

## PROTOCOL FOR BASIC MANNERS TRAINING AND HOUSETRAINING FOR NEW DOGS AND PUPPIES

The steps below are designed to help you begin to train and housetrain any dog. They are divided into two sections: puppies and older dogs.

### Puppies

#### Sensitive Periods for Social Exposure

Puppies become adept at interacting with other dogs between the ages of 4 and 8+ weeks and with people between the ages of 5 and 10+ weeks. They are especially able to learn to explore complex new surroundings between 5 and 16 weeks, and if they are not exposed to such stimuli by about 10 weeks of age, they can become *neophobic* (fearful of the unfamiliar). Because of these “sensitive periods”—periods where puppies learn quickly about new social and physical experiences—the recommended time for bringing a new puppy home starts at about 8.5 weeks. Before this, dogs are really honing their dog–dog skills and need the stimulation and solace of their parents and littermates. Dogs with a good social background have more tools for understanding increasingly complex worlds.

If a breeder is willing to expose the dog to all new environments and new people, and housetrain the pup, the pup can stay at the breeders through 12 weeks of age without detrimental effects. The real advantages of having the dog stay with the breeder all have to do with social experiences with other dogs. As long as the puppy is engaged in an active vaccination and preventative healthcare program, there are other ways for this interaction to be achieved, including puppy play parties, play dates, puppy daycare, and puppy kindergarten. If there is an adult dog in the home already, the pup will learn best and fastest from that dog, so anyone who already has a dog and is bringing home a puppy needs to make sure their adult dogs are well behaved before adding a pup.

Dogs who miss these sensitive periods for interaction and development do not *necessarily* develop problems associated with lack of experience, but may be more *at risk* for developing such problems. Dogs may not get adequate exposure because they are kept in isolation at the breeder’s or because they are sent to their new home too early. The more we learn about effects of the early learning environment, the more justification we have for trying to *minimize risk* for young puppies in terms of the social and environmental exposure. Doing everything right does not guarantee you a perfect dog, but *not* doing what we know helps puts your dog at risk for behavioral problems.

#### Exposing the Dog to Try to Minimize the Development of Fear

So, in the first 2 months that you have your puppy you should make sure that the pup interacts with other dogs and people of all ages and sexes, experiences cars and traffic, meets other animals the puppy lives with, such as farm animals, and gets accustomed to most of the situations in which the adult dog will be expected, by you, to function. The key to producing a behaviorally healthy and happy puppy is to understand and recognize fear.

- It is okay if the dog is a little startled by the new experiences, as long as the puppy recovers quickly. This means

that the pup is willing to continue exploring and maintains his curiosity and willingness to interact, even if he is a little uncertain.

- It’s **not** okay if the experience upsets the puppy so much that he cries, urinates, defecates, and wants to hide.
- It’s **not** okay if the puppy does not recover quickly—within a few minutes—when startled by a normal, but unfamiliar event or object.
- It’s **not** okay to deliberately scare a puppy to make him “tougher.” You will just behaviorally damage the pup.
- It’s **essential** to seek veterinary help as soon as possible if you begin to see a pattern of when the puppy reacts fearfully to new things, people, and events and does not recover quickly in a way that allows the puppy to enjoy his life.

If you intend to show the dog in conformation, agility, or obedience, take the pup to shows early, even before he is old enough to be entered. This is possible with outdoor shows. This way you ensure that the pup has experience with vans, crates, pens, runs, rings, food smells, many dogs, the chaos of shows, and—maybe most importantly—with the various options used for allowing a dog to eliminate within the confines of dog show rules and events. Please remember that *if the pup shows any signs of fear or anxiety* (crying, whining, withdrawal, salivation, avoidance, shaking/trembling, non-stop panting, salivation, scanning, vigilance, inappetence, vomiting, diarrhea, uncontrolled urination/defecation, et cetera) that do not quickly stop, *you must remove the dog from the situation to one where he is calmer*. Please do not think that by continually exposing the dog to something worrisome that the dog “will get over it.” In fact, the opposite is true: you will render your pup truly fearful and do long-term harm.

