



# THE DOGGY DIGEST

## TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

### Potty Training 101

You just adopted a brand new toddler. Mikey just learned how to walk. You are against this diaper thing though. How restricting, so, you let the toddler run around without a diaper on. Does this sound potentially disastrous? Do you think that you may have to teach the human baby where the appropriate place to go to the bathroom is? How much time do you think it would take to do this? How would you manage this child? I am thinking some diapers, baby gates, and some M&M's would help. WE will not be strapping diapers on puppy Fido in this article but will discuss when you can expect that Fido will need to eliminate and three important rules that must be followed. Couple this with a healthy dose of patience, commitment, and most importantly consistency, and you, Fido, and Mikey will be on your way to potty training.

Just like we have to teach Mikey where the toilet is, we also have to help puppy Fido set up a scent post. Dogs will inevitably go to the same spot, or location to go to the bathroom to be kept clean. So, if you prefer to have Fido going potty in the back left corner of the yard, put a leash on him and walk to the same area every time, every day, no matter what, until potty training is over. IF it is raining, grab your umbrella, because if puppy Fido has to be out there, so do you. This whole process can take weeks to months. Just like Mikey will potty train at a different speed than his classmates, so will Fido.

Fido will need to go to the bathroom in or after four different scenarios. After he eats, after he drinks, after or during playtime, before sleeping, and after waking (yes, this includes naps). Now, take into consideration that Fido will eat two to three times a day, drink five to eight times a day, play four to five times a day, wake-sleep every night, and will include several naps throughout the day. You are looking at fifteen potty breaks every day minimally. He may need more, and as he grows he may need less. Biologically Fido can 'hold it' one hour for every month he is old plus one hour. So, if Fido is three months old, he should be able to hold it for about four hours. This is only true for puppies, not adult dogs, and usually is only pertaining to crated puppies, or when they are sleeping through the night. When puppy Fido is awake, follow these simple tips to ensure success.

#### ***Elimination code of conduct***

**1. 100% Supervision** - This means all eyes are on Fido. IF you cannot watch Fido 100% of the time, he should be safely confined to a crate. If you are supervising Fido, consider tethering him to you with a leash. This is not the most convenient task in the world, but Fido will not systematically deconstruct the antique furniture while you become absorbed in a television show if he is tethered to your side. He is also less likely to have an accident and you will be able to pick up on puppy Fido's subtle body language. While tethering, give Fido a stuffed Kong toy, elk antler, or NyloBone to occupy himself. The only other place puppy Fido should be is outside with you, on a potty break.

**2. 100% Positive Reinforcement** - When Fido goes to the bathroom outside, in his designated area on a leash, you should not only praise him but deliver five tasty treats to him, one right after the other. Why five? Why not? Jackpotting Fido is a great way to clearly mark the difference between having an accident in the house and going to the bathroom outside in the grass.

What should you do if Fido has an accident in the house? If Fido has an accident inside, you should probably reread step one, 100% supervision. Human error is the number one reason why Fido's potty training regime gets sabotaged. So, the only thing that rolled-up newspaper is good for is hitting yourself with it. If Fido does have an accident, due to the fact that it is most likely human error, you should quietly ignore it, clean it up really well, and start over. By jackpotting Fido outside and ignoring him completely when accidents happen inside, he will quickly realize where he gets the most bang for his buck. Just in case this wasn't clear, never punish fido for an accident.

**3. 100% consistency** - Consistent supervision, consistent reinforcement of desired behavior and consistently taking Fido out at the same time every day and to the same location for scent posting are all variables that go into potty training. Consistently keeping Fido on a leash will help you target Fido's scent post to an area you prefer in the yard and will not allow him to linger and play, rather than taking care of business.

15-20 minutes is the best amount of time to ensure that Fido has completely eliminated. Puppies tend to take more time in the beginning, and will quickly learn to get it all out right away, so they can lose the leash and play.

Consistent feeding schedules are also very important. If you are free-feeding puppy Fido, you are going to have a hard time predicting his bowel movements and are going to miss out on the bonding and reinforcing value of feeding time.

Michael Baugh, the owner of Michaels Dogs in Houston, boils potty training down into one question that you should never have to ask yourself, "Where is the dog?" If you can always answer this question, you and puppy Fido will be fine. Remember to stay fair, puppy Fido needs to poop, pee, and play, but he also needs a close relationship with you. Puppy fido will grow up very quickly and you will soon be wondering where your puppy went. So make sure you enjoy his puppy antics and take lots of photos!

**Until next time, keep it pawsitive!**