

Six Tips to Train a Puppy to Use a Paper or Litter Box

1. Know that paper training may slow the process of getting the puppy to develop an outdoor substrate preference. But in some cases, it may be your only option.
2. If you must train a puppy to eliminate on paper or in a litter box, put the paper or box in one place, preferably close to a door. Take the puppy to the paper frequently, and praise it when it squats.
3. Consider putting heavy-gauge plastic under the newspaper to protect floors and rugs in case the puppy misses or the urine soaks through the paper.
4. Getting the puppy outdoors still requires you to be home for a while. If the dog is being trained to eliminate on paper, you still have to take it out three or four times a day (e.g., after meals, upon awakening, to play). Praise the puppy immediately during and after it squats.
5. To wean the puppy from the paper, gradually start to move the paper one to two inches per day closer to the door. Spy on the puppy during weekends; as it begins to squat on the paper, rush outside and wait for it to urinate or defecate. This also helps to stop the dog from being fearful outside. Enthusiastically praise the puppy when it pees or defecates outside.
6. Some people with small dogs elect to have the dog permanently trained to paper or a litter box. Litter boxes now are commercially available that are suitable for large dogs. Litter boxes are easier to handle for small dogs, but if you don't want the dog to rely on these, you must do the tasks described here.

Caution: Litter boxes aren't intended to relieve you of having to take your dog out and about. Please don't use these as an excuse to not exercise your dog, let it explore the world or engage in free play with other dogs.