

HOUSETRAINING

Bringing a new dog or puppy into your home is full of challenges, and housetraining can be a big one. Your puppy probably hasn't had any housetraining experience, and while your older adopted dog might have an idea, he still needs guidance learning *your* house rules. Here are some tips that may help!

- Establish a routine and stick to it. What part of the yard should he go to? What door will you use? Use a leash to lead him to where you'd like him to go and encourage him use the area consistently.
- Take treats outside with you, and use the cue "Go Potty!" as he prepares to relieve himself. As soon as he starts, tell him "Good!" and when he finishes, give him his treat along with a healthy dose of praise.
- Supervision is key! If you can't prevent accidents, your housetraining won't go very fast. Use a crate, playpen, baby gates and/or leashes to keep your new pup in your sight all the time. Watch for signs such as sniffing, circling, suddenly ceasing an activity or acting distracted, and finally squatting. Quickly tell him "Outside!" and take him out to do his business.
- Don't punish the accidents. Interrupt your puppy and tell him "Outside!" if possible, and quickly escort him outside if you can. If you find an accident that has already occurred, clean it up with a good quality pet cleaning solution and move on. Work on your supervision skills. Should you punish your puppy for his mistake, he is likely going to run off into another room to go instead of find you to let you know he needs outside.
- Use a crate. Make sure your crate is sized properly to encourage him to keep clean, it should not be large enough for him to potty on one side and walk away to the other side of the crate. Don't expect your young puppy to stay crated all night at first, or even more than a few hours in the daytime. Leave a durable chew toy with him, but be cautious of bedding and soft toys.
- When you take your pup outside, give him about 10 minutes to do his business. If he does not do what you expected, don't let him free in the house- Either put him back in his crate, or keep him leashed and in your sight and try again in another 10 minutes or so. Also, save playtime for after he's gone potty outside.
- Feed your dog on a regular schedule, either two to three times a day depending on your pup's age. Put his food down, and in 15 minutes or so, pick up whatever is left. This will help you better predict when he needs to go. He should have access to fresh water at all times, but if your pup is having trouble sleeping through the night, pick up the water bowl about 2 hours before bedtime.
- If your dog is having trouble 'telling' you that he needs to go, acknowledge every subtle signal he gives near the door. Whining, pacing, or even barking by the door. Alternatively, you can use bells on or near the door and teach your dog to ring them to let you know. Be aware, some dogs will go on to abuse this tool by ringing just to go out and play! This can be discouraged a number of ways.
- Patience. There is no 'age' that your puppy or dog *should* be trained. It depends on size, breed, past experiences, consistency, and a number of other variables. Just keep on track and don't give up!

Happy Training!