

Eric Letendre's

Dog Training System

Private, One-On-One, In-Home Dog Training...Gauranteed Results!



How to Housetrain Your Puppy in 10 Days or Less

By Eric R. Letendre

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How to Housetrain Your Puppy in 10 Days or Less

Housetraining is a big problem for many puppy owners. To successfully housetrain your puppy you only need to follow the next three steps:

1. Manage the behavior
2. Teach your puppy where it is acceptable and where it is unacceptable to go
3. Proper cleaning

Manage the behavior

Management of behavior is extremely important when you are housetraining a puppy. Management simply means keeping a close watch over your puppy's behavior.

Most of the time our puppies will relieve themselves when we are not watching closely. Have you ever turned your back for a second only to discover that your puppy has urinated on your carpet?

It happens all the time.

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Here is my first rule of thumb for puppy owners. Never, ever let your puppy out of your sight until she is completely housetrained.

Many new puppy owners will ask me at this point: "What do I do when I cannot watch him?" My answer is still "Manage the behavior." A great management tool that luckily has become more and more accepted is the crate.

Now, if you have negative opinions about using a crate please continue reading so I can give you suggestions and explain why I believe every puppy should be crate trained.

I will also explain a foolproof method for teaching your puppy to love his crate if you are having a difficult time getting him to go into it.

Step 1

I strongly believe that every puppy should be crate trained. At some point in your dog's life there is a very good chance that she will be required to go in one. If your dog ever has to travel, go to a groomer, or spend the night at a vet's office, your dog will be placed in a crate.

It is much better for your puppy to learn crate training in the comfort of his home than to have some stranger shoving and forcing him into one when he is already stressed.

A crate is a great way to manage your puppy's behavior when you cannot watch him. Most puppies will not mess in the crate (if yours does mess in the crate, I will discuss what you can do later on) and it allows you to teach your puppy housetraining much faster.

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One of the other reasons that I feel so strongly about crates is the fact that I have seen plenty of puppies injured when they were allowed too much freedom.

I worked as an animal control officer for three years and during that time I saw dogs choke on objects, chew through electrical cords, get caught on fencing, and much more. Some of the dogs were only slightly injured. Some of them died. All of the injuries could have been avoided with proper crate training and management.

How To Teach Your Puppy To Love The Crate

Some puppies do not like the crate. What most of them don't like is the separation from you. Some have had negative experiences with the crate. What we don't want to do is force your puppy into the crate.

We want to teach your puppy that her crate is a good place, a fun place, and a place that she willingly enters. We want to teach your puppy to go to the crate on command.

How do we do that?

Simple. We develop your puppy's desire to go into the crate.

Here is what you need:

- Kong® toy
- Hot dogs
- String cheese
- Peanut butter
- Assorted treats

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Put all of the above on a table. Have your puppy's crate close by. Now call your pup over and pick up the Kong® toy. With your puppy right in front of you show her the hot dogs as you put them in the Kong®. Let her smell them but don't give her any.

Now pick up the cheese and put some in the Kong®. Then pack in a little peanut butter. Now take some of the assorted treats and stuff them in there. Take a little more peanut butter and top it off.

Remember, I want you to do this with your puppy watching; in fact I want you to do this inches away from his nose.

Now with your puppy still watching, take the Kong® and toss it into the crate. Here's the important part: Close the door on the crate. Don't let your puppy go in just yet.

Remember, I said that we wanted to develop your puppy's desire to go into the crate. If you have done everything correctly, your puppy should be outside of the crate looking in at the ultimate stuffed Kong® toy. Your puppy should be pawing at the door.

I want you to wait a few seconds and then I want you to take your hand off the door and tell your pup: "In the crate."

At that point your puppy should open the crate door and grab the Kong®.

DO NOT SHUT THE CRATE DOOR

Let your puppy grab it and take it out of the crate if he wants.

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After doing this a few times take a piece of string and tie it around the Kong® toy. Tie the string to the outside of the crate so your puppy cannot take the Kong® out of the crate. Now he has to stay in there to chew on the toy.

