



Chastain Veterinary Medical Group Pet Health Fact Sheet

Houstraining Puppies

Your new puppy! It's just so cute! All you want to do is cuddle it, roll it over, play with it, hug it...**oops!**

Then it makes a "cute" little puddle! Or something worse - and now your house is no longer such a nice home to be in!

"So, how do I stop my pup from peeing everywhere, Doc?"

Now, you're probably going to think we're terrible! We're going to tell you to put your precious pup in a crate or pet carrier and not to play with it for what may seem like a very, very long time. We're going to help you

HOUSETRAIN YOUR PET.

Does it sound too harsh? Quite seriously, it is cruel *not to* houstrain a pet. Much of the punishment pets receive is the result of "messing up" and we don't really want to have to punish our pets, now do we?

At Chastain Veterinary Medical Group, we've developed a program that's been used to houstrain thousands of pets and we'd love to share it with you.

Remember! Your puppy needs a little time to grow to the point when it can control those little accidents, so we need to follow a step-by-step program. And here it is:

Step 1 Get an airline approved shipping crate!

This shipping crate or pet carrier will become your puppy's new home. When you're not actually playing with the puppy, put it in the crate and leave it there for a short period of time. Do this frequently - until it is fully houstrained.

It is really not cruel to keep a puppy in a crate. In the wild, most canids (dogs and dog-like animals) dig burrows and use dark tunnels in the earth as dens. Since dogs have evolved from wolf-like animals, being in close, confined, dark spaces is, in fact, normal and natural for them. In fact some seem to really like it.

And here's a bonus - Your dog will be familiar with crates or pet carriers and less stressed if it has to travel in one by airline or automobile at some later stage.

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Step 2 Keep him/her cozy!

Your crate should be only just large enough for your puppy to stand up in, turn around and lay back down comfortably. If you do get a larger crate to allow for “growing room”, then fill part of it with boxes, sandbags or other similar items. Arrange these to temporarily limit the floor space to just enough for the puppy to stand up in, turn around and lay back down.

The space must be confined so if the puppy “messes up” it cannot get away from the elimination for a while. This will reinforce, in the puppy’s mind, the need to “hold it” until it gets to go outside.

Remember! Even a small room in the house, such as a bathroom or utility room, is just too large and generally will not work as well as a crate will.

Dogs are naturally clean animals. They do not want to “mess up” where they sleep. So, the instinct to keep the crate clean is already built in. All we have to do is use that instinct.

Airline approved crates and pet carriers are plastic and are easily washed out. This makes it a lot easier for cleaning up after mini disasters!

Just a thought! When you are cleaning up your pup, it is important to use a high quality pet shampoo with a balanced pH.

Step 3 Try and forget about it!

Yes! We understand how you feel, but when the puppy is placed in the pet carrier; please try not to show it any attention whatsoever! If you talk to it, stick your finger through the door to pet it, yell at it, or show it any attention while it is in the crate, the puppy will quickly learn that all it has to do is bark, howl or whine to get more attention. So if you pay attention to the puppy while it is in the pet carrier, you will allow the puppy to train you, instead of you training the puppy!

Starting from the first night put your puppy in the shipping crate and consider placing the crate in a distant room. Leave a radio playing softly so your puppy won’t feel totally alone. This may also drown out any whining and barking so you can get a good night’s sleep. This will be hard on both of you at first. But after a week or so, you will be amazed at how much the puppy loves its new “bed”.

Yes! Yes! We know how long a week is but you really must steel yourself!

Steps 4 Out we go!

As soon as you take your pup out of the crate, take it outside immediately. Put the puppy down where you’d like for it to eliminate and let it sniff around and explore. If it does not do “its business” promptly, then put it back in the crate and try again in 5 minutes. Take it to the same spot every time. Some puppies become so excited when they get outside that they forget what they are supposed to do, but it does not take them long to learn that their reward for “doing the doings” is to get to stay out of the pet carrier.

Remember! Most puppies are fully capable of holding it for hours if they really want to - so if at first you don’t succeed...!

Be sure to lavish praise on the puppy when it does do what it has to do. Praise is much more effective on puppies than punishment.

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Dogs are really very clean animals and do not want to “mess up” where they stay. With consistent encouragement and by following a few simple rules, you will be surprised how easy it is to houstrain your new puppy and how much your pup actually enjoys the experience.

Step 5 Feed your pup well but time it right!

Here is the general rule for feeding puppies: Feed your pup all it will eat in 15 minutes (dry food (kibble) only, moistened with warm water if need be). After fifteen minutes, take the food up. You can warm up the food in a microwave to enhance the flavor and taste.

No table scraps please! It is much better to add a commercial canned food that is nutritionally balanced to the dry food than to add table scraps.

Puppies should be fed 3-4 times daily until they are 4-6 months of age. After that, they can be fed twice daily. Once they are adults they can go to once daily feeding or free choice feeding. In the meantime, if you go to work, feed the puppy early in the morning, again as soon as you get home and again one hour before bedtime and take it outside to do “its business” each time.

High quality food will result in much less stool volume and less odor.

Warning! It is next to impossible to houstrain a puppy that is on “free-choice” feeding where the food is left available at all times. It must be restricted to definite feeding intervals to develop good bowel habits.

Step 6 Time’s up!

After the puppy has finished eating, take it outside to have a bowel movement. Almost every puppy will have a bowel movement at some point within 1 hour after eating. Each puppy is unique. Some puppies take five minutes, some 30 minutes and some take up to an hour. Whatever the timing happens to be for your puppy, you will usually find that it will be close to that same time each and every time. Once you have learned the appropriate timing for your particular pet, you can wait and take it outside close to that exact time.

Make sure you feed your puppy early enough so that it has enough time to have a bowel movement before placing it in the crate when you go to work or go to bed.

Step 7 Follow the rules!

- Water should be freely available to your puppy when it is out of the crate.
- No water or food should be fed to the puppy in the crate.
- Always take the puppy outside before placing it in the crate.
- Always take the puppy outside as soon as you take it out of the crate.
- Keep an eye on the puppy when it is out of the crate and loose in the house. Look for those little signs that say its time to “go”! Signs like circling, restlessness, sniffing, whining, etc.
- When you take the puppy outside and nothing happens, put the puppy back in the crate for a few minutes and try again.
- Take the puppy outside to eliminate after:
 - Each meal
 - Anytime it drinks water
 - Whenever it is taken out of the crate
 - Just before going back in the crate
 - After playing games or getting excited
 - Whenever you see the “Signs” - circling, sniffing, whining, restlessness, etc

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Step 8 Be Patient!

Puppies are smart and quickly learn what to do if you will just be a little patient.

Yes! We know how hard it is not to break the rules, but do trust us on this one. We have used this method of housetraining for thousands of puppies. We have found it the easiest and “least messy” way. It works if you will just follow these directions carefully. Please let us know if you have problems - we will be glad to help you.

Remember, most housetraining accidents are the fault of the owner, not the dog! Oops!

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