



Training Information for the Dog and Cat

Topics Covered

- Housetraining
- Litter Box Training
- Crate Training
- Basic Training Commands
- Feline Scratching



Housetraining

General Tips:

- Feed your dog on a schedule, and he'll eliminate on a schedule.
- Keep your dog's diet consistent. High quality, dry kibble produces the least amount of waste.
- Some people choose to paper train their dogs and puppies. They set aside an area in a room and cover it with newspapers or absorbable pads and teach the dog to eliminate there.
- Paper training risks only partial housetraining, as a dog/puppy learns that it is acceptable to relieve him/herself indoors.

HOUSETRAINING:

Puppies

- Housetraining puppies calls for vigilance, patience, and plenty of commitment.
- Don't expect the house training process to be completed until your puppy is 5 to 6 months of age or older.
- Some breeds are easier to train than others. Hounds and terriers are notoriously difficult to housebreak. (Owners of these breeds may need encouragement.)
- By following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house, and more likely, several. Expect accidents.
- However, the more accidents you have, the more accidents you will have! In other words, if you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate, which will prolong the housetraining process.



- ESTABLISH A ROUTINE
 - The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior.
 - Puppies need to be taken outside to eliminate immediately after meals, naps, and bursts of play. It is often best to carry them so they do not squat before they make it outside.
 - Pick a bathroom spot near the door. Always take your puppy to this spot. Pace back and forth, and chant an encouraging phrase (“Go Potty!”). Only go for longer walks after elimination has occurred.
 - Praise your puppy lavishly each time he eliminates outdoors. You may give treats immediately after he’s finished. Reward him/her before coming indoors. It is important that your pup recognizes that the reward is for eliminating outdoors.

- KEEP A CLOSE WATCH
 - Don’t give your puppy the opportunity to soil in the house. Keep an eye on him whenever he’s indoors. Either: Tether him to you with a six-foot leash.
 - Use baby gates to keep him in the room where you are.
 - Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate – circling, sniffing, etc.
 - When you see these signs, immediately carry him outside to his bathroom spot.

- CONFINEMENT
 - When you are unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won’t want to eliminate there.
 - However, this space should be big enough for your puppy to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around.
 - Crate training is an appropriate means of confinement. Please refer to the section on Crating a Puppy.
 - To estimate the time period a puppy can be expected to “hold it”, take their age in months and add one.
 - For example, a four month old puppy can be expected to “hold it” for a maximum of 5 hours.
 - After confinement, take your puppy directly to his bathroom spot as soon as you let him out.

- OOPS!
 - Expect your puppy to have a few accidents in the house – it’s a normal part of housetraining.
 - If you catch puppy in the act of eliminating in the house, interrupt him by making a loud, startling, noise. There is no need to scare him excessively, but you do want to startle him enough to make him stop eliminating mid- flow. Then, immediately carry him to his bathroom spot. He will arrive still needing to go and you can praise him lavishly when he finishes eliminating there.
 - If you find a soiled area, it’s too late to administer correction. Just clean it up. Avoid rubbing your puppy’s nose in it, scolding him, or any other punishment; you may make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Clean the soiled area well, as puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.

HOUSETRAINING:

Adult Dogs

- Adult dogs have better bladder control and can “hold it” for longer periods of time.
- Remember: Do not punish accidents. Ignore them and work to prevent them. Reward successes. Dogs learn faster this way!
- Again, choose an area, outside, where you wish your dog to potty.
- Take your dog on leash to the area, pace back and forth, and chant an encouraging phrase (“Do your business!”)
- Repeat this activity for only 3 minutes:
 - If he eliminates, praise him and play.
 - If he doesn’t, go back indoors, and either keep him contained on a leash with you or place him in his crate.
- Try again in an hour.
- After each success, allow 15 minutes of freedom in the house before placing dog on a lead or in a crate.
- After 3 consecutive days of success, increase freedom by 15 minutes.
- If there is an accident, decrease freedom by 15 minutes for 3 days.