Only after your puppy starts to get comfortable in the crate should you start to close the door. Close the door for short periods of time. The first time you close the crate door - don't latch it. If your puppy paws at it, it should open. Once your puppy has been in for short periods of time you can start to latch it for a few seconds, and then minutes.

Another good thing to do is to start feeding your puppy all of his meals inside the crate. When it is breakfast or dinnertime, put the food dish in the back of your pup's crate.

Now that we have your puppy crate trained, you can start to use it when you cannot keep a close eye on her behavior.

The other reason that I am a big fan of crates is that many times we will punish our dogs long after the behavior has occurred. If your puppy urinated on the carpet before you got home and you punished her for the accident maybe as much as an hour after the behavior occurred, she would start to get confused.

It is important to remember that when you are rewarding a behavior you have about 1 to 3 seconds to reward. If it takes you more than 3 seconds, there is a good chance that your dog would think that he is being rewarded for something else.

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No one would ask their dog to do a command like sit, walk away, come back 20 minutes later with a treat and expect the dog to understand that the treat was for the sit that he performed 20 minutes earlier.

The same holds true with punishment. Why would we think that our dogs would understand the punishment when we administer it long after the behavior has occurred?

Here is the other problem with too much punishment when we are teaching our puppies housetraining. The puppy becomes afraid to go when we are around.

Let me explain. I often get calls from puppy owners who tell me they bring their pups outside and stand around for hours and they will not go. They come in the house and their puppies will still not go. They know that they have to go but they hold it.

Then when they take their eyes off their puppy for just a second, the pup sneaks off somewhere and goes.

When I ask the puppy owners what method of housetraining they have tried most of them explain that they pushed their pup's nose into the mess, or that they gave them a good smack.

Here's the problem:

When you use heavy punishment to housetrain, your puppy learns to not go in your presence. When you are around they "hold it" until they think you are not watching.

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Housetraining is a normal, natural function and getting hysterical over it will not help the situation. What we need to do is manage their behavior and show our puppies where we want them to go. This can be accomplished by following the next step.

Step 2: Teaching Your Puppy Where It Is Acceptable

So now you're keeping a close eye on your puppy, you're putting him in the crate when you can't watch him. Now we need to teach him where he can go.

If your puppy does start to go inside the house the best thing to do is to startle him. A loud "Hey" or "AH" is good. I usually will loudly clap my hands or stomp my foot and say "HEY!" I want to do it just firm enough to stop him. I then quickly put the puppy on leash and take him outside.

One of the biggest mistakes puppy owners make is to tie the pup up outside or put him in a fenced in yard. You need to be right there with your puppy while you are housetraining.

You see, training is all about influencing your puppy's behavior. If your pup is allowed to walk around without you there, then there is no feedback. You need to be right there to tell your puppy "Yes, this is where I want you to go."

Bring your puppy to same place in the yard on leash with some treats in your pocket. Once your puppy is done give her a reward. Tell her how smart she is.

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How To Teach Your Dog To “Go” On Command

This can be extremely useful...especially if you live in a cold part of the country. Standing outside waiting for your dog to go, wearing a bathrobe in sub-zero weather does not rank up there as one of the joys in life.

Teaching your puppy to go on command is pretty easy if you follow these steps.

1. Every time you bring your puppy outside he is on leash. While walking him, wait for him to give you the signals that he is getting ready to go. Most dogs will sniff the ground, walk in circles, etc. After you have had your pup for a while you'll be able to tell. While your puppy is giving the signals, start to say the command. I say: "Get busy." I'll keep saying it while my dog is sniffing the ground: "Get busy," "Get busy."
2. Once your puppy starts to squat - stop talking. Let him finish before you say anything. If your puppy is going and you say in a high-pitched voice "GOOD DOG," there is a good chance that your pup will stop before he is completely finished.
3. The second your puppy is done you can say: "GOOD DOG" and quickly reward her with a treat. You want to strengthen and reward the behavior. I recommend using treats and praise.

