



"Housebreaking your new puppy"

On using the instinct that puppies have of not soiling their bedding and the fact that they end up "going" where they get used to going.

Kennel training or crate training a new puppy is the most direct and sure-fire way of house training your puppy. A carrier of proper size is selected from a pet store. It should be large enough to allow your puppy to stand up and move around but small enough to essentially be just a bed. The objective is to confine the puppy for a short period of time in its bed, where it does not want to "go" and then to take him/her to that spot in the yard that you want them to use, or other suitable spot, and allow them to "use" that area. They can eat, drink, play and hopefully "go" in that area. Keep them there for a period of 15-20 minutes and then they are returned to the kennel or carrier for another short period of time. Very young puppies do not have as much "control" as older puppies do so the period of time that they spend in the carrier is shorter, about an hour. Puppies that are 3-4 months of age can spend more time in their carriers, like 2-3 hours. Most young puppies get used to going in this special area that you have selected for them. It becomes the spot that they "go". They are used to going there and it will seem strange for them to "go" anywhere else and then they are housetrained. They will go to the door that is closest to the way out to their area and whine or bark to be let out. You need to be very conscious about the first signs they give you that they want out and respond quickly. In the beginning your puppy may just go to the door and sit there waiting for you. Letting them out to go to their area is what you have been waiting for, do not miss the opportunity. This will reinforce the puppies desire to use that area and its knowing that it can get to that area when needed.

There is another advantage to using the crate for training. Before long your puppy will be used to the carrier as their bed and at night they get into their bed without a hassle. When a puppy starts enjoying the security of the carrier, you don't have to worry where your puppy is or where it might "go" in the middle of the night. This is quite a pleasant nightly ritual for most puppy owners. Some people really do want their puppy to sleep in their bed, so for them, this crate method would seem objectionable for the night bed, but it certainly advisable for the day time bed.

I believe that it is counterproductive to scold or punish your puppy for "going" inside the house, for its accident. My suggestion is that there be a family meeting and a decision be made that "accidents" in the house are not acceptable. I suggest that there be an agreement of all the members of the family that they will be sure that there are no "accidents" in the house for a period of two weeks. During this time the puppy can not be allowed to be in the house unattended. If the puppy is in the house where an "accident" could occur, then some responsible member of the family should be in charge and be an

arm's length away from the puppy and their eyes on the puppy or the puppy is not allowed to be unattended in the house. It is in someone's arms, in its crate or kennel, or it is outside. Or the puppy is placed in a confined area of the house that is totally covered with newspaper so that if there is an accident were to occur it would not be on the flooring of the house, it will be on newspaper.

If an "accident" does occur then it is not the puppy's fault, it is the fault of the person that was supposed to be watching over the puppy. A new level of commitment needs to be made so that there will be no "accidents" inside the house. Some owners have reported that they were able to house train their puppy in a week. The level of commitment that you make to "no accidents" in the house will be a crucial factor in the amount of time that it will take you to train your puppy. Puppies seem to want to go where they get used to going. So if they get used to "going" in the house 10% of the time, it will take longer for them to "go" outside 100% of the time. Your goal needs to be NO ACCIDENTS in the house, EVER. And that demands constant supervision. That level of supervision is the most difficult for the smallest dogs. I believe that is why the toy breeds are the most difficult puppies to train.

If you plan to keep your puppy outside, then house breaking involves the same level of observation when they are allowed in the house. You must be certain that you are not allowing for the opportunity that your puppy has a chance to "go" in the house in the beginning, until you have learned that you can trust them.

I do not object to the use of treats to reward the proper behavior and am sure that there are times that it would enhance the training results. Small bite sized pieces of cheese are my favorite treat to use for training, and there are many different treats that can be used. For rewards to be successful they need to be timed properly. The reward needs to be at the precise time that the puppy is engaged in the activity that you are rewarding them for. And your reward needs to be consistent, at least in the beginning. Once they start getting the idea that they are getting a reward then it is valuable to give them giant unexpected rewards from time to time, and no rewards at other times.

This form of reinforcement has a more lasting affect on your puppy. They never know for sure when they will get a reward, but they definitely remember the times that they got the giant reward and continue to do the behavior that you have trained them for.

Allowing your puppy to stay in a room, like a kitchen or bathroom that is completely covered with newspaper is a "second best" training technique and works for people that are not around the house during the day to let their puppy out frequently. They can be left in this room during the day. "Messses" on the newspaper are not considered accidents because they are not on your flooring. When you are home you need to pay the same kind of attention to them as described above. You need to have the attitude that there can be no "accidents" in the house. If there are "accidents", the responsible party needs to realize that the level of attention that they are giving the puppy is not consistent enough to train the puppy quickly. When using a paper covered area for training and the puppy is "going" in the house this is somewhat confusing the issue for the puppy. It is going inside the house, but at least it is

not on your flooring, and the type of surface that the puppy uses is a large factor in its selection of a place to "go". They just naturally seem to select grass or bushes to "go" in.

