

## **There are four main steps involved when teaching a dog to eliminate outdoors:**

1. Prevent accidents from occurring through management and supervision.
2. Anticipate when the dog will need to eliminate.
3. Reinforce elimination in appropriate locations and redirect the dog if caught eliminating in an undesirable location.
4. Clean soiled areas thoroughly.

## **Prevent**

Management in a crate, exercise pen, or other dog-proofed area is necessary to prevent undesirable elimination from occurring, especially when the dog is unsupervised.

In order to prevent accidents, the dog should be directly supervised when it is not confined to a crate or dog-proofed area. Either an “umbilical cord” technique (with the dog on a light leash that is attached to the owner’s waist) or a “tether” technique (with the dog on a light leash that is tethered to a fixed point in a room where the owner is present) may be used to assist with supervision.

Strict management and supervision will be necessary for at least 4-6 weeks to help to establish a routing of eliminating outside.

## **Anticipate**

- Keep a house-training log. This can help to identify the dog’s schedule for elimination.
- Dogs eliminate shortly after eating, sleeping, or playing. Set a routing for mealtimes and feed a highly digestible diet.
- Access to water should not be limited. Free access to water prevents excessive water consumption and teaches the puppy to regulate its fluid intake.
- Provide ample opportunities for the dog to access approved elimination areas.
- The rule of thumb is that a puppy can wait the number of hours as his age in months plus one so that a two-month-old puppy should be taken out every three hours.
- Watch for signals of impending elimination, such as circling, sniffing, panting, or wandering to the door.

## Reinforce

### Establish a routine:

- A verbal cue such as “Outside,” may be given immediately before taking the dog outside to eliminate.
- Take the dog outside (preferably on a leash) to a designated area of the yard for elimination. The leash restricts play and free exploration, and limits elimination to a specific area.
- Use the same exit from the house each time.
- When the dog is in the area of the yard where elimination is preferred, another verbal cue, such as “Go potty” or “Hurry Up”, may be given. Do not repeat this cue multiple times if the dog has not yet learned to associate the cue with elimination. In the beginning, only say the cue as the dog is eliminating. Once the dog has learned the cue, you can begin saying the cue prior to elimination.
- Ignore the dog until elimination occurs.
- If the dog does not eliminate within 5 minutes, return inside and supervise the dog closely. After 10-15 minutes have passed, or if the dog starts to display signs of impending elimination (e.g., circling, sniffing, panting), start the routine again.
- Once the dog has eliminated in the desired location, it should be reinforced at the end of the voiding behavior with a small food treat.
- After the dog has been rewarded with a food treat, if you are in a safe, secure, and fenced location, remove its leash and verbally praise the dog.
- Allow the dog to play and explore the environment if it can do so safely. Ensure that play and fun in the yard are contingent upon the dog first eliminating. This will expedite the elimination process when outside.

## Redirect

- Avoid punishing the puppy for indoor elimination, as this only teaches the animal not to eliminate in front of people – it does not teach the puppy where to eliminate.
- If the puppy is caught in the act of eliminating in the home, interrupt the behavior with a calm verbal cue such as “Outside.” Take the puppy outside to an appropriate area for elimination and reward it for urinating or defecating in that location.
- The elimination behavior should be interrupted in a non-threatening and non-scolding manner.

## Cleaning

- Pick up all solid waste and/or soak up the urine.
- Clean all soiled areas with a cleaner specifically formulated for use in pet-soiled areas. (Try Urine Away<sup>®</sup> by Ceva)

**For more information and assistance with house training, visit: [sPCA.org/housetraining101](https://www.sPCA.org/housetraining101)**

# House Training Log

	Urine or Stool Production	Confinement and/or Supervision	Food and Water Intake	Exercise and Training
12 AM				
1 AM				
2 AM				
3 AM				
4 AM				
5 AM				
6 AM				
7 AM				
8 AM				
9 AM				
10 AM				
11 AM				
12 PM				
1 PM				
2 PM				
3 PM				
4 PM				
5 PM				
6 PM				
7 PM				
8 PM				
9 PM				
10 PM				
11 PM				

*Provide opportunities for the puppy to eliminate hourly when it is not confined or supervised.  
Feed the puppy twice a day and note its access to water.  
Note the puppy's exercise and training schedule.*