area as an acceptable place to eliminate. Sometimes changing their perception takes time, but reacting angrily will not help them learn any faster and can actually make it worse.
- 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 common animal behavior myths, such as that animals sometimes go potty inside the house or in certain areas when they are "mad" and trying to get revenge.

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, or when you have to run an errand.
- DO put your puppy in her short term safe space (crate) to sleep at night and for naptimes after active playtime.
- 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.
- 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 making a small attention getting noise like lightly clapping your hands, and picking up puppy and taking her straight to her potty spot. Say your cue word "outside" as you are carrying puppy outside.



Daily Crate Time By Age

8 - 10 weeks: 30 min - 1 hour

11 - 14 weeks: 1 - 2 hours

15 - 17 weeks: 2 - 3 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.



Transitioning to Loose in the Home

Once your puppy is 6 months or older, you should begin the 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 don't have separation anxiety. Start with departures of 5 - 10 minutes and see how they do. Gradually work your way up to longer times.



Questions?

Comments?

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