LITTER BOX TRAINING:

- Start by placing your cat or kitten in an enclosed area, such as a bathroom, at night.
- Provide your cat with an open litter box, food, water, and a place to sleep.
- This will give your kitten fewer choices about where to go to the bathroom.
- During the day, when your kitten is exploring the house, occasionally pick him/her up and place him in the litter box. Hold the kitten there for 10 seconds. They will either do their business or scamper out. Do this about once an hour and after meals. It may help to hold the kitten’s paw and show him to scratch the first few times.
- If the kitten goes outside the litter box, clean the area well. If smells linger, the chances that your kitten will use that spot again increase.
- Reward the kitten with cuddling or a treat when he uses the litter box. Keep the box clean to encourage consistent use.
- Some cats are picky about their litter. Usually litters with a sand or clay like consistency are best.
- If you have several cats in your household, provide several litter boxes.
- And as a rule, where litter boxes are concerned, bigger is better.

CRATE TRAINING:

- Advantages of Crate Training:
 - Peace of mind when leaving your dog alone.
 - Expedites the process of housebreaking.
 - The crate can travel with your dog and serve as his “security blanket”.
 - Gives your dog a “den” to which he can retreat to when tired, stressed, or ill.



- A crate is a rectangular enclosure with a top and a door, made in a variety of sizes proportioned to fit any type of dog.
- A crate should always be large enough to permit any age dog to stretch out flat on his side without being cramped and to sit up without hitting his head on top.
 - For an adult dog: measure the distance from tip of the nose to base of the tail to determine the crate's length.
 - For a puppy, measure as above, then add 12 inches for anticipated, rapid growth.
- Crates should be placed close to a "people area" – kitchen, family room, etc.
- To provide your dog with a sense of den security and privacy, place the crate in a corner and/or have the sides and back loosely draped with a sheet or large towel.
- Crates are NOT intended for frequent, long-hours usage for the convenience of an absent owner.

Crating a Puppy:

- Establish a "crate routine" immediately, closing the puppy in at regular 1 to 2 hour intervals during the day and whenever he must be left alone for 3-4 hours.
- Remember when establishing your routine: take their age in months, add one, and that is the number of hours the puppy can "hold it" during the day.
- Give him a safe chew toy.
- Remove collar and tags; they might get caught in an opening.

Crating the Adult Dog:

- Many problem behaviors of adult dogs arise from the lack of a feeling of security
- When he begins to enter the crate confidently, place his bedding and something of yours inside. Coax him to lie down and relax. Continue to use food if necessary.
- Shut the door briefly while you sit beside him or when people are visible and/or audible nearby.
- When you are confident the dog will remain quietly in the crate, you may leave him alone.
- Give him a chew toy or safe bone to attract his attention.
- Start with brief stays in the crate (1/2 to 1 hour) until he has accepted the crate as his "special place".

PUPPY TRAINING BASICS

It is a proven fact that dogs learn more quickly and the behaviors tend to remain trained for longer when POSITIVE reinforcement is used. In puppies, desired behaviors should be shaped using positive reinforcement. Unrewarded behaviors are not sustained. For example: instead of kneeing the puppy for jumping on you, teach him to sit in front using food and ignore him when he jumps. Puppies learn very quickly and in no time the puppy will promptly sit in front of you, and jumping up on you, won't become a part of his behavioral repertoire. Viola! You have prevented a problem. A lab puppy that jumps might be cute when he is 15 lbs., but not when he is 50 lbs.!

The following basic commands should be taught to all puppies. The same commands can also be used for older dogs unless otherwise specified.

