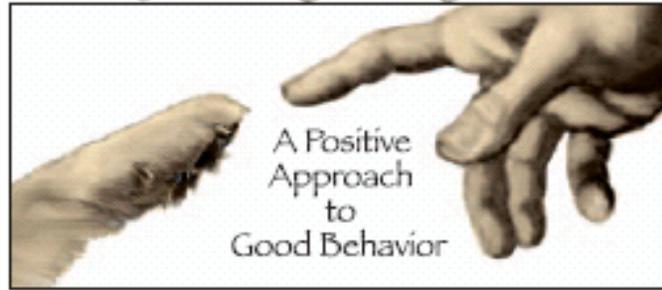


Jane Brydon: Dog Training Coach, LLC



## 10 Easy Steps to Housetrain Your Dog Using A Positive Approach to Good Behavior

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**10 Easy Steps to Housetrain Your Dog**

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## 10 Easy Steps to Housetrain Your Dog Using A Positive Approach to Good Behavior

by Jane Brydon, Dog Training Coach

I have always enjoyed housetraining a dog. To me it means the start of a wonderful, budding relationship with my new companion. I have housetrained puppies, adolescents and adult dogs. You don't have to start with a puppy to have success. Now I only adopt rescue dogs, which are usually adult or geriatric and by using this method they have all learned good manners.

### Step 1: Set your goal

Your goal is now to totally focus on your dog being house trained. Housetraining a dog is not difficult, it means that you must set housetraining as your goal and give your total focus to that specific dog, clearly showing her what you want her to do. Here is my goal: teach my new dog to eliminate in an area I have set for that purpose. Personally, I always want my dogs to eliminate outdoors, either in the yard or during a walk. Some people prefer to train their dogs to go on paper, puppy pads, or in a litter box. It doesn't matter where you choose, you just have to set your goal and have the potty area available when needed.

### Step 2: Use the dog crate as a wonderful place for your dog to be when you cannot have total attention on your dog.

Before you bring your puppy or dog home, buy or rent a dog crate. She won't soil the crate but make sure you don't keep her there too long.

This is the most useful piece of furniture you will ever purchase.

#### **The many reasons for having a dog crate:**

- Housetraining your dog can be accomplished more quickly because dogs don't like to soil their dens.
- This enclosure creates a safe environment that is comfortable and protective during the many times you need your dog to be away from commotion or not underfoot.

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- This will save your house from being destroyed while you are not around to oversee what is or is not a plaything.
- Traveling with your pet is much safer because, if your car is in an accident, your pet is protected from getting loose on the highway or from becoming a missile that flies around the car, injuring or killing you as well as your dog.

For all of you reading this who are thinking: “That is so cruel, putting a dog in a cage,” dogs don’t see it as cruel.

We see a cage that to us looks like a jail. But dogs are denning animals and this helps to satisfy their denning instincts, which they share with their wolf, coyote, and other canid relations. They like small areas they can call their own. Once dogs realize this is their own special spot they will go there on their own to rest or play with their toys. My Rottweiler, Scout, will take breaks during the day to go to his crate in the basement. I don’t tell him to, he just likes his own space at times. Gracie, my Chihuahua mix, will go into her crate, which is in my office, while I am working and play with her toys or take a nap. I have never had a dog who didn’t initiate his/her own crate time.

Buy the correct size for your dog. If you are purchasing a crate for a puppy you can buy a crate to fit the puppy and add about 12” because puppies grow quickly. Or you can buy a crate for an adult dog that comes with a wire partition to size the crate to fit the puppy as it grows. This means you use the wire divider to make the crate large enough for the puppy/dog to stretch out flat on her side, lying down comfortably and to be able to sit up and stand without her head touching the top of the crate.

Place the crate in an area where you will be. You are confining the dog when you are busy, but you do not want to banish the dog. You can place it out of the way in this area, providing a greater “denning” sense by putting the crate in a corner or up against a wall. For nap time you can lightly cover the crate with a sheet or towel.

### **Getting your dog adjusted to the crate.**

When you feed your dog, feed her in her crate. Leave the door open so she can walk in and out. When she is finished eating, take out the bowl.

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Throw some treats in the crate for her to go in and get them. Let her walk in, get the treat and walk out again. Say: “go into your crate”. Throw the treat in. Say: “come out of your crate” and coax her out. Make it a game. Show you are having fun by smiling and using a happy voice. Be upbeat! Repeat this a few times.

Say: “go into your crate”. Throw in the treat. Close the door. Say “Good Dog”. Open the door and say: “come out of your crate”. When she comes out, make a fuss, telling her what a good job she is doing.

Move the crate next to the couch or favorite chair when you relax and watch TV or read. Have a good treat ready and, while you are relaxing, drop in treats at varied times. Your dog will go into the crate and calmly sit there, waiting for you to drop in the next goody.



When she is comfortable with the crate, you can tell her to go in, give her a treat, and close the door for a short time while you are nearby cooking, doing the dishes, working, or whatever. Make sure she has a soft blanket

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or towel to lie on and toys to chew on. Fill a Kong toy (or any of the many food stuffing toys) with Easy Cheese in a can, peanut butter, wet dog food, or left overs, freeze it for a few hours and give that to her to play with while in the crate.

**Step 3: Put treats in your pocket, put her on a leash and go with her to the potty spot.**

This is the time for her to go to the bathroom. This is not playtime. Don't play with her. Just stand there until she pees/poops.

The best time for you to be perfect and your dog to understand what is being asked of her is first thing in the morning. Open the door, pick her up (if small or a puppy) or put her on a leash and run her right out the door.