#### Teaching Puppies to Eliminate Outside

The best time to start teaching a dog to eliminate in a desired location is when the puppy is between 7.5 and 8.5 weeks of age. At about 8.5 weeks the puppy is best able to start to choose a preferred substrate (grass, dirt, cement) *and* to act upon that choice. This is the first age at which the pup can cognitively make the connection between the scent and feel of the place they are eliminating and the act of elimination, *and* that they are able to control the act of eliminating. Before about 8 weeks of age most puppies just do not have the neurological control to inhibit elimination. Housetraining a pup has two parts:

1. getting the pup to use the “right” place and
2. encouraging the pup to *wait to eliminate* until he gets to the “right” place.

This means that puppies need both the neuromuscular control and the cognitive component for housetraining to succeed. Working well with an 8.5-week-old puppy does not guarantee that the puppy will not have accidents after that time: they will, but the foundations for easier housetraining are best laid at that age.

Some puppies are not as developmentally advanced as others at the same age and may do well forming a preference for an area for urination and defecation, but they may not have the physical muscle and nervous control necessary to

endure extended periods without accidents. There is a lot of variation in the rates at which puppies develop, just as is the case for human children. This control will come with age if the puppy is appropriately reinforced and if there is no physical problem. This is important to know because for puppies, as for human children, the first incident of abuse often comes with house- and toilet-training.

If you have truly done everything “right” and the 6- to 9-month old puppy is still not completely housetrained, it is important to look for an underlying medical problem, like an infection, that may be contributing to or causing the problem. Sometimes, a slight amount of dribbling, particularly if the dog is excited, can be normal. For example, although not true for every dog, it is not uncommon for female puppies to dribble urine because of some of the hormonal and anatomical differences that distinguish them from male dogs. The dribbling usually resolves or improves with age, but in some cases when it doesn't, the puppy may respond to the hormones that become abundant during an estrous or heat cycle. Heat cycles usually start at about 9 months of age and will recur about every 6 months if the puppy is not spayed/neutered (ovariohysterectomized).

Housetraining a puppy is time-consuming, because it requires attention to the puppy's signals and consistent action. Housetraining a puppy when young is a lot easier than trying to correct inappropriate elimination behaviors that could have been avoided by the right approach at the start. If you do not have the knowledge or energy to housetrain a puppy kindly and humanely, please consider adopting an adult dog who is known to be housetrained.

### Should You Neuter/Desex Your Puppy?

A word on spaying and castration is in order. Spayed and castrated (neutered/desexed) pets are often considered healthier pets for several reasons:

- They are less likely to roam. This is especially true for intact or non-castrated males. Roaming exposes dogs to other dogs with whom they may fight, traffic, and, possibly, to areas of infectious disease.
- Castrated male dogs have decreased risk of prostatic and testicular cancer and infection.
- Spayed females are not at risk from dying of uterine infections or unintended pregnancies.
- Spayed females have a greatly decreased risk of mammary cancer if spayed by no later than 1.5 years of age.

In the United States, most dogs and cats are neutered to prevent the births of unwanted pets. There is some developing evidence that suggests neutering of some animals *may* be associated with increased risk of illnesses not directly linked to the reproductive tract. The data are few, but it should be understood that we may make different decisions for dogs coming from shelters, and those people can and will supervise. Early neutering (5 to 8 weeks vs. the traditional 6 months of age) is now common for shelter and rescue dogs. Studies show that long bone growth is greater in early neutered animals so they will be taller.

If the decision is made to allow the female puppy to have a heat cycle, the owner is absolutely responsible for always keeping the puppy on a leash, in sight, and away from male dogs for the extended period of time before, during, and after the actual discharge phase of the cycle. Otherwise, the puppy will become pregnant.

