

# The Call of Doody



**Training a puppy to eliminate outside rather than in can be surprisingly quick and easy!!**

Unfortunately, more people are aware of the old wives tales type of methods than they are of good, science based techniques for housetraining. If you thought it was normal to take months to train good housetraining then you are probably using those old methods! Most of my puppies are housetrained to a reasonable degree of certainty by 12 weeks old and sleeping through the night.

## **Supervision**

This is so key. Whenever your puppy cannot be under your direct supervision they should be crated or tethered to you. This way you can be either sure they will be loathe to eliminate (crate) or you will be able to recognize the behaviours that mean the puppy needs to go out. Crate training is imperative for them to be comfortable in one without anxiety, so make sure you are working on that before using one.

## **How Long Can A Puppy Hold It?**

It is said that puppies are capable of holding it for 1 hour for each month old they are. Developing the muscles to hold it for longer will develop as the puppy grows and some puppies bladders develop a little slower than others. So a puppy that is 2 months old should only be expected to hold it for 2 hours. This of course does not mean they cannot go longer during the night when they are asleep and all their metabolic functions slow down. But a good rule of thumb during the day is an hour for each month old.

Overnight, if puppy wakes up and is restless, immediately take them outside to eliminate and then pee party and right back to bed. Do not make a habit of playing when out in the middle of the night or puppy will keep you up til all hours wanting to play.

## **When Do Puppies Need To Go Out?**

After eating, sleeping, playing, drinking and many times in between! Basically, take 8 week old puppies out every hour until you know their schedule and signs they need to go out. The more awake and active the more puppy will need to go out. As mentioned before, supervision is the key. When puppy is given freedom to roam and play, they must be under the direct, active supervision of an adult. Prevention of accidents is so important, but is very likely. Do not give puppy more freedom than they are ready for. Once your puppy has not eliminated in one room of the house for a week, try another room and a bit more freedom.

## **What About The Potty Bells?**

While they can be a great way for puppy to tell you they have to go out, most people abandon them quickly as it becomes an annoying habit for an adolescent to constantly be ringing the bells every time they just want to go out and play. Teaching the puppy that sitting by the back door or even barking can be just as effective.

If you wanted to teach them to ring the bell - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qagemQ\\_FRVE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qagemQ_FRVE)

To teach a puppy to sit by the back door to be let out - We want to create a chain of behaviour that results in the desired outcome. Every time you take puppy out, ask for a sit by the back door. When they sit, the door magically opens and they can go outside. Do this every time so puppy learns that sitting by the back door results in the door opening.



### **Training Procedure**

Dogs are creatures of habit. The more purposefully planned the potty breaks the easier your puppy will understand what is expected of them. One of the most common complaints I hear is "I took my puppy outside for an hour and nothing, but the second we got in the door he/she pooped or peed". Often this is because they have learned that peeing inside is safer, or where they have gone in the past and it wasn't cleaned up properly,, and sometimes it is because the texture is too similar to the area you are trying to teach them to eliminate on.

1. Take puppy out on leash or carry them to the spot you want them to eliminate on.
2. Stand quietly, not playing or giving them much attention other than a spoke cue to "go pee".
3. Once puppy is finished peeing, begin the pee party!!! Lots of high pitched praise, dancing around, treats if you have them, but get very excited!
4. If puppy did their business outside you can give them a bit of freedom to roam and play. If they did not, either put them in their crate with a chew for 20 mins or tether them to you while you are stationary to avoid them sneaking away to do it in the house.

This will continue until puppy is housetrained. You DO have to go outside with them every time until they are.. Once they are reasonably efficient you can open the door and let them out and mark with "yes" the moment they are done and they can come back into the house to get their party, but if you want them to stick to a certain area in the yard, you will need to put in the time to show them where that is.

### **What Happens If Puppy Makes A Mistake?**

IF you catch puppy in the middle of eliminating in the house, interrupt with a pleasant, not scary or angry, sound and snatch them up to take outside to finish. If you scare the puppy they will learn to go out of sight to pee in the house and next time you move your couch you could have a nasty surprise. Carry them out instead of letting them walk as I guarantee they won't make it. If they finish out there, they get the party. If not, no party.....

IF you do not catch the puppy in the act then there is nothing you can do, but clean it up and whack yourself in the nose with a newspaper for not supervising your puppy lol. Make sure you clean it up with an enzymic cleaner like Nature's Miracle and let it sit on carpets or upholstery for 20 minutes before blotting it up.

### **Pee Pads ....To Use Or Not To Use?**

I always caution against their use, but in some cases it is completely unavoidable. If you are in an apartment or it is -40 degrees outside, it may be in your pups and your best interest to start or even always use an in home toilet arrangement. If you want your pup to transfer to going outside it is best to start there if you can and be diligent. Using pee pads teaches your puppy that sometimes peeing inside is fine. If you plan on having a potty patch or like system for elimination then by all means, start them on it right from day 1. If it is too cold to be taking puppy outside to eliminate, using pee pads can be a temporary help, but you will have a lot more steps to transfer them outside when the weather changes.