BASIC TRAINING COMMANDS:

- Choose a reward word (“YES” or “GOOD BOY/GIRL”). Begin teaching your dog this word by saying the word and then giving a treat. Treats should be small and easily chewed/swallowed. Small pieces of hot dog or soft, moist dog treats work nicely.
- Test whether or not the puppy knows the reward word. If he looks at you when you say it, he is beginning to learn it. Once the puppy knows the reward word, use it to reward desired behaviors. The most desired behavior to reward initially is the puppy looking at you. All further training requires that he look at you (that you have his attention).
- “Touch” – Teach your puppy to touch your hand. Hold the palm of your hand near his face. Wait for him to touch it, and then give him a treat. Keep your hand still once it is near his face. Do not reward mouthing. As he learns this, gradually put your hand in other positions so he has to move to touch it. This is the behavior we want to shape: the dog seeks your outstretched hand.
- “Gotcha” – Touch the puppy’s neck (as though to take him by the collar) and say GOTCHA. Use your REWARD word and give him a treat. Do this from various positions (sitting, standing and walking). The goal is for the dog to welcome you to reach for him and take him by the collar. This is critically important for puppies to learn: when they reach adolescence, they will try to dodge and escape your reaching hand, but not if you have shaped this behavior from day one. Instead, they will think bones will rain from the sky when they see your hand reaching for them!
- “Sit” – Hold a hot dog right above the puppy’s nose and move it slowly backwards to lure him into the sit position (he should fold into a sit). As soon as he sits, give the reward word and the hot dog.
- “Down” – Once the pup has learned SIT, begin working on DOWN. From a sit position, lure him with a hot dog starting at his nose and guiding him down to the ground by moving the hot dog straight down to the ground. Putting the hot dog on the ground between his front legs may help him learn to lie down.
- “Okay” – After the puppy has learned SIT and DOWN, it is time for him to learn a RELEASE word. This is one word to mean an exercise is over. Use the word “okay”. Do not allow the dog to “break” a command until you give the RELEASE word. The goal is for the puppy to remain under command until he/she hears the release word.
- “Come”
 - Young puppies want to be with their people: this is the best time to teach them to come. Start by having one person hold the puppy and restrain him while the other calls.
 - Call the pup’s name, and say **“Come!”** in a cheerful, excited tone over and over until the puppy can’t stand it: he *must* get to you! He is excited! At this point, the other handler releases him



- and he comes to you to receive treats and lavish praise. Yippee! Really make a fuss over him. Then repeat. This shapes an incredible desire to come when called.
- Gradually, add “sit” when the puppy gets to you and then do the “Gotcha” command. This shapes the obvious sequence of behaviors we want in our puppy: happily come to me when I call you, sit and welcome me to take you by the collar. Yippee! Bones rain from the sky!
 - Older puppies and adult dogs will need to be taught to come on lead. The lead between you and your dog may be as short as a normal 6-foot leash or up to a 30-foot long line. Allow him to get 6-10 feet from you and then say your dog’s name and “Come!”. If he does not come, pop the leash toward you, and then back up until he catches up with you: do not reach for him! You may kneel down to encourage him to come all the way to you. Then, have him “sit” and do the “Gotcha” command.
 - Gradually let him wander further away on his long line before calling him back to you, thus increasing the distance he comes.
 - Walk toward another person, dog, or toy. When he is distracted by something other than you, call him. If he does not turn to you immediately, pop the leash and continue as described above.
- Controlled Walking (“Let’s Go”) –
 - First steps to leash walking are:
 - Teach your puppy to follow you - this is a natural behavior for small puppies and only takes encouragement.
 - Leash break your puppy: this starts by letting him wear the leash and drag it all over the house.
 - After he is used to this, you can pick up the end of the leash and follow him, so he is not afraid when you hold the leash... then you are ready to begin.
 - Start in an area that is quiet and has few distractions. With a hotdog in your hand, walk backwards a few steps luring the dog. The puppy should follow your hand. Make sure that your hand is at the level of his nose (if it is too high, he will jump up). Give the reward word when the pup is following you and then give him the hotdog. When he is following you for a few steps, you can then turn clockwise (keeping your hand in the same position) so the dog is walking by your left side. Give the reward word and the hotdog. Once your puppy is readily walking with you on your left, there is no need to start by backing up.
 - Gradually lengthen the number of steps you can take with the puppy by your side. Be prepared to go back to a smaller number of steps if your dog is having difficulty. Use the hotdog as a lure at the dog’s nose to shape his behavior (in other words to get him to walk in a controlled fashion by your side).
 - Continue working on CONTROLLED WALKING. Gradually lengthen the number of steps you take with your dog by your side. Begin to eliminate luring him with food. Talk to your dog while you are walking. Treat him when he is doing well.
 - Begin making right turns and left turns as you walk. Lure with food around the turns.
 - Continue working on CONTROLLED WALKING. Use food as a reward and no longer as a lure.