**Although the numbers have decreased in the past decade, at least 10 million unwanted pets are killed annually in humane shelters in the United States. No one needs unwanted and unplanned puppies, and it is not a kindness to allow a puppy to bear puppies.** Even if the dog is a superior quality breeding dog, no responsible breeder would encourage or allow a **puppy** to be bred and have babies while she is still a baby.

Castrated dogs are thought to fight less with other dogs, urine mark less frequently, and roam and wander less. It is important to remember that every behavior has a learned component and hormones may just act to facilitate some behaviors. Taking away the hormone source doesn't take away the memory that certain behaviors were interesting or fun.

If your dog is not an absolutely top-quality breeding animal (i.e., all of your dog's parents and “grandparents are free of any genetic disease or problem” *and* your dog's “temperament” and that of your dog's parents and grandparents is flawless, *and* you are willing to take back and humanely home animals who do not work out in others' homes), **do not breed the animal:** either neuter your dog or ensure that the dog will not breed. This is a kindness; most of the dogs turned in to humane shelters are purebred dogs, and 60% of all breedings result in the death of either the mother or one or more of the puppies.

### Managing Puppy Chewing and Other Developmental Issues

Decide whether you are going to crate-train the puppy. Using a crate (a cage or kennel) can be an excellent idea for most puppies and can be an essential step in the housetraining process. Small, enclosed areas encourage the pup to develop conscious muscle control to inhibit elimination at inconvenient times.

Crates are available from pet stores and online, and some kennel clubs may rent them. If you are planning to travel by air with the pet, buy an airline-approved crate. Airlines require crates (although please think carefully about whether you need to fly your pets and research the best ways to do so safely) and you can even check in to some of the finest, fussiest hotels if you are willing to crate the dog when you're not in the room.

Some pups immediately feel more secure when left alone in a crate with blankets, toys, food, water, and, if large enough, an area for paper for urination and defecation. Get a bigger crate if the pup is to spend all day crated, but please consider having a pet sitter exercise the dog if you have to spend this much time away from your pet. Young (8-week-old) puppies need to eliminate **at least** every hour (more if eating, playing, or just awakening) and will need an area they can start to use for this. If the crate is small, an older puppy will be unlikely to soil it; however, no puppy can be expected to last 8 to 10 hours without urinating or defecating.

**Please note:** Even better than a crate for pups that must be left for long periods (>4 hours) is a dog sitter, doggie daycare, or taking the dog with you to work, if possible.

Crates should always be placed in family areas, not in the damp basement or the garage. You want the puppy to learn to love going into the crate. Feed the puppy in the crate with the door open: ask the puppy to sit and wait (see **Protocol for Deference** and **Protocol for Relaxation: Behavior**

**Modification Tier 1**), put the food inside, and release the puppy. Teach the puppy to wait to go in by using biscuits to reward the puppy for having some restraint and not charging the crate.

Correctly **reward** with treats or toys—**do not bribe**. Remember, a bribe is an action taken to lure the dog away from an undesirable behavior that rewards the animal before the animal offers the undesired behavior; a reward is an action taken after the dog has willingly complied with a request. A reward is a salary; a bribe is blackmail.

Each day, give the puppy a toy, a blanket, and something to chew (a biscuit, a big sterilized bone that has been stuffed with peanut butter, a stuffed Kong, Planet Toy, or a Nylabone) and put the puppy into the crate for some quiet time. This is quiet time for all of you and will provide you with the ability to give the dog a safe place to relax and calm down (“time out”) any time the puppy is driving you nuts and you do not have the patience to work with the pup.

Puppies are babies and need their own quiet time, too. During these short (2 to 5 minutes to start) sessions, stay quietly in the room with the pup, but don’t respond to attempts to get your attention. The puppy is capable of amusing himself. As the pup becomes more accustomed to the crate, extend the period of time that he is in it and go to other areas of the house.

