

DOG SAVVY

HOUSE AND CRATE TRAINING

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Dedicated to K'dar – *"I still feel you by my side..."*

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Introduction

One of the main complaints from new puppy owners as well as owners of older pups or dogs is that the pup is not fully “house-broken”. Not surprisingly the first thing on most people’s minds when they bring home a new pup or dog is training her to be “house-clean”. You will find the term “house-clean” is used here instead of “house-broken” simply because this is not a matter of “breaking” the pup’s “spirit” rather it is teaching the pup how to be clean inside your house. Achieving that is more than a matter of convenience - it’s the basis of good relationship.

Let me say that in another way: To have a good relationship with your new pup or dog, she must be house-clean. That’s not to say that if your dog *is* house-clean you will automatically have a good relationship, but if your dog is not 100% house-clean your relationship will most definitely suffer. Training your pup or dog to be truly house-clean is very first step in building a great foundation with your companion.

To have a good relationship with your new pup or dog, the dog must be house-clean.

Teaching your new pup to be 100% house-clean is a relatively simple process, but it requires knowledge, consistency, and fairness. This book will give you the knowledge you need, but it’s up to you to be consistent and fair. As you train, keep in mind that you need to observe your pup and respond to his level of understanding. Pups or dogs that are not house-clean are not being “bad”. They truly don’t understand what your expectations are. So, please, take the time to start your pup out right.

You will begin teaching your pup house-clean behaviors the moment you bring her into the house. Make sure all members of the household are on board with this process. Addressing this aspect of training immediately will help prevent your pup from developing the unpleasant habit of relieving herself in the house, and will help ensure your happy cohabitation.

However, there may be situations where you have had your pup for awhile and/or you are having trouble with teaching her how to be house-clean. This book is set up to teach you how to teach the pup, regardless how long you have had her. Certainly, the sooner you teach your pup correctly – the better for all involved. But not all is lost if you don’t start right away. In fact, all the steps that you will see outlined, can be directly applied to adult dogs that you have recently adopted or are having house-messing issues. Chapter 6 specifically will talk about house training adult dogs. However, the steps are the same and even though I will refer to “pups” throughout this book, it is for dogs of all ages.

Chapter 2

The Three Parts of the House Training Process

1. Teaching pup to “hold” herself. (crate training)
2. Teaching pup where to relieve herself. (house-clean training)
3. Teaching pup to signal when she needs to go outside. (communication training)

Following is a description of each and then we’ll teach you how to teach your pup!

Part 1 – Crate Training: Hold on baby!!!!

As said earlier, the younger your pup is, the shorter period of time they can hold their urine and bowels. Keep this in mind, but you will also be continually pushing forward to teach your pup how to “hold it”, until they are in the correct location to relieve themselves.

“Holding it” is a rather un-natural thing for a dog or pup to do. In the wild, if an animal has to go, they find a place to go. But in order to have a good relationship with our canine we need to instruct them how to hold themselves until they are in the correct location to relieve themselves.

The vast majority of dog guardians teach their pup to hold it using a crate. We will be going into depth on using a crate to teach house-clean behaviors as well as how to teach them to be comfortably confined.

Some people don’t use a crate and can use confinement to a small part of the house effectively. Either via the crate or room as confinement – confinement will be the key to successfully teaching your pup house-clean behaviors.

Part 2 –House-clean Training: Location, location, location!

Understand that it is your choice as to where you want your pup to relieve herself. You can, in fact, train them for a specific location outside *or* just to go outside – anywhere is fine. But decide ahead of time what it is that you want as a final result. It is much easier to train the pup to the right location to start with, than to try and re-train the location later on.

If you select a specific outdoor location, it is easiest for the pup to clearly understand if there are some very visible markers. These markers may already be there in the environment – like the corner of the yard between 2 trees, the side of the garage that is a fairly defined area, etc. You can even make a specific area by building a short 1 foot barrier (i.e. this could be an attractive wood fence that is only 1 foot high!) with an opening for your dog to enter and relieve themselves. This area could even contain rocks/stones or woodchips for easier cleanup. This is very clear to the dog – boundaries are well established and they are either “in” or “out” of the area when they relieve themselves.

Note: if you elect to have your dog go in a specific area of the yard, you *must* keep it well picked up at all times. Running the sprinkler or hosing the area frequently will help the urine absorb into the ground and breakdown. Sprinkling lime in the relieving area and will also help the breakdown any odor. Most dogs will naturally go to the same area *unless* the area is full of old filth. It is unfair to ask your pup or dog to go to the bathroom in an area that you don’t keep clean.

It certainly is not necessary to teach your new pup a specific area, only know that if you would like him to go to the same area each time; you certainly can teach him that.

In thinking about location, some dogs get into a habit of only going in their own yard and not on walks. Some people like this as they don’t have to carry their dogs waste with them on the walk. But, this can be pretty hard on a dog if you ever travel with him. From the start it is best to teach your puppy that they can relieve in different areas away from home. Also teach them to be able to “go” while they are on a leash or some dogs will develop the habit of “holding it” if they are on a leash. Just keep all these things in mind as we start the actual training process.

Part 3 – Communication Training: “Helloooo - I have to go outside”!

A pup can quickly learn that “going outside” is the right thing to do, but if they don’t know how to tell you that they need to relieve themselves, there will be mistakes in the house. Many dogs will develop their own signal to indicate their needs: a special woof, a scratch at the door, or looking cross-eyed. But many pups don’t figure out how to “ask” so it is important that we teach them a signal so we know they need to relieve themselves. Giving your pups the tools to be successful is the key to any good dog training, regardless of what it is your want to teach them.

Let’s jump in now and talk about part 1: crate/confinement training!