

# Potty Training: A Comprehensive Guide

Potty training may seem like a major challenge, but with patience and consistency, you will see results quickly. The goal is to set your puppy up for success by preventing accidents and heavily rewarding outdoor behavior.

## 1. Establish a Predictable Routine

Puppies thrive on a schedule. By making potty breaks, meals, and naps predictable, you help your puppy's body regulate itself. A good rule of thumb for bladder control is **one hour for every month of age** (e.g., a 3-month-old can typically hold it for 3 hours).

### Example Daily Schedule

Time	Activity
7-9am	Wake up, immediately go out to potty, then supervised playtime
9-10am	Breakfast & nap in crate or playpen
10-12pm	Go out to potty, then supervised playtime
12-1pm	Lunch & nap in crate or playpen
1-3pm	Go out to potty, then supervised playtime
3-4pm	Nap in crate or playpen
4-6pm	Go out to potty, then supervised playtime
6-7pm	Dinner & nap in crate
7-9pm	Go out to potty, then supervised playtime. Pick up water bowl to limit overnight accidents.
9pm	Last potty break, then bedtime in crate or playpen

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## 2. Effective Supervision & Confinement

Think of your puppy like a human baby: they require constant eyes-on supervision. Lack of supervision leads to accidents and chewing hazards.

- **The "Safe Zone":** Use baby gates or a playpen to create a puppy-proofed area with pee-proof flooring.
- **The Crate:** Ensure the crate is large enough for the pup to stand and turn around, but not so large that they can use one corner as a bathroom.

- **Tethering:** If you aren't in a confined area, keep the puppy on a 6-foot leash attached to you. This ensures you'll notice immediate signs (sniffing, circling) that they need to go out.
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### 3. Reward Success Immediately

To teach your puppy where to go, you must be there to reward them the moment it happens.

- **The Potty Spot:** Take your puppy to the same small area on a leash. This keeps them focused and prevents them from getting distracted by the "big world."
  - **The 3-Second Rule:** Give them a high-value treat within **three seconds** of them finishing their business. Do not wait until you get back inside, or they won't associate the treat with the act of going potty.
  - **The "Reset":** If they don't go after 5 minutes, take them back inside and place them in their crate for 10–15 minutes (this ensures they can't run off to another room to potty as soon as they come back inside), then try again.
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### 4. Managing Accidents

Accidents are a normal part of the learning process. How you handle them determines how fast your puppy learns.

- **The Gentle Interrupt:** If you catch them in the act, gently interrupt them and calmly carry them outside to finish.
  - **Cleanup:** Use an **enzymatic cleaner** (like Nature's Miracle). Regular household cleaners don't remove the pheromones that tell a puppy "this is a bathroom spot."
  - **Never Punish:** Do not scold, yell, or rub their nose in an accident. This teaches the puppy to be afraid of you—not that they shouldn't go inside. It often results in puppies "hiding" their accidents behind furniture.
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### When Is a Puppy "Potty Trained"?

You can consider a puppy potty trained once they have gone **two full weeks without an accident** and are consistently signaling (waiting by the door or pawing) to go out.

**Pro-Tip:** Most dogs aren't fully reliable with their freedom until they reach physical maturity around 1 year of age.