

# Wilmette Pet Center

*"the place for people who love pets"*

## **Potty training your new puppy**

Amidst the joy of bringing home a new puppy is the dreaded chore of potty training. But with the right equipment and knowledge, it doesn't have to be a long, difficult process.

Using a crate is, in our opinion, one of the easiest and fastest ways to teach your new pup what the rules are. While some think putting a dog in a crate is a cruel thing to do, it is actually a very natural thing for dogs. In the wild, dogs, wolves, coyotes and other canines instinctively seek out small, dark, cramped caves and nooks to sleep. Puppies are born in small dens, and have a natural urge to keep their space clean. You're going to use this instinct to help train your pup to go to the bathroom outside

The biggest tool for success is consistency. Dogs are very much creatures of habit and routine. Do it the same way, every time, at the same time, to help your dog learn the rules. Teach the whole family the procedure so that they are helping reinforce the training.

### **The first steps**

**Select the right sized crate.** You want to give your pup enough room to stand up, turn around, and lay back down. If you give them too much extra space, they'll sleep in one section and go to the bathroom in the other, confusing them as to the rules and setting back your potty training efforts. All of our wire crates come with divider panels that you move to limit their movements.



**Make the crate a safe, fun place.** A lot of puppies are not big fans of crates, but they have to get used to them. Use small treats to lure your dog into the crate, and feed them near the crate so they associate it with positive things. You can even feed them in the crate, with the door open, to get them used to it. Never use it to punish or exclude your pup.

Cover the top and the sides of the crate with a blanket. This creates a more cave-like feel and makes the pup feel more secure. Be sure the ends are out of the way so the puppy does not chew on them.

Use a pheromone spray like Comfort Zone with DAP to help make the crate a more comfortable. These scentless chemical messengers help take the edge of anxiety off and make the crate a more pleasant place. The plug in style gives you a continuous application of these calming pheromones.

Keep your voice lower and very matter of fact. Walk around the crate doing your normal activities. The less of a big deal you make the crate, the more comfortable they feel.

Keep all toys, food, and treats out of the crate. Except when using food or treats as a lure in the crate, you do not want them eating or chewing on anything in that small space.

**Important:** if your dog starts whining and whimpering in the crate, do not take them out. Doing so simply teaches them to make noise to get what they want and trains you to do what they want. When they make noises, do not go over to the crate and don't talk to them in baby voices. Turn around and walk away. Once they calm down, then you can go over and give them some attention, to let them know that it is silence and good behavior that gets them what they want.

There are a lot of different training methods out there. This is the one that we have found to be the easiest and gives the most reliable results.

### The actual potty training method

- ✚ Take your pup out of their crate and put their leash and harness on them. This gets them used to them and keeps them focused.
- ✚ Take them over to their food and water. Since they're not eating in the crate, they'll be hungry.
- ✚ Once they're done eating, immediately take them outside to a designated potty spot. Taking food in is going to make their body want to eliminate right away.
- ✚ Tie going to the bathroom with phrases; this will help them understand the process and makes potty breaks much faster. Decide what to use as a family. When they start sniffing around to go pee, say your phrase, and when they do their business, reward them. Tricky Trainers make great potty training treats, as they're small and can be broken into smaller pieces. Praise them and be excited. When they poop, do the same thing.

Many people like to teach their dog to ring a bell when they need to go out. You can train them to do this during this process. When you're going out after they've eaten, take their nose and bump it on the bells (which most people hang from the door handle). Do this every time, reward them with praise when the bell rings, and they'll quickly learn to do it when they want to go out.



Once they're done, then you can take them on short walks or play with them. But as a puppy, they get to live in one of two places. They're like a year old child, and you'd never let your baby roam the house without supervision. When you're done playing, they go back inside the crate or you can keep them out with the umbilical method.

**The Umbilical Method:** This technique is used to control your puppy when they're not in the crate. When you tie their leash to your belt, they follow your every step in the house. While it can be annoying at first to have the pup pulling on your belt, this serves as an important teaching tool, as your eyes are always on that dog. When you see them sniffing or hunching to go to the bathroom, you immediately

take them outside to their potty spot. This helps reinforce the crate training. This also helps teach dogs to stay right by you when walking.

Plan to take your puppy out about 6 times each day. Smaller dogs cannot hold for as long as larger dogs, so, in the beginning, plan to go out more frequently. Older and larger dogs might not need to go out quite so often. Most people find they have to get up once in the middle of the night to let the puppy go out, but this is only while they are really young. As they get older, they know how to hold it better.

And don't forget to pick up after your dog. Leaving dog poop lying around is not only unsightly and messy, it can also spread disease and support rodent populations.



**Accidents:** An occasional accident on the floor is to be expected, even from the best dog. How you handle it is important. Dogs are smart but they cannot reason. If Cubby gets around the corner and goes poop, even if you see it 15 seconds later, you cannot yell at them for it. They don't associate the poop on the floor with their action. To properly train, you need to discipline them in the act. We love to use the "BAH" method, as verbal corrections remind them, on an instinctive level, of the mother dog barking at them when they misbehave. You're the alpha in the pack, and you have to resolve to keep a better eye on them.

We recommend this technique even when you adopt an older dog, even if they seem to already be potty trained. It helps them understand the rules of their new home, and establishes the pecking order in the pack. You can also use this on older dogs who have suddenly seemed to "forget" potty training if needed.

Once they are done with the potty training and can be trusted to roam the house without having accidents, their crate should stay up. Many people choose to have their dog sleep there at night, and it makes a great way to keep them, and your house, safe when you're out. It also can serve as their own private space, their refuge when they need a safe place to hang out. They should not spend too many hours in their crate, and older dogs can have both more space and some toys to keep themselves entertained.

Keep in mind that the first few weeks is the most vital time for your family and your new pup. You're learning what they need and they are learning what the rules and guidelines are. Understanding how a dog's nature works, and using consistent training techniques, will help make this time a rewarding one and give you a well behaved dog.