



## *Furry Friends Rescue*

Puppy training classes can begin when puppies are as young as 12 weeks. But training really begins with your first interaction. You are teaching the pup - intentionally or not - what she's allowed to do not allowed to do. Every dog needs to know his exact place within his new family circle.

Puppies use the "self-teaching" method if no one tells them otherwise. They learn by doing and evaluate the consequences. If the puppy bites a littermate's ear, the other pup screams and bites back. The puppy may then try to find out how hard a bite is okay. And so on. This is her first lesson in bite inhibition. Usually, however, once is not enough. Puppies need consistent and constant reminders.

To be successful, your action must be the smallest correction necessary to end the undesirable behavior and to teach what is acceptable. A "correction" does not necessarily mean punishment, and it does not merely stop the misconduct. A correction always ends by having the puppy do something - anything - for which you can say "good dog." Make sure your motto is "Teach, don't punish."

- Adapted from Bardi McLennan,  
*Puppy Care and Training: An Owner's Guide to a Happy, Healthy Pet*  
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### **Crate Training**

Housetraining is the most important training you do in the first several weeks of your puppy's new life with you. It is important to be consistent and to develop a routine so that your pup will know when and where you want her to eliminate.

A crate is psychologically very comforting for a young puppy and all dogs. Because dogs are direct descendants of wolves, they still carry a desire for secure closed spaces. The crate is your dog's modern-day den. Training your puppy will be much easier if you begin by using a crate. (For information on what kind of crate and what size to buy, see [Crates](#) in this Care Guide.)

Dogs learn to love their crates and will often seek them out during the day. Crate training can be one of the most important things you do in the training of your puppy or adult dog.

- Your dog will be housebroken more easily in a short time.
- Your dog will be more comfortable when she needs to be confined at a veterinary clinic, boarding kennel, or grooming shop.
- Dogs often go through very destructive phases. Crating will prevent this destruction.
- When animals are isolated for a short period of time before a training period, there will be a greater tendency for them to relate to you. Therefore training will become a much easier task.

Psychologically, puppies will not urinate or defecate where they are confined. Given any reasonable opportunity, a puppy will prefer to eliminate away from her resting area. Young puppies should be confined to a crate the first few months of their life when you are not interacting with them. Your pup will be more comfortable if you feed her and give her toys or treats in her

crate.

Remember that young puppies have to eliminate fairly often. It is not reasonable to expect a young puppy to go more than three to five hours without eliminating. When you get up in the morning or come home during the day, immediately carry your pup to the place where you want her to eliminate in the yard. Reward her immediately with a pet or a treat. Most puppies will be housebroken in two or three days, provided you continue crate training.

When you arrive home with your new puppy, take her immediately to the area in your yard where you want her to eliminate. Have very small liver treats ready to give her as she eliminates in your yard. For the first couple of days, carry her - do not let her wander - to this spot in your yard and reward her appropriately with a treat and praise.

Watch her carefully in the house. When she is not in her crate, spend time with her in one room. Do not allow her to wander throughout the house. Housebreaking is all about confinement. As you become familiar with your pup, you will be able to predict when she needs to go outside. Always, after she eats, when she wakes up from a nap, and when she exhibits the elimination behavior, scoop her up and take her out to her yard. Praise, praise, praise, and use lots of treats to reward this good behavior. After your pup is successful a few times, in addition to praise, start to use a command so the dog associates elimination with a few special words - "Do your business." This can come in handy on long car drives or rainy nights when you want her to eliminate quickly.

Feeding your puppy in her closed crate will prevent her from taking a bite and then eliminating in the house. Give her 10 minutes to eat her meal, scoop her up, and head back to her yard. Feeding her at the same times every day helps her to learn her new daily routine.

Always take your pup out to eliminate before confining her. The first few nights that you crate her, she will probably emit a scream like you have never heard. Never go to her when she is crying or barking. That will only reinforce that unacceptable behavior. Always remember the message you are giving your dog. If you run right to her crate when she is calling, then the message she gets is, "When I bark or cry, my new family will come to me." This is not the way to train your pup. Reward her for good behavior.

If your puppy eliminates in inappropriate places, never use harsh punishment. Never rub her nose in it or hit her with a newspaper. This is totally unproductive. Housetraining is one behavior that is most responsive to positive rewards.

If your puppy has eliminated in the house, remove the urine or fecal odor with a commercial enzyme product. This product will usually remove the stain as well as odors. If you do not remove these residual odors, your pup will often return again and again to that same spot. Tip: Try 50/50 of White Vinegar and water. The vinegar cuts the oils from the urine/fecal.

When crate training adult dogs, feed your dog only in a closed crate. Choose special toys and treats that your dog loves and give them to her only in her crate. Never use the crate for punishment.

- Charles J. Berger, DVM