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HELPFUL HINTS FOR HOUSEBREAKING CRATE TRAINING—HOW AND WHY

Puppies are born with the instinct not to soil the area where they eat and sleep. Some puppies (especially the very small breeds) have less of this instinct than others and might need a little more time, but the following rules will work for all breeds of dog.

RULE NUMBER ONE: NO “FREE” TIME UNTIL YOUR PET IS TRUSTWORTHY

Remember, the only place that your pet is interested in keeping clean is the crate in which he/she eats and sleeps. Even one or two steps outside the crate is an acceptable “potty spot” at first. It is up to you to teach your pet where eliminating is appropriate. So, your pet must be either in the crate or under your direct supervision at all times.

RULE NUMBER TWO: NO FOOD OR WATER BETWEEN MEALS

Puppies should be fed and watered twice daily. At each of these mealtimes, leave the food and water down for about 20 minutes; then pick up whatever is left after 20 minutes. Be very consistent with your pet’s mealtimes. If the puppy is allowed access to food and water at roughly the same time each day, it will rapidly develop regular patterns of elimination, making this whole housebreaking process a lot easier! **Remember, leave no food or water in the crate.**

RULE NUMBER THREE: GO OUTSIDE WITH YOUR PET TO ITS ELIMINATION AREA

Initially, your puppy’s strongest instinct will be to stay with its pack leaders—that means you! If you try to leave the puppy outside in the yard at elimination time, he/she will likely whine, look at the door, and refuse to go anywhere to do his/her business. Your puppy only feels secure when you are near. Try to select a particular spot outside for elimination. This will hasten the process and make it easier for you to keep your yard clean! (We discourage paper training as any paper or magazine left on the floor can become an unwanted “potty spot”.) **Puppies are trained with praise.** Praise your puppy during and after the act of elimination. Treat rewards are appropriate at this time, if you so desire. Repeating a key phrase, such as “hurry up” may also help your puppy learn faster.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE:

In the morning, let the puppy out of its crate. Initially, it may help to carry your puppy to the door. The door might be too far away for some and your puppy might eliminate before it reaches the door on its own! Take your puppy on a leash to the elimination area. Give praise when it “performs”. Allow access to food and water for 20 minutes. Repeat the trip outside. (You will get a feel for when this second trip should be made. Some dogs need to go immediately after finishing their meals, and others 15-20 minutes later.) Repeat this same routine at suppertime. Trips outside may be added as often as possible. But do not change the feeding times, or the times of the first visit and last visit outside.

GOOD LUCK!!