

Throw Out the Paper

Paper-training often prevents a fully house-trained dog.

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Human history offers many instances of great ideas that could not be fully realized until a complimentary idea evolved. One example of an invention that looked good on paper was, literally, on paper. Paper was first made in China in A.D. 105 during the reign of Emperor Ho Ti. Rumor had it, by A.D. 106, courtiers used the new invention to paper train the imperial puppies.

New dog owners have used paper to housetrain puppies for thousands of years. While many swear by the practice, just as many swear at it. From a behavioral perspective, paper training is of dubious benefit. The reason is that while teaching the pup to eliminate on paper is an owner's convenience, it often leads to difficulty in achieving a fully house-trained dog.

If you were to paper train your pup, the process would begin by completely covering a small, confined area with large amount of newsprint. Small bathrooms or laundry rooms make the most logical areas. In one corner of the room, place a blanket or bed for the pup. Place the pup in the area at night and anytime you can't observe it. Don't forget water.

Because the entire floor is covered, the pup has no choice but to eliminate on paper. After about two weeks of wall-to-wall paper, remove the paper near the bedding. If the pup has no accidents on the uncovered portion of the floor, you know you are on the right track. Continue to remove more and more paper until the potty area is an identifiable area, apart from the bedding.

Once the pup appears to have an understanding of the process, you can enlarge the domain a little. Confine the pup to the papered area for sleeping time only. Reward efforts to actively seek the paper as a potty area.

The final step is to transfer the behavior outdoors. Place soiled newspaper in the area you have selected as a potty location. Periodically take the puppy to it when it is likely to eliminate.