If you follow those steps consistently you will have a dog that goes on command. You'll be the envy of all your dog owning friends.

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How To Teach Your Puppy To Give You A Signal

When you are in the house it is a good idea to bring your puppy out before he is thinking about going. I get calls from dog owners that say that their dogs do not give them any signals. I always recommend bringing your puppy out on a frequent schedule.

Prevent the accident before it happens. Over a period of time you will start to notice if your puppy signals. Some pups will go to the door and scratch at it. Others will bark. Some dogs, like mine will pace. You need to keep a close eye on your puppy to see if he is trying to signal. If you see your pup sniffing the ground or circling, there is a good chance that she is getting ready to go.

You can teach your puppy to give you a signal by hanging a bell from your door. Hang a small bell from your doorknob on a piece of string. Put a little peanut butter on the bell. When your puppy touches the bell, quickly open the door and bring her outside. Over a period of time your puppy will learn that touching the bell gets her outside.

Step 3: Cleaning

A lot of our housetraining problems start with the type of cleaning solutions that we use. When your puppy goes in the house, many owners will use a commercial product to clean up the area.

If the product contains any ammonia it will smell like urine to your puppy. If your pup smells the ammonia thinking that it is the urine of another dog, he will try to cover the scent by going again in exactly same spot that you just cleaned.

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Cleaning should always be done with products that contain enzymes that can naturally break down the scent or vinegar and water. I like to use 'Natures Miracle' which can found in most pet stores.

Problems

Here are some typical questions that I get from puppy owners experiencing housetraining problems:

Q: "I've tried a lot of what you suggest but I still seem to be having a problem. My puppy will urinate and defecate all the time. Is there anything that I am missing?"

A: When a puppy owner tells me that their pup is going "all of the time" I know that this is not true. A puppy can't go 24 hours a day 7 days a week. He has to stop some of the time.

All kidding aside, if your puppy seems like he is always going there is a good chance that you may be feeding him too much. Most of the instructions on the dog food bags advise owners to feed puppies three times a day. I recommend twice a day.

You have to remember that what you put in will come out.

Closely monitor how much food and water your pup gets for a few days and scale back a little. See if that makes a difference.

Q. "My dog pees a lot. She drinks a lot and seems like she is always squatting and trying to go."

A. Sounds like you have a physical problem, not a housetraining problem. I recommend getting a urine sample and having your vet check it. There is a good chance that your puppy may have a urinary tract infection.

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Q. “My dog goes in the crate. He doesn’t care. He will urinate and defecate in the crate and just lay in it. I tried everything. What do you think I can do?”

A. This is a big problem for some dog owners. First thing I would recommend is a vet check. Have your vet perform a urine and stool check to rule out any physical problems.

The next thing I would advise for you to do is to get an x-pen. An x-pen is a large pen similar to a play pen that parents sometimes use with their children.



[X-Pen \(available from National Pet Cages\)](#)

When you are not there to watch your puppy you can put him in the x-pen instead of the crate. The x-pen is large enough for your pup to go in one area and then sleep in the other.

When I am working with a puppy that will go in the crate, I will either paper-train the puppy or I will teach him to go in a litter box.

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Now, when you are home you will bring your puppy to the paper or litter box instead of taking him outside. When he goes on the paper or in the litter box, be sure to reward every time.

Now you can leave the paper or litter box in the x-pen for your puppy when you are not there. I know that it is still a hassle but it is better than giving her a bath everyday.

Once your puppy is successfully going in the litter box or on the paper you can start to bring the litter box outside. If your puppy goes to the litter box when it is outside, I would recommend leaving one out there for your pup.

Over a period of time you can wean the puppy off the litter box or paper. Weaning is always a gradual process. With the paper you would start to make the area smaller and smaller.

Good Luck!

If you have any questions, or would like further assistance training your dog, please email
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or call 508-963-6489.

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