Before you release the pup from the crate, ask the pup to sit and praise her when she sits. When the puppy is let out of the crate, don’t fuss over the pup for a few minutes—she could learn to associate release from the crate with lots of attention. You can give the pup all the love and attention you wish a few minutes after releasing her from the crate. Some of the attention you give the pup should consist of practicing a few really helpful “good manners” behaviors like “sit, please” and “down, please” and “take a deep breath, please” (see the **Protocol for Teaching “Sit,” “Stay,” and “Come”** and the **Protocol for Teaching Your Dog to Take a Deep Breath and Use Other Biofeedback Methods as Part of Relaxation**).



This puppy is next to and outside of her crate. The crate is in the kitchen and has toys and bedding. This pup would spend more time in the crate than is good for her. (Photo courtesy Kristen Penkrot.)

### Keeping Crates and Puppies Safe and Clean

The crate should be kept clean. If soiled, use hot water and non-irritating soap or baking soda and vinegar and **rinse well**

and dry. Use an odor neutralizer (Elimin-odor, PON, FON, The Equalizer, AIP), let sit for a bit, rinse well, and dry again. Crates should be placed in well-lit areas, but not in those that will get the heat of the afternoon sun—the puppy could easily overheat and die. Timers can be placed on lights so that the pup isn’t left alone in the dark. Radios and TVs can be left on for auditory company and to mask scary street sounds.

**Never, ever** leave **anything** around the pup’s neck, like a loose buckle or choker collar, that can tangle and hang on any part of the cage or anything in it. The puppy could strangle and die a painful death.

The crate has three main purposes:

1. to encourage the dog to start inhibiting the urge to eliminate,
2. to keep the puppy safe from all the disasters from electric cords to toxic substances that lurk in the average home, and
3. to keep you sane when the puppy is too rambunctious.

Puppies **are** rambunctious. They need an **aerobic** outlet for all that energy. The crate is **not** meant to keep them incarcerated or to substitute for that need for aerobic exercise. **Do not** think that you can keep the puppy in the crate 8 to 10 hours per day and then not have to play energetic games at night. **If you need an animal you can keep caged for most of the animal’s young life, please consider a gerbil.**

### Alternatives to Crates

If you are not going to crate your puppy, confine him to one area (kitchen, den, heated or air-conditioned sun porch) at first. This may give the dog a greater sense of security when you’re not home, and minimize damage. Leave a radio and a light on for the pup. Expand the areas to which the pup has access gradually, only when the puppy has not eliminated or destroyed anything in the area to which he was previously confined. Baby gates can help with this. If you are going to be gone for more than 2 to 3 hours, the puppy will have to urinate or defecate, so you’ll have to provide the pup with an area to do this (litterbox or newspaper; see below). Make sure that the room is puppy-proof: no cupboards with chemicals or toxic substances into which the dog can get—no strings, ropes, slippers, magazines, or mail the dog can shred and/or ingest, possibly causing an intestinal obstruction. Just as for a crate, the dog should have a blanket, water, toys, and a biscuit or two.

**Caution is urged** in confining puppies to bathrooms, where they have been known to drown in toilets, or in kitchens, if they can reach and turn on the stove accidentally.

### Elimination Paradigm

Puppies develop substrate preferences for urination and defecation. “Substrates” are the surfaces on which dogs wee and poo. This means that if you teach a dog to urinate on newspaper, the pup will learn to seek out **that** substrate. Although it is tougher to teach a puppy to go outside to urinate and defecate after he has learned to use newspaper, it is not impossible. It is preferable to teach the dog to go outside at the outset, but this may not fit into your schedule.

