

## Training a Young Puppy

### **The problems with training a young puppy.**

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Posted: Tue May 31 00:00:00 PDT 2005

Q. I recently received a 5- to 6-week-old black Labrador Retriever puppy as an early Christmas gift. How do I train her to go to the bathroom outside? She's constantly peeing, and pooping all over my house. I put newspaper down, but she doesn't use them. I've never trained a dog to use the bathroom outside.

A. Your 5- to 6-week-old puppy is really too young to be taken away from her mother and littermates, which is one of the reasons you're having trouble with accidents in the house. You will have to work extra hard to housetrain your puppy, and then socialize her.

There's a lot of good information available on housetraining puppies, as well as socialization for puppies weaned from their mother at a young age. Check out the Dog Channel website and magazines such as DOG FANCY. Once your puppy is about 8 to 9 weeks old, you may want to start with cratetraining, in which you take your dog outside before and after crating. Most dogs will not soil their crate. A young puppy may not be able to be crated initially for more than 4 to 6 hours, but as she gets older, she will eventually be able to get through the entire night. In general, your dog should be under your close observation at all times, so if she acts like she is going to urinate or defecate, you can immediately put her outside.

A regular walking and feeding schedule will also help in getting your dog to take regular potty breaks outside. It does no good to punish your dog after the fact. Newspaper in front of the door is sometimes a good intermediate step in teaching your dog to ask to go outside.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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