

## *Sample Houstraining Schedule and Addressing a Few Issues*

**By Karen Peak**

### **West Wind Dog Training**

Puppies housebreak at different rates. Some breeds are tougher to teach to go potty outside than others. Your crate and a consistent schedule are two key ingredients to teaching puppy to potty outside. Even if you have an adult dog, you can adapt the puppy schedule...

#### ***Schedule***

Depending on the age of your puppy will depend on how many meals he eats a day. Puppies up to about six months should be getting three meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner. Feed Puppy at the same time each meal and use a potty schedule that corresponds to eating. Here is an *example*:

6:30 a.m. - wake up and take Puppy to go potty.

6:45 a.m. - feed Puppy in crate and give him water.

7:15 a.m. - take Puppy to go potty.

***Young puppies have small bladders and less capacity. They may need to go out every couple of hours during the day.***

11:30 a.m. - take Puppy potty

11:45 a.m. - feed Puppy in crate

12:30 p.m. - take Puppy potty

***Puppies, like children, benefit from naps after play. Put Puppy in his crate with a drink and a few safe toys and let him "go sleepies" for an hour or so.***

4:30 p.m. - take Puppy potty

5:00 p.m. - feed Puppy supper in crate

5:30 p.m. - take Puppy potty

***Evenings, especially in the summer when it is cooler, are a great time to take Puppy for walks and socialize him. In addition, this will help tire him out for the evening.***

8:00 p.m. - pick up water for evening

9:00 p.m. - take Puppy potty

9:30 p.m. - put Puppy in crate for bed

***Note: young puppies cannot be expected to hold all night. It can be months until they have enough bladder control so be patient.***

Look for signals between scheduled potty times that Puppy needs to go out: sniffing around the ground, circling, etc. When you see him start this, say a sharp "AAAAH! NO" to stop the action and then say in a happy tone something like "Want to go out?" Take Puppy outside immediately to his potty area and encourage him to go. I use "Go Kennel!" You can use "Get Busy", "Go Potty" or whatever you like - just use the same command each time and praise as soon as the action happens. My dogs will stand by the door to signal they have to go out. I know people who have taught dogs to ring bells hanging from the doorknob.

Along with a solid schedule, puppy needs to be with you and not roaming the house unsupervised. Use baby gates or if you are walking about, umbilical cord the puppy to you with a leash. This way, puppy is never out of your sight. The best redirection (correction) is the one that happens the instant the behavior of inappropriate elimination occurs. If puppy is wandering the house and gets to realize there are times he can potty inside, he will continue to do so. In addition, a correction after the fact is a lost correction. If you are going to be in a position where you cannot watch him (napping, going out) crate him. In addition, NEVER leave the leash on puppy when he is crated or when he is not tied to you. A dragging leash can be tangled and puppy could get hurt.

Should Puppy have an accident in the house, you must catch him in the act for discipline to be effective - why in the above paragraph the use of gates and a leash was brought up. If puppy has pottied five minutes ago on your best rug and you just see it now, the correction is totally lost. Puppies and dogs forget faster and will interpret the discipline not being done because he pottied in the house but for something different. Clean up the spot well and with something that will neutralize the odor. Use one of the commercially made products or white vinegar and water.

I am against paper training or using those special pads that "encourage" Puppy to go potty on them. This teaches Puppy it is fine to potty in the house. Now you want to teach him he cannot do something once fine for him to do. It is confusing. Unless you are disabled or for some reason MUST paper train, I encourage people to avoid it.

Bear in mind that should a housebroken puppy or dog begin having accidents, there could be an underlying physical reason such as a bladder infection. Should this not be the case, there could be a behavioral issue such as submission urination or stress. Should you start having problems with a dog not prone to problems, seek medical assistance first. In addition, as a dog ages, accidents may happen. Accidents also happen with fully trained dogs. Dogs not neutered or spayed have a higher incidence of eliminating in the house as well.

### ***Refreshing Houstraining in Older Pups and Adult Dogs:***

It takes time and effort to houstrain a dog reliably. Some will houstrain very fast while others may take months or more. Often, houstraining issues are a direct result of the human. The owner must have reasonable expectations based on age and ability. Younger pups will not and senior dogs may not be able to hold as long as a healthy, adult dog. If you notice accidents starting up in a reliably houstrained dog (one that had gone months or longer and is reliably signaling and holding when in the house), first rule out medical. Bladder infections, urine crystals or bladder stones, being on certain medications, certain diseases that cause an increase in thirst etc., can all cause accidents to occur in a reliably houstrained dog. Stresses in a dog's life can cause a regression in houstraining (a move, new baby, new dog, divorce, new neighbors, etc). Even reliably houstrained dogs may occasionally "slip up" for one reason or another. If there is no medical reason (and you have ruled it out), then you need to get back to basics with houstraining. Regressions often will not go away on their own nor should they be ignored. If you see a non-medical regression starting, address it immediately by treating the dog as if it is not houstrained.