### Directly Training the Puppy to Urinate (Wee) and Defecate (Poo) Outside

1. Every 1 to 2 hours take the puppy outside. Puppies have *high* metabolisms—meaning that they make a lot of urine

- quickly—and *small* bladders—meaning that they cannot store all that urine for long. The basic Labrador retriever puppy has a bladder the size of a lemon when full; the basic Yorkie pup’s bladder is the size of a small apricot when full.
- When you take the pup out, let him sniff a bit. Don’t just pull him away from what he is sniffing and keep walking. Sniffing is an important part of the elimination sequence in dogs.
  - If the dog is just rampantly plowing ahead sniffing, consider stopping and walking a bit quickly back and forth. This movement simulates normal dog elimination precursor behavior. The pup will eventually squat—pay attention and praise him. When the dog is finished, tell him that he is brilliant.
  - Use a fixed-length, short lead so that you can quickly encourage your puppy and respond to her cues. You can give the pup a little piece of biscuit or another small treat as she squats on a substrate you both like (grass). A reward may help encourage the association between squatting on that substrate and good experiences. Urinating or defecating is physiologically self-rewarding—you are rewarding the behavior exhibited in the location chosen.
  - Regardless of the frequency of your other walks, take the pup out 15 to 45 minutes after *each time he eats*. This is the time range for eating to stimulate intestines to move feces. “Food” means all meals, including biscuits and rawhides, both of which will stimulate elimination.
  - Watch for behaviors that tell you the dog may be ready to eliminate—pacing, whining, circling, a sudden stopping of another behavior—and intercept the pup. If you pick the pup up and she starts to leak, or the act of picking up the pup starts the leak, get a cloth and clamp it to the pup’s genitals. This will help to stimulate the pup to associate inhibition of elimination with those muscle groups. It also keeps the floor cleaner. Again, praise the pup as he is squatting and **immediately** after he has finished. **Do not punish any leaks.**
  - Take the puppy out immediately after any play **and** naps or if he awakens at night.
  - Prepare for the first walk of the day by having your clothes ready to put on before you approach any crated puppy. Puppies who have waited through the night cannot wait long once you are awake!
  - Watch the puppy between walks—pups often get caught short, especially if they encounter and play with a water dish or they become superfocused or distracted. Any puppy who is moving around and suddenly stops, needs to eliminate. You can make monitoring easier by putting a bell on the dog’s collar: any time the puppy’s bell stops, get the pup and take her outside immediately. If you are going to do this, you need to use a breakaway/quick-release collar that will come undone if the dog catches it on anything.
  - If you have an older dog that is housetrained, take this dog with you when you take the pup out. Dogs learn extremely well by observing, and this may speed the process.
  - Dogs are generally faster to housetrain for defecation than urination. This may be, in part, because puppies urinate more frequently than they defecate. For some very clueless dogs it can help to take either a urine-soaked sponge or a piece of feces to the area you would prefer

the pup use. This may help the pup to learn to associate her scent pattern with the area, but it cannot be used in the absence of the other steps above.

### Paper or Litterbox Training the Puppy Inside

- If you must train the pup to paper or a litterbox, put the box or paper in one place, preferably close to a door. Take the puppy to the paper frequently and praise him when he squats.
- You may want to put heavy-gauge plastic under the newspaper to protect flooring and rugs in case the pup misses or the urine soaks through the paper.
- Getting the puppy outdoors **still** requires you to be home for a while. Although the dog is being trained to paper, you still have to take him out at least 3 to 4 times a day (after meals, awakening, play). Praise the puppy immediately during and after the squat.
- To wean the puppy from the paper, gradually start to move the paper 1 to 2 inches per day closer to the door. Spy on the puppy during weekends and as he begins to squat on the paper, rush him outside and **wait** for him to urinate or defecate. This also helps stop him from being fearful outside. Enthusiastically praise the pup when he pees or poos outside.
- Know that paper training may slow the process of getting the puppy to develop an outdoor substrate preference. It may be, however, your only option.
- Some people with small dogs elect to have the dog permanently trained to paper or a litterbox. Litterboxes are now commercially available that are suitable for large dogs. Litterboxes are easier to handle for small dogs, but if you do not want the dog to rely on these, you must go through the amount of work described here.
- Caution: Litterboxes are not intended as devices to relieve you of “having” to take your dog out and about. Please do not use these as an excuse to not exercise your dog, to let him or her explore the world, or to prevent free play with other dogs.**
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- Dogs are generally faster to housetrain for defecation than urination. This may be, in part, because puppies urinate more frequently than they defecate. For some very clueless dogs it can help to take either a urine-soaked sponge or a piece of feces to the area you would prefer the pup use. This may help the pup to learn to associate his scent pattern with the area, but it cannot be used in the absence of the other steps above.