If you are like many other owners who have a full time job away from the

**Potty Patch**

home, you will have to leave your puppy with options for elimination in their pens. An environment instead of just a crate is preferable to give puppy a place to eat, drink, sleep, play and eliminate. This is what the xpens are for. I find it more practical to use the washable pee pads or even a potty patch in the pen for elimination purposes as they are not ripped up by bored puppies like the disposable ones.

### **What Goes In Must Come Out.**

If puppy is on a low quality dog food they will need to eat a lot more of it to meet their nutritional needs. Overeating dog food can cause loose stools and a lot of tummy upset as the puppy tries to digest this massive amount of food. Puppies under 6 months should be eating 3x per day. The best food for you puppy depends on breed, their metabolism, and chemical make up. There is no "best food" for every dog, but there are foods that dogs do chronically poor on and cannot in good conscience recommend. Never get your puppy's food from the grocery or department store. Some of the most popular brands of dog food are complete garbage, but they are cheap...hence the popularity. There are two things I do not ask my vet their opinion about as they do not receive adequate education on the subject in school. The first is behaviour, the second is nutrition. A general vet will only suggest foods they carry which are traditionally poor quality foods by Hills Science Diet and Royal Canin or Purina. Ask instead for a referral to a board certified nutritionist if you are uncertain what to feed your puppy or be prepared to do a ton of research.



Choose a food by carefully reading the list of ingredients on the side or back. At the very least, a named meat (eg. chicken or lamb, not byproducts or simply meat as a descriptor) should be the first ingredient. Grains should be kept to a minimum and corn, wheat and soy should be eliminated completely. Hopefully no foods contain BHA and BHT any longer, but be on the lookout for that in very low quality foods as well. Check out options like dehydrated and raw foods as well. All my dogs are on and have been raised on raw food starting at 8 week old. Having taken several nutritional courses (independent, not through a kibble company) I can safely say it is a game changer for us and all the dogs that come through this house, including the ones with serious health problems. Feeding a balanced raw food take some reading and you can always ask me if you want some additional resources, but it is not just picking up meat at the grocery store and feeding it to your dog. You will pay more for a good quality food, but what you save in vet bills and see in the vitality of your dog will be worth it.

It is much easier to train a puppy on a feeding schedule rather than free fed. There are so many reasons why free feeding is not recommended, but this is definitely one. Splitting puppy meals into 3 and put down the morning portion and give them 15 minutes to eat. What goes uneaten can be added to the afternoon meal and then the dinner. By bringing up the food after 15 minutes you are letting puppy know that it is not something available at all times and they better get busy. Often if puppies are uninterested in their food, you may have the wrong food, they may prefer to eat out of puzzles (most dogs do), or they might not be feeling well which you are better able to recognize if they are on a schedule.

### **Excitement Or Nervous Peeing?**

Some puppies have a really hard time controlling their piddles of excitement or nervousness before developing the muscles to control better. Luckily they typically grow out of this as they mature, but teaching them to repond with a bit more impulse control around new people is also a good strategy. Sitting for attention instead of jumping, settle on a mat and stay can all be helpful to keep your guests shoes dry. My very first dog peed on the Welcome Wagon lady when we moved back to Calgary.

### **My Dog Relapsed On Housetraining!**

Has your dog been checked for a medical reason for a relapse? UTI's are common and easily treated and if your dog is peeing very frequently and small amounts you will want to get that checked specifically. If there is no underlying medical reason for it, then we have to assess what has changed. New work schedule?

New pet in the home? New baby? New anxiety? Any new stress should be considered as a factor and a dog's mental wellbeing should also be assessed. If you cannot think of anything, going back to basic 101 housetraining is recommended for a brief period to remind the dog, but more often than not there is a medical or emotional reason behind it.

### **New Adult Dog?**

Any new dog that comes into your home will need to be shown the house rules. Where to eliminate is one of them. Often I get people telling me that they were lied to about the housetraining status of a rescue dog as the foster home said they were and they clearly aren't in their home. The problem is not that the dog isn't housetrained, but that they just haven't been shown where to go and how to tell you. Often new adopters miss the signs that their dog needs to go out.

Starting at housetraining 101 for the first few days will help you and your dog learn to communicate this more effectively. Go out, show them where to go, when they go there, throw a pee party! If they eliminate improperly, don't make a big deal of it, interrupt if you can and show them where to go instead. Just like puppies, dogs need to be given only as much freedom as they earn in the first few weeks so that they are set up for success. Generalizing the housetraining they had at the previous home should be easy to do as long as you are consistent, gracious and instructional about it. Remember that your dog's whole world has been shaken up again and learning a new family, new rules and new expectations takes time.