You can't just open the door and let her go into the backyard alone. You need to be with her to reward her for doing what you want her to do. Always reward what you want her to do. Do not punish her for what you don't want her to do. Punishing does not give her the information to know what is correct.

If she does pee/poop, as she is finishing, pop a small treat in her mouth and act like she has done the greatest thing in the world.

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Be very happy and excited. Tell her she is “Brilliant and the best girl ever!” Make a huge fuss. She will definitely understand that you are pleased and giving her the treat immediately after she finishes will be directly related, in her mind, to peeing and pooping outside.

You can't wait to give her the treats. If you bring her back into the house and then give the treat, she will relate going into the house with the treat, which is not the correlation you are trying to make. You want her to have an immediate association of peeing/pooping in the potty spot with treat.

### **Treats**

Use a tasty treat that is more exciting than she gets in the house, like cheese, chicken, hamburger, etc. Treats should be small enough so she isn't standing there and chewing forever. A biscuit is too much. A tiny biscuit is good. You could use lima bean sized pieces of cheese or hot dog. Just something to let her know you are really pleased. You are not feeding her lunch!

**Step 4: If she does nothing at the potty spot after a set amount of time, bring her directly back to her crate.**

Put her in her crate with her toys. Do not let her walk around unsupervised or she may make a mistake and go the bathroom in the house, which is definitely something you don't want her to do. Wait an hour and take her directly to the potty spot again. If she does her business this time, immediately give her the treat and show her how wonderful she is.

When you and she are inside after she pees/poops, be watchful and keep her close to you. If you think she is sniffing around, run her out again.

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### **Step 5: Keep her close by using leash, tether or enclosed area.**

When you and the dog are in the house she should be with you in the same room so you can watch her. You can attach her to you with a leash or tether (a line with clasps at both ends) so you know where she is or what she is doing and she can't wander off. Or you can set up an exercise pen, which is a small, low, fenced in area that can be set up in the house. You can use baby gates to enclose her in whatever room you are in. If she starts sniffing or looking agitated, grab the treats, snap on her collar/pick her up and take her to her spot,

### **Step 6: If she makes a mistake ignore it, clean it up, and don't act upset.**

She will not know why you are upset with her and it will only make her anxious. Ignoring it will make for a calmer house and by using the reward system she will learn what does make you happy.

Because you are not catching her in the act, the dog thinks Dad/Mom is just irrational and going crazy. She knows you are upset with her but she is not being shown how to make it better. If you just scream at her for doing the wrong thing but never show her what is the right way to go about it she can never understand what you want. It is much better to make sure she never makes a mistake in the house.

### **Step 7: Take the dog to the potty spot every hour.**

If you do this in the beginning you have less chance of allowing her to make a mistake. As she starts to understand where she is supposed to eliminate the light bulb will go off and she will understand what you want of her.

### **Step 8: Bedtime arrangements.**

To ensure no problems, have her sleep in her crate where she will stay clean all night. At bedtime, put the crate next to your bed. The puppy/dog will know you are near. She may whimper and bark for a short time but she will ultimately settle down and sleep. Do not pay attention to her when she fusses. If you take her out because you feel badly she has just learned that if she whimpers and barks you will pay attention to her – and she will continue to do this. Ignore her and she will settle down.

### **Step 9: If you hear her whining and moving around in her crate, wake up and run her right out.**

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When she wakes at around 2 AM or 3 AM she will have a full bladder and be uncomfortable. Her crate is too small for her to pee in because she does not want to dirty her area, so she will start squirming and eventually whimper and bark. Jump up and out of bed IMMEDIATELY! I call this running with the football. Open the crate, grab her as soon as she starts to walk out and run her to the potty spot. Of course, if this is a larger, adult dog, snap on the leash and hustle her outside very quickly.

Be prepared! *You must have a treat with you at this time.* She will relieve herself shortly after you put her down. Don't do anything. Don't even move. This is not playtime. Hold the leash and just let her sniff around and relieve herself. As soon as she does this, act as if she has done the greatest thing you have ever seen. Make your voice high-pitched and really happy and say Good Girl! You are the most wonderful girl! Then pop the tiny piece of treat in her mouth. I know it is 2 AM and you are outside in your slippers, PJs and trench coat! Here is the time to do that Academy Award winning performance. It will pay off.

Then take her right back to the crate, put her back in and go back to sleep. Remember, you don't want her to think that this is now playtime.

Don't wait or she may not be able to hold it and will soil her crate. This is another great opportunity to reward her when she goes where you want her to go.

### Step 10: Be vigilant.

It is your responsibility to make sure she never fails. The goal here is to ensure she always does the right thing – pees and poops outside in the place you want. If she does make mistakes in the house she has not been taken out enough or you were not watching her closely enough to read her signals.

### And lastly: What to do with a rolled up newspaper:

Pat Miller, author of **The Power of Positive Dog Training**, uses the rolled up newspaper.

Here is her training tip: Every time Spot has an accident, take the newspaper and hit **yourself** on the head with the newspaper while repeating,

I will supervise Spot more closely.

I will supervise Spot more closely.

I will supervise Spot more closely.

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I send lots of positive thoughts your way as you embark on this endeavor!  
This is an exciting time for you and your dog and I wish you many years  
of companionship and love.

Warmly,

*Jane*

**Jane Brydon, Dog Training Coach, LLC**  
Certified Professional Dog Trainer

*A Positive Approach to Good Behavior*

Training dogs Delaware County

Member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, Certification Council of  
Professional Dog Trainers, International Association of Animal Behavior  
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