### A Word About Cleaning

You must clean any indoor area where the dog has urinated or defecated.

- If the dog soiled a rug, be aware that you may ultimately need to clean the rug pad and subfloors. Start with soaking up urine and removing feces.
- Then soak with club soda, let sit a minute or so, and blot.
- You can repeat this as often as needed until there is no scent and clear liquid is being blotted.
- Then use one of the odor eliminators suggested above, or Febreze or a similar product. Always test the floor or rug

to make sure that whatever you put on it is not going to discolor it. Use just enough odor eliminator to cover the area—remember you are trying to stop the odors from being smelled by the dog by changing them. This is a chemical process. Washing odors away or diluting them is a physical process. You need to do both.

5. If the dog revisits used spots or sniffs at them, there is still odor that the dog can detect. Start over with the club soda.

### What About the Older Puppy Who Does Not Seem to Understand That There Are Preferred Places for Elimination?

For puppies who are older (7 to 9 months) and who still seem to have no awareness of appropriate elimination behavior, diapers can help. This is **not** a substitute for the steps above, but an addition to them. Dog diapers or britches are available at pet-care outlets and are sold primarily for females in season/heat. The uncomfortable sensation of a damp diaper next to the skin may help to teach some dogs to control themselves. You have to be willing to bathe and powder any dog who might soil himself to prevent urine burns or fecal contamination. A thin layer of Vaseline can help to provide a protective coating.



A young, male dog who is not completely housetrained and who also engages in some marking wearing a “belly band,” a type of diaper for male dogs. The wrap is fabric and washable, and it holds an absorbent pad over the dog’s prepuce.

### What About Just Letting the Dog Roam and Housetrain Himself?

In addition to all the steps above it is important to note that even if you have 120 acres and the dog will have free range, **you** need to be standing there, next to the dog, rewarding him for eliminating on an appropriate substrate or the association will not be made. It is not acceptable to wave at the dog through a window or to praise the pup when he returns. This is **not** a reward structure. Remember that free-range dogs learn to eliminate anywhere. This is not what you want.

### Essential Role for Play in Training a Puppy

Reward the puppy with a longer walk and play outside **after** he eliminates. Do not play with the puppy or allow him to play with other dogs before he eliminates. In essence, you want to reward eliminating outside with carefree play. If the only time that the pup has to watch the air, chase leaves, and hear birds

is when he is out to eliminate, you may be making your housetraining problems worse. If the pup is yanked back inside right after eliminating, he can learn to avoid or postpone elimination outside and to save walks for exploration. After all, the pup can always eliminate indoors.

### Can We Use a Word to Tell the Dog to Wee or Poo?

Finally, if you want your dog to start to learn to eliminate “on command,” request that the dog eliminate as she does so. Say “empty,” “potty,” or “go wee,” and make sure the last repetition of your cue coincides with a squatting event. Then tell the dog that she is brilliant. Use this with play after elimination and your pup will be more than willing to do your bidding.

