

Potty Training a Puppy: BEFORE You Grab That Coffee...

No really — put the mug down. The very first thing you should do in the morning? Let that puppy outside!

First Things First: Early Morning = Go Time

Before your eyes are even fully open, that pup has been awake for a while — and their little bladder? It's on a tight schedule. Whether you're working with a Rottweiler or any large breed, early consistency is key.

Kennel Setup: Bigger Isn't Always Better

I love using a large crate when house-training, but it must have a divider. Why? Because dogs don't like to potty where they sleep — if they can help it. But if the crate is too big, your pup might just use one end as a bathroom and snuggle up at the other.

With fast-growing breeds like Rottweilers, you'll be adjusting that divider often. They grow like weeds!

A Crate is Not a Punishment — It's a Safe Space

I hear this a lot: "I feel bad using a crate." But don't. Dogs are den animals by nature. A crate gives them a sense of security and routine.

Yes, they may cry at first — that's normal. They're missing their littermates, adjusting to new surroundings. Make the space cozy with:

- A soft blanket
- A "snuggle buddy" stuffed animal
- Calming sounds (radio or white noise)

And teach kids that the crate is your dog's "bedroom" — a quiet zone, not a play zone. Later in life, when your dog feels overwhelmed or anxious, the crate becomes their safe retreat.

Potty Training Basics

Take your pup to the same outdoor spot every time. Dogs learn by scent, so that familiar smell helps trigger what they're supposed to do. Unfortunately, if they have an accident indoors and it's not cleaned thoroughly, it teaches the wrong lesson. Clean the area well and use an enzyme-based spray to neutralize odors.

Pro tip: If they poop inside? Scoop it up and place it outside in the designated potty spot. You're sending a very clear message.

Name the Process While It's Happening

Here's a secret weapon: name the act while it's happening. When your pup squats or starts to go, say something like: "Go potty!" or "Get your business done!" — calmly and consistently.

Say it every time they go outside to potty. Over time, they'll associate the words with the action. This will make things so much easier down the road — especially when you're traveling, at the vet, or in unfamiliar places and need them to go on command.

Timing, Timing, Timing

Potty training takes time, patience, and tons of repetition.

- Puppies need frequent potty breaks — at least every hour in the beginning.
- Especially take them out 30 minutes after eating.
- Expect a few false alarms — some pups will go once, move to a new surface, and then decide... “Oh wait, there’s more!”

Like toddlers, they’ll often get distracted mid-play and forget they needed to go — until it’s too late. And most puppies master the pee part before they consistently get the poop part right.

Outside Time ≠ Play Time (Yet)

In the early stages of training, try to separate potty time from play time. I know it’s tempting, but mixing the two can confuse your pup. For the first few weeks, follow this rhythm:

1. Outside = potty business
2. Inside = praise and attention
3. Playtime comes after progress

Celebrate the Wins

Every successful potty trip outside? Throw a little puppy party. Lots of praise. Maybe a treat. Let them know they nailed it.

Consistency is everything. Over time, your pup will understand what’s expected and you’ll both be a lot less stressed.

Final Thoughts

You’ve got this. Be patient. Be repetitive. Be kind. Potty training won’t last forever — but the bond you’re building will.