

Don't have time to houstrain a new puppy?

Try adopting an already-trained, adult dog instead.

By September Morn

Q. My husband and I want to purchase a Cairn Terrier or a Yorkshire Terrier, but are concerned because we both work full time, and aren't sure about how to houstrain him. My mother has a Cairn and I know how she trained hers, but she was home all the time with the puppy. Please help.

A. You're right to be concerned about houstraining a puppy while both you and your husband are working full time. The first few weeks that you have a new dog, she will be learning your household rules, and a puppy -- especially one under 6 month old -- can't learn proper house manners if she's unattended all day.

Most pups from 10 weeks of age on can sleep through the night without needing a potty break. During the day, though, a puppy needs someone at home to provide houstraining guidance, because she'll need to pee about once per hour and poop about every three hours.

Could one of you to change your work schedule, so there'd be someone home during the day for at least the first few weeks? Or could you plan the adoption to coincide with a few overlapping weeks of vacation or personal time?

An alternative that might work better for everyone would be to adopt an adult dog who's already houstrained. Adult dogs don't need to pee or poop anywhere near as often as puppies do. With an adult dog who has good house manners, you'd only need to spend three or four full days at home with her when you first get her, helping her learn where her approved potty area is and how to get there on her own when she needs to relieve herself.

Contact the national breed rescue organizations for Cairns and Yorkies. You can find links to them on the American Kennel Club's website (www.akc.org). You will discover that there are many lovely adult dogs who are already houstrained and looking for new homes. One of them might be the perfect dog for you.