### Punishment

You will notice that no mention of punishment for housetraining has been made. That is because *punishment has no role in housetraining any dog*. Animals and people make associations between acts and consequences; this is how we learn. Coming downstairs to find a puddle of urine on the rug and the dog cringing **does not** mean that the dog *knows* he erred. What he is probably telling you is that this has happened before: you have come home, grabbed the dog, dragged the dog to the urine, and whacked him. The dog *has* made an association: you come home and the dog gets whacked, but it’s the wrong association (or at least one you did not intend for the dog to learn). In fact, if you have punished the pup, the pup probably cringes when you come home even if he hasn’t urinated on the rug, but you don’t notice.

You **must** couple any “correction” exactly with the action that needs “correcting.” If you see the puppy start to squat or find her in the act of urinating or defecating on the rug et cetera, interrupt the dog if you think you can do so successfully. She should just stop the behavior but not be terrified. Saying “uh, uh,” inhaling sharply, or softly clapping your hands will interrupt most pups. Use the lowest level of stimulus necessary to achieve the interruption. If you don’t think you can interrupt the pup as she starts to piddle so that she stops and is able to go outside to eliminate, forget it. After you clean up make a mental note to take the dog out in 30 minutes and frequently thereafter, each time rewarding the dog for eliminating in the more desirable (from your viewpoint) place. For some very meek pups **any** “correction” can make them more timid, so caution is urged. If you are able to successfully interrupt the pup, take her outside and praise her as soon she urinates or defecates on an appropriate substrate. Psychologists have shown that we learn best and most quickly if we are interrupted in an unexpected context, so disrupting undesirable elimination can help you to dissuade the pup from eliminating in the wrong place *if and only if you do not scare the dog*.

Reminder: No matter how distressed you are about the dog’s accidents, there is **never any** excuse to hit or beat a dog. **Never**. Please remember that dog abuse and child abuse are associated and both often begin when training the individual to eliminate in a preferred location, on a preferred schedule.

### What If You Have Done Everything “Right” and the Puppy Is Still Having “Accidents”?

If you have done all of the above and are still having problems, keep a log for a week to tell you how frequently the dog is out, for how long the dog is out, what happens when the

dog eats, plays, sleeps, snacks, et cetera. Review the log for any patterns associated with elimination in the house. Chances are something will jump out at you.

However, if you review your log and see no patterns, bring the dog and the log to your veterinarian so that they can review the history and double-check the dog for medical or developmental concerns. Something will make sense.

## Early Training for Manners

No puppy is too young to learn to earn what he wants by sitting and staying. All pups should be taught to sit and stay for walks, food dishes, water, play attention—anything. The fastest way to teach this is with food treats—tiny pieces of really good biscuits, treats, jerky, or cheese. This technique allows you to only use voice signals so that your moving hands do not distract the pup. Later—when the dog is flawless for your verbal requests, you can add hand signals and other cues, if you wish.

Teaching sit is like teaching any other behavior: take advantage of normal, freely offered behaviors to reward the pup. Then you can teach the pup to offer the behavior in response to a cue. The puppy will accidentally sit the first time you attempt this: hold the treat in one hand in front of the dog's nose; gradually move him close to the ground and repeat "sit" when his bottom touches the ground. **Instantly** open your hand for the treat and say "good pup." As the puppy matures you can begin to expect him to distinguish between "sit" and "down" by using those words to only mean what they say; at first, the pup only has to get his bottom on the ground, however it's done (see **Protocol for Relaxation: Behavior Modification Tier 1**). At first use the words "sit" and "down" to mean exactly that, but reward the pup if he does either; reinforce them to distinguish between the commands by being particularly enthusiastic if they do. You will gradually shape their behavior. Later, as the pup is more mature, you only reward him for "down" when he lies down and "sit" when he sits instead of lying down. The earlier you start to teach a dog to look to you for cues and to defer to you for anything he desires, the better off you'll be. *All* dogs should be taught manners and to respond to their owners' requests. This is particularly true for large-breed dogs who can be unpleasant, at best, and dangerous, at worst, when out of control. *No* dog needs to be hit to do this.

