



of sonoma county

Santa Rosa & Healdsburg

HOUSE TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

The 2 rules for house-training success

Prevent Accidents. Supervise your puppy in the house. Use a crate when you are not sure if your puppy is empty.

Reward your puppy for going outside. Praise at the right moment, i.e. the second he starts “going.” Reward with a treat after he is finished.

Preventing accidents: Long-term and short-term confinement.

What is long-term confinement?

A place for your puppy to stay when you can't provide 100% supervision. In other words, when you are out, or busy around the house, and can't keep your eyes on him the entire time. It prevents chewing accidents, potty accidents, and teaches your puppy to be alone.

Confinement? Is that too strict?

Not at all. It is the best possible start for your puppy in your household. People often give a new puppy complete freedom right away. Then, when he has an accident on the carpet or chews on the legs of the coffee table, they confine him, and confinement becomes a punishment. Instead, give your puppy a safe place from the beginning, and let him make a gradual and successful transition to his new home. He will be much happier and your furniture will be intact.

When do I use it?

Use a long-term confinement area if you will be gone longer than your puppy can hold it. Setting up the confinement area. The ideal confinement area is easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate. It should be mostly free of furniture and non-puppy related objects. The best places for a confinement area are the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom, or an empty spare room. Furnish with:

- A puppy potty pad or litter box
- Your puppy's crate (with the door open)
- Water and food bowls
- A chew toy or Kong

Getting your puppy used to his confinement area:

Step 1. Take your puppy out for a walk or bathroom break.

Step 2. Give him a chew bone or a stuffed Kong. Leave him alone in the confinement area while you go about your business in the house.



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Step 3. After 5 minutes or before he finishes his chew, let him out but don't make a big deal about it or make a fuss over him.

Repeat steps 1-3, gradually increasing the time you leave your puppy in his confinement area without leaving the house. Vary the length of your absences, from 30 seconds to 20 minutes, and repeat them throughout the day. Leave your puppy in his confinement area (or crate) at night. It is normal for him to try a little crying as a strategy to get out, so brace yourself for that. He has to get used to alone-time.

Step 4. Within the first day or two, start leaving the house for really short intervals like going to the mailbox or taking out the trash. Gradually work up to longer absences, like running errands.

Training Tip: Be patient. It may take several days or weeks for your puppy to get used to his confinement area.

Troubleshooting: If your puppy begins to howl, whine, or bark, wait until he has been quiet for at least 10 seconds before you respond. Otherwise, he will learn that whining or barking makes you appear or gets him out of the confinement area, and he will bark or cry more often and longer in the future.

What is short-term confinement?

It means crating your puppy. A crate is a terrific training and management tool. It is useful for housetraining, brief alone time, settling, and any form of travel. Most importantly, a crate teaches your puppy to hold it when he has to go to the bathroom. A crate helps your puppy in many ways—and saves your carpets.

Is using a crate cruel?

Absolutely not. A crate can be your puppy's favorite place in the world. Think of it as his crib. Use treats, praise, and toys to make your puppy love his crate. Just remember never to use the crate for more than 3-4 hours at a time, except for bedtime

When do I use it?

Use the crate for short absences. General guidelines for crating puppies:

8-10 weeks: up to 1 hour

11-12 weeks: up to 2 hours

13-16 weeks: up to 3 hours

Over 4 months: up to 4 hours

Getting your puppy used to the crate

Step 1. Begin crate training right away—preferably the first day your puppy is in your home.

Step 2. Throw small tasty treats into the crate one at a time. Praise your puppy when he goes in to get the treat.



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Step 3. When your puppy is comfortable going into the crate, practice closing the door for 1-2 seconds, then treat him through the door. Let him back out. Repeat this step many times, gradually building to 10 seconds.

Step 4. Stuff a Kong with something very yummy or use a special bone that will take a lot of time to chew. Put the chewies in the crate. Shut the door. Move about the house normally. Let your puppy back out after 5 minutes or when he finishes his treat. Don't make a fuss over him. Repeat this step several times, varying the length of your absences from 1 to 20 minutes.

Step 5. Next, leave your puppy in the crate with something delicious while you leave the house for short errands, like getting the mail or watering the garden. Gradually build your absences.

Training Tip: When you plan to crate your puppy for longer than an hour, make sure he is well exercised, has gone potty, and is ready for a nap.

Troubleshooting: If your puppy is going to the bathroom in his crate, remove any bedding and make sure he has been pottied before you put him in the crate, and that he is not being left for too long. Make sure you are following the rules for good potty training. If all else fails, call us.

Training Tip: Don't think that confinement and crating is too strict on your puppy. You are doing him a big favor. A few short weeks' time investment on your part nets you a lifetime of freedom for your puppy—and you don't have to replace your carpet.