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Puppy House Training

House Training should begin as soon as your puppy enters his new home. How long the training must continue depends on both the puppy and you. Some pups learn sooner than others. Your dog wants to please you. But a puppy's memory is short, so your patience is important. A home with a badly trained puppy is not a happy home for you or the puppy.

Keep in mind that we are trying to set the puppy up for success and not set him or her up for failure. So, by taking the time to prepare and discuss as a family how all of you are going to train your puppy is important.

- a) The puppy's bed or den may be a box or crate, open at one end and slightly larger than the puppy. If the bed is too large, the puppy, may defecate or urinate in a corner rather than go outside. If the bed is smaller, the puppy will do its "business" outside rather than soil its bed. If you have purchased a large crate (as you are anticipating your puppy will grow into it), and you are finding that as a small puppy there is too much space in that crate, simply placing a barricade inside, such as cement blocks (which can be removed later) to make the bed "smaller" may help.
- b) Enclose the bed in a small area, such as a laundry room.
- c) Dogs will urinate and defecate if they smell urine from a previous elimination. Thus, a secret to housebreaking is: bring your puppy to the same place in the yard where you want him/her to eliminate, create and "elimination area". After a few times of eliminating in the area, it becomes easier, your puppy is stimulated by the previous eliminations in that area.
- d) There are certain times that your puppy will most likely want to eliminate. These times are:
 - first thing in the morning
 - right before bedtime
 - right after a meal
 - right after a nap
 - right after a playtime period

Now, as you can see, that is many times a day when your puppy may need to eliminate! You will be outside with him many times during the day. Be proactive, not reactive. Anticipate when your puppy will need to go outdoors, don't wait for him to show you signs that he needs to go outside, he hasn't learned those signs yet.

e) When you take your puppy outside, grab a treat. Your puppy should be directed to the elimination area. Yes, choose an elimination area as previous urine smells encourage your pet to eliminate in the same area. Go outside with him or her. Yes, you need to do this even if it's the middle of winter. Let him or her sniff about. Encourage your puppy to eliminate by giving him

a command that the family has agreed upon to use, for example “Go Potty” or “Go Wee Wee”. The moment he has relieved himself, pat him on the head, tell him what a good puppy he is, and give him or her a small food treat, immediately.

Remember, the major point here is you are immediately rewarding him or her for good behavior. You are motivating him or her to want to eliminate outdoors.

f) This routine should be repeated every hour or two throughout the day, especially after times listed above in d).

g) There will of course be some "accidents" in the house. Just as the rewards are immediately given outdoors for correct behavior, any sort of verbal reprimand (*never physical reprimand*) for indoor elimination must also be immediate. Studies have shown that if the reward or reprimand is more than 2 seconds from the behavior, the reward nor the reprimand will not be associated with it. Verbally reprimand the puppy and rush him to the elimination area.

h) When there are accidents in the house, the smells do have to be cleaned. Remember, urine smells encourage the puppy to urinate in the same area. So scrub the area of mishap thoroughly until all odor is gone with a good bacterial odor neutralizer to clean the area which is available at most pet retailers.

i) Indoors, supervise your puppy at all times when he or she is not confined to ensure that the puppy does not get itself into mischief, or cause damage to itself or the home. Leaving a remote leash attached is all that is usually needed to prevent or interrupt inappropriate behavior such as garbage raiding, chewing on household items, house-soiling, or wandering off into rooms or areas that are out of bounds. If the leash is attached to a head halter, such as a Gentle Leader Promise Collar, you can quickly correct other problems that might arise, such as nipping, play biting, and jumping up. When the puppy cannot be supervised, confinement (discussed above) will be necessary.

j) Immediate positive reinforcement of proper urine and bowel habits is five times more important than properly applied reprimands. When your puppy urinates or defecates in the correct place, spend several minutes stroking and praising him. Also, when the puppy is beginning to show signs of wanting to eliminate, be sure to reward that behavior. If you recognize the signs of impending elimination and praise the puppy whenever it heads for the doorway, the behavior can be further encouraged.