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When a **new puppy arrives in the house**, it's an exciting time for everyone. In order for the homecoming to proceed as smoothly as possible, it's a good idea to spend a little bit of time in preparation.

One of the **major challenges of dog ownership** (particularly for first-time owners) is the **issue of house training**. If you equip yourself with some rudimentary knowledge and a positive attitude, though, it's a lot easier than most people make it out to be.



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The New Arrival

As soon as you bring the puppy home, take her outside. The excitement of the car journey coupled with the unfamiliar faces, sights, and sounds will have her needing to go anyway – and **if you can orchestrate her first toilet break so that it occurs outside, instead of inside, then so much the better**. And not just from the perspective of short-term [hygiene](#), either – the more your **puppy relieves herself inside**, the more likely she is to do it again.

The homecoming is a **great opportunity for you to set a precedent for toilet behavior!**

- **Take her to your designated toilet area**, and put her down on the grass.
- Wait while she sniffs around – refrain from petting her or playing with her just yet, because you don't want her to forge an association between this area and games. **She has to learn that this part of the yard is for toilet breaks only.**
- When she begins to relieve herself, say the phrase you want her to associate with toilet breaks: "Go pee" or "potty time" or whatever works for you. It's best if that phrase is short and easily recognizable – and use the same voice inflection each time, too (so that your dog can easily memorize the meaning of the phrase.)
- When she's done, make a big fuss over her: shower her in praise and affection, and give her a little treat.

When you take her inside the house, the house training regime you've decided upon should start immediately.

As far as house training goes, [crate training](#) is generally accepted to be the most effective and efficient means of house training a puppy in a short space of time.

What is crate training?

Crate-training is essentially the use of a small indoor kennel (the crate) to confine your young puppy when you're not actively supervising her.

How does it work?

Crate training is based on all dogs' inherent dislike of soiling the area where they sleep. Because you're restricting your puppy's movement to her sleeping space, she'll instinctively "hold it in" until she's let out of the crate (provided you don't leave her in there too long, of course!)

This is why it's important that the crate is sized properly: if it's too big, she'll be able to use one end as a bed and one end as a toilet, which defeats the whole purpose!

How do I choose a crate?

As a **general guideline**, it's more cost-effective for you to choose a crate that's **big enough for her to grow into**. It should be big enough for the **adult dog to stand up** comfortably **without crouching**, turn around in, and stretch out – but no bigger (**so that she doesn't choose one part as her bed, and one part as her toilet!**)

Because the adult dog is likely to be considerably larger than the puppy, it'll most likely be necessary for you to use a barrier to reduce the internal size of the crate. A wire grille or board will do just fine.

Alternatively, you can use a cheap crate (or even make one yourself) and replace it with a larger model as your puppy grows.

Using the crate for house training

Crate training works like this: your puppy is in that crate at all times unless she's sleeping, eating, outside with you going to the toilet, or being played with (active supervision.)

You'll need to be consistent, or else it won't work: you can't let your puppy wander off through the house unless you're focusing your complete attention on her.

If you allow her **access to the house before she's thoroughly house trained**, you're basically encouraging her to relieve herself inside – and remember, each time she does this, it'll be easier for her to do it again (and again ... and again ...)

Sample schedule of a morning's crate training



Image by [Getty Images](#) via [Daylife](#)

7am: Wake up. Puppy comes outside with you for a toilet break.

7.25: Breakfast time.

7.45: Back outside for another toilet break (accompanied by you, of course.)

7.50 – 8.45: Play-time! Puppy is out of the crate being actively played with, cuddled, etc.

8.45: Outside for another toilet break.

8.50 – 11: Puppy goes back in the crate for a nap

11 am: Puppy comes outside with you for a toilet break.

11.05 – 12.30: Playtime! Puppy is out of the crate being played with and petted.

12:30: Lunch time.

12.45: Puppy comes outside with you for a toilet break.

1 – 3.30: Puppy goes back in the crate for a nap.

... and so on throughout the day.

Crate training generally takes one to two months (depending on the breed of your dog and how much time you spend on the training process.) As the puppy grows older, you can begin to reduce the amount of time spent in the crate – but beware of doing this too soon!

Other **crate training rules**

- Your puppy probably won't be too happy to go in the crate the first couple of times she uses it. **She wants to be outside, being showered with affection and attention, and hanging out with you** (of course!) But it really is for her own good – in a surprisingly short time, she'll come to accept the crate as her own personal haven where she can go to relax and get a couple hours' uninterrupted sleep. It's important to persevere: **do not respond to any whining or crying.**

- The **best place for the crate to be is the hub of the household:** usually the den or the kitchen, anywhere where people tend to congregate. Just because she's in the crate doesn't mean she can't still feel like part of the household; **it's important for her not to feel isolated or excluded.**

- The **crate should be a welcoming, inviting place for her to go.** Lay a couple of thick blankets or towels on the floor, and place a few toys and a chew or two inside it as well. The door should be invitingly open at all times (unless she's in there, of course, in which case it should be securely shut.)

Some toilet facts about puppies that will come in handy

- **Puppies' bladders and bowels are so small and weak** that they have only a very small window of opportunity between knowing that they need to go, and having that need become an immediate reality. Because of this, **it's imperative that you take her outside as soon as she wakes up** (she'll let you know she needs to go out by pawing the door and whining), and within ten minutes of eating or playing.

- **Behaviors that indicate she needs to go outside** include sniffing the ground and circling. Again, because she's only little, she won't exhibit these warning signs for very long – so as soon as she starts, take her out straight away. Better an unnecessary trip to the yard than an unnecessary wet patch (or pile) on the carpet!

- The **maximum amount of time that a puppy can be crated** at one time is figured out using the following equation: her age in months, plus one. So, **a three-month old puppy can be crated for a maximum of four hours.** However, this is likely to be physically pretty uncomfortable for her (not to mention hard on her emotionally and psychologically: it's tough being cramped up with nothing to do), so you should really **take her out at least once every two hours during the day.** If she's sleeping, of course, just let her sleep until she wakes up naturally.

For a more indepth look at house training, as well as a great deal of useful information on canine behavioral problems and the most effective training techniques, check out The Ultimate House Training Guide. It's the complete dog-house-training guide..

You can visit the The Ultimate House Training Guide site by clicking on this link:

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