## Older Dogs

The same basic training and housetraining rules apply to older dogs that apply to puppies, but older dogs can be more difficult to housetrain because they may have to unlearn some less-favorable behaviors. Older puppies or dogs who have been kenneled for extensive periods may have developed a preference for the substrate on which they were kept. You may be able to use this (e.g., there might be cement in your neighborhood) or you may be able to shift the preference to a broader range of substrates.

- For older dogs—even as you repeat all of the steps involved in housetraining a pup—you will have to be very vigilant any time that the dog is around substrates she had used in the past.
- Expect to have to do a lot of monitoring and redirecting.
- Spying on the dog can be made easier by putting a bell on the dog's collar.

- Incarcerate the dog any time you cannot monitor her.
- **BE PATIENT.** If you have ever tried to lose 5 pounds you know how hard it is to change behavior.
- As soon as you see the dog squat in an inappropriate area, calmly shuffle the dog outside and reward any act of elimination.
- If the dog startles and will not eliminate, take the dog on a long-leash walk and reward sniffing and acts of elimination.
- If the dog will not eliminate on a lead, take her to a fenced outdoor area with the scents of other dogs and wait. Bring coffee. Reward any elimination behaviors.
- Finally, consider borrowing a dog who is good at eliminating in the outside, desired places as a demonstration model. Dogs do observational learning quite well and are interested in the scent of the urine and feces of other dogs. Praise and reward the other dog every time he eliminates. Your dog will catch on with exposure.
- On the positive side, these older dogs are usually so grateful that they were rescued and can now be loved, they will work wonderfully for praise and interaction. Use this.

## Tips the Pros Use: Teaching a Dog to "Knock"

Teaching the dog that he has some control over the ability to go outside can help. Put a cow bell, sleigh bells, or jingle bells on a string by the door and teach your dog that when he baps the bell, you open the door and let him out. Demonstrate this the first few times by taking the dog's paw and saying "knock," and whacking the bells. Then tell the dog "good dog" and let him out (on a lead, if needed for safety or to get the dog back). This process will give you an auditory cue for when the dog has to go out, so you can further reinforce the good behavior. You **do** have to be willing to take the dog out every time that the bell rings and you are home. Dogs can learn not to ring when you are not there. This is a useful technique for older puppies, too.



One week at the beach with 4 dogs produced 42 bags of poo. All dogs should have their feces cleaned up and disposed of properly.

## Checklist for Houstraining a Puppy

1. Bell the puppy so you know where she is at all times; this way you can interrupt elimination and take her to the desired spot
2. Crate
3. Times to take to desired area
  - Immediately upon awakening
  - Immediately after playing (especially if the puppy voluntarily slows play)
  - Fifteen to 30 minutes after any food
  - Minimum of 6 to 8 times per day
  - Every 1 to 2 hours is optimal
4. Restrict access
5. Regular feeding times; no free access; take up food after 20 minutes
6. Leash walk!!!!
7. No play until he has eliminated
8. Fifteen- to 20-minute walks
9. Permit sniffing
10. Concentrate in one area—small steps
11. Allow play/exploration after

12. Reward
13. Appropriate interrupts—do not make the dog afraid or wary of you
14. Reinforce scent (older dog, feces in correct area)
15. Variety of substrates (show or traveling dogs)
16. Verbal signal/cue (empty, potty, go wee, et cetera)
17. Patience
18. Odor eliminators and appropriate cleaning
19. Non-elimination-associated aerobic play—LOTS

## Checklist for Houstraining the Older Dog

1. See puppy checklist
2. Identify preferred substrate
3. Gradually switch preferred substrate
4. Concentrate on rewarding appropriate behavior
5. Interrupt when the dog starts to eliminate in an undesirable spot, then take the dog to a place more acceptable to you
6. Crate—use natural inhibition
7. Short lead for leash corrections
8. Walk and reinforce frequently; teach “knock”