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CRATE TRAINING vs POTTY TRAINING

Crate training your new puppy is one of the best tools I can recommend to you. The crate provides a safe haven for your puppy whenever you cannot give your undivided attention to him. It also aids tremendously in the house breaking process. Crate training and house breaking are two different things. However, they are very closely related and must accompany one another. I use the term 'crate training' to represent teaching the puppy to wait quietly inside his crate. A crate trained puppy should not whine or protest being in the crate during the day or at night. A crate trained puppy will ride quietly and safely inside the crate in your car. A crate trained puppy will sleep quietly all night long and give you a peaceful rest. Crate training aids in house breaking your puppy. The crate also provides a quiet place for a puppy to relax and stay out of trouble when you cannot watch him. It is impossible to watch your puppy %100. You should get into the habit of crating your puppy whenever you cannot give him you UNDIVIDED attention. Have you ever had a puppy chew your favorite pair of shoes when you weren't looking? Where were you? Crate training will prevent a mischievous puppy from ruining that expensive wool rug and keep him from having accidents in your home. Crate training is very valuable, but comes with a price tag....commitment! Most puppies are not crate trained at 8 weeks and I have never known one to be house broken at that age. This is the responsibility of the new pet owner. The process is very simple, but there is no room for laziness on our part. Make sure you are committed to the routine a new puppy will require before you purchase. It is easier to be successful house breaking a puppy if you are committed from the first day you bring your puppy home.

The crate will aid in your house breaking process because dogs typically will not urinate where they sleep. Your puppy's natural instinct is to wait until he is out of his 'den' to urinate. Use this concept to your advantage. Your crate should be the appropriate size for your puppy. Extra large crates for small puppies only hinder your progress. Here's why. If the crate is too large the puppy will have room to sleep in one side of the crate and have plenty of room to get up, walk to the other side and urinate without soiling his bed space. This creates confusion and I feel you are setting your puppy up for failure. THE ONLY place I want my puppy to urinate is outside!! So from day one, the only place I allow it, is outside! For potty training success your crate should only be big enough for him to stand up and turn around in. That way, the confine space acts like his den. I like to place my crate conveniently by the back door. This makes it easy to get a puppy with a full bladder outside before an accident. Later when your puppy is comfortable in the crate and sleeping through the night with no accidents, you can increase the size of the crate if you wish and move the crate to a different location. By this time, your puppy likely will have grown big enough he will need a larger size crate anyway.

Crating your puppy multiple times during the day will set your puppy up for success for housebreaking. Stay committed to the routine. Don't be fooled by a puppy that goes several days without an accident and think he is housebroken. He isn't. Although your puppy may catch on very quickly it is extremely important that you do not deviate from your routine of crate training. I do not fully trust my dogs in the house until they are about a year old. Until that time they are watched %100 or crated when inside the house-even if I am most certain they are house broken.

Start with an empty crate. For young puppies I remove all bedding. Do not add bedding for several months. Some folks may disagree with me on this. But I have found that bedding encourages the puppy to urinate instead of learning to wait until he is out of his 'den' to relieve himself.

Have fun with your puppy! Play with him. A tired puppy is a good puppy and will be less likely to get into trouble. He will also be ready for a nap! Thus, a perfect time to introduce him to the crate. Take him outside to make sure his bladder is empty and then place him inside the crate. He will likely whine and protest. Every puppy is different. Some will whine quietly, while others bark loudly and carry on. Remember your puppy is protesting and you should never let him out when he is protesting. Wait until he is quietly resting. You will want to wait until he is quietly playing with a chew toy or settles down for a nap. This may take a few minutes or 30 minutes. You may be a lucky one and have your tired puppy curl right up and go to sleep. If he goes to sleep, let him sleep for 20 minutes or so. It is a good idea to wake him up before he wakes up on his own. When he wakes up on his own, he will surely have to go potty and start whining. A bad spot to be in. If you let him out now, you are conditioning him to learn that if he whines, he will be let out. But, if YOU can wake him up you are rewarding his quiet behavior by letting him out. Pick him up and take him immediately outside to potty. Make sure he relieves himself. He may potty once or twice before his bladder is empty. You will need to watch and learn your puppy's behavior as each one is different. Once his bladder is empty bring him inside for some play time.

After about 30-60 minutes or so of playing (watching him the whole time. Here is where the leash would come in handy. Make him follow you around so you can keep an eye on him) I would take him outside again. If he goes potty outside, let him play inside for 30 more minutes. Then back into his crate for 20-30 minutes. Repeating this process. Each time he comes out of his crate he would go directly outside to relieve himself. While outside, do not talk to him. Stand quietly or walk quietly in the area you want him to go. It will be very distracting to him if you give him eye contact or talk to him. Ignoring him will allow him to do his business. Once he has gone potty, praise him and take him inside.

If he does NOT relieve himself outside after 5-7 minutes, take him back inside to the crate. Try again in 30 minutes or so. Repeat the process until he figures out he can potty outside. The first few days are a lot of work. I promise you if you will do it religiously he will catch on very quickly and you can lengthen your play times and crate times. Only take him out of his crate when he has been quiet. You shouldn't reward a crying, protesting puppy! Unless of course he is whining because he has to go out.

If he is crated at night it is a good idea to let him out once or twice in the beginning. doesn't potty....plan on waking up in 60 minutes to try again. I recommend using a long lead DO NOT TALK TO HIM. Keep things quiet and "all business" so he will settle down quickly once back outside. Unfortunately, I recommend going out with him at night so you KNOW he relieved himself. If he at night so I can avoid calling the dog and talking to him. It isn't play time and I don't like my dogs to really "wake up." Just give him an opportunity to relieve himself and right back to bed. If he protests after putting him back to bed with whining...do not give in! Night time training typically lasts 1-14 days. If done correctly, your puppy should be sleeping through the night before 2 weeks is up!

When he pees in the house it means he isn't sure where to go yet. Whatever you do, don't scold him. When I am potty training a pup I use a crate a lot of the time. He would only get to play in the house just after relieving himself outside and I am certain his tract is empty.

Remember to take him outside religiously to potty every time he

- 1) wakes up from a nap
- 2) 5-30 minutes after eating or drinking
- 3) anytime he comes out of his crate
- 4) has played good without accident for 1-2 hours

Also, if there is an accident on the carpet, I like to clean it with 4:1 water:vinegar solution. This neutralizes the smell and discourages him from going there again. Dogs tend to eliminate themselves where they can smell urine. There are also over the counter sprays that do the same thing.

BE CONSISTENT! Keep a routine!
Written by NICOLE BLACKHURST

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