The last two exercises are for puppies only:

- Controlled down
 - This is a “taking charge” exercise to let your puppy know that you are the top dog! It is NOT the same as the down command. Starting with your puppy in the sit position, place him on his side and keep him there for 5 seconds. Ignore his struggling. Do NOT talk soothingly to him. After 5 seconds, release him. Say “okay” and then lavish him with praise. Repeat daily until he accepts this subordinate position readily. Start with 5 seconds and work up to 5-10 minutes gradually over 2-3 weeks. Once puppy is relaxed in this position, it is a good position to practice handling exercises in. Handling exercises are simply exercises where you touch your puppy all over so he gets accustomed to this and accept it, for example, his feet, his ears, his teeth. Do a little and praise, and the next time a little more. You should feed him treats while doing handling exercises. Teach your puppy to think bones rain from the sky when you touch his feet! This will make nail trimming much easier!

- Bite inhibition
 - When dogs are mad, they don't write you a nasty letter, THEY BITE. It is a natural behavior. We must train them not to do it. When puppies are playing with their littermates, and play gets a little too rough and one puppy bites another too hard, what happens? Well, the puppy that got bitten yelps and ignores or shuns the puppy that bit him. In effect, he is ignoring the bad behavior. When he doesn't bite too hard, he is engaged in play and this appropriate behavior is rewarded. So, to teach puppies bite inhibition, we must do the same thing. If puppy starts biting while playing, say “OUCH!!” in a loud high pitch yelping tone. Then shun him for a moment. Praise the puppy when he stops biting and resume play. Repeat the “OUCH!!” command to eliminate biting by working in the following order: 1-no hard bites, 2-no pressure at all, 3-mouthing is okay until owner says to stop. The ultimate goal is for the puppy to never initiate mouthing as he grows into a dog. For retrievers and other breeds that are obsessed with carrying things in their mouths, keeping chew toys available to insert in their mouths (rather than your hands) is advisable. Food bowl handling should also be practiced. Tasty treats can be added to the bowl as a reward. Let the puppy learn to welcome a hand at his food bowl. These exercises are prescribed for puppies only!



FELINE SCRATCHING:

- Scratching is a normal behavior for all cats.
- Scratching shortens and conditions the claws.
- Cats scratch to mark their territory and to stretch.
- Even declawed cats scratch with their paws.
- Cats require an area for scratching.
- Scratching posts should be set up in prominent areas of the house, with at least one post near the cat's sleeping quarters.
- Make sure your scratching post is sturdy enough that it doesn't topple when being used.
- Posts may be horizontal or vertical, depending on your cat's preference.
- Choose a post covered in a material that appeals to your cat. Materials include: carpet, sisal, rope, corrugated cardboard, and wood.
- To lure your cat to his/her post, place a few play toys, cardboard boxes, catnip treats, or even the food bowl nearby. Turn the scratching post into an interesting and desirable play center.
- What to do if your cat displays inappropriate scratching:
 - All forms of physical punishment should be avoided since they can cause fear or aggression toward the owners.
 - A spray bottle with water may be useful for some animals.
 - The simplest approach is to cover the scratched surface with less appealing material: plastic, aluminum foil, double-sided tape, etc.
 - Most importantly, provide your cat with an appealing alternate scratching area.

