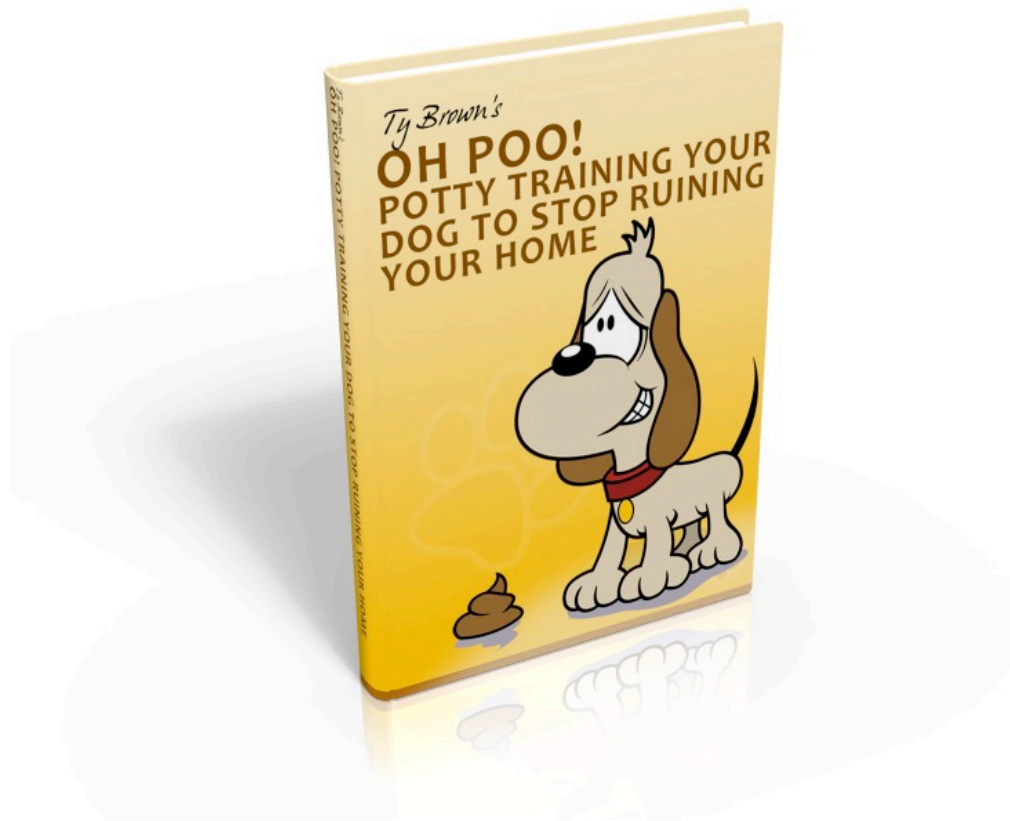


Ty Brown's

OH POO! POTTY TRAINING YOUR DOG TO STOP RUINING YOUR HOME



Oh Poo!



*Potty Training Your Dog To Stop
Ruining Your Home*

By Ty Brown

House Training

This is one of the big ones. Clients often come to me with such frustration and confusion regarding why Buddy just doesn't get it and keeps going to the bathroom in the house. Let me give you the solution.

The way I am going to show you is going to be basically the same for a puppy as it is for an adult dog that you are welcoming into the house for the first time. There will be a few small differences but the concept is identical.

The first key is to have the right equipment. In the beginning of this book I spoke about getting a crate. Your crate should be large enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down. That means that for your little poodle you shouldn't get him the extra large size. The idea behind sizing the crate is to make it very cozy and den-like. If it is too large it potentially will feel like an open area to your dog and it won't have the same effect. The dog will merely relieve himself at one end of the crate and lie down on the other side. This would be a disaster for your housebreaking efforts.

The reason why using a crate is so effective is that dogs instinctively have a desire for a den. I have seen dogs that have never seen a crate that will find their favorite space under a table or in a small, remote corner, or underneath some other furniture. Dogs, at times, will feel safe and secure if they have their little area. In a dog's den or secure area he won't go to the bathroom because he doesn't want to lay in the mess.

The exceptions to this are dogs who have nervous system problems, puppies who are unable to control their bowels, being left for prolonged periods of time, or you haven't taken the correct steps to teach him that the crate is his den. So if you can create a space in the house, which is his crate, where Buddy won't go to the bathroom and you can also supervise him outside of the crate so that he can't go to the bathroom, then you can properly housebreak him.

For house training purposes if your dog is not in the crate, he needs to be with you. Keep him on the leash and carry the leash, attach it to your belt, put the loop under your chair leg, etc. Whatever you do, make sure that your dog is not capable of making decisions on his own with regards to how he is going to act in your house.

Crate acclimation

The first step is acclimating your dog to the crate.

If you are starting with an adult dog begin by enticing him into the crate. If he goes in without a hitch, great. Give him some praise and even a treat with the door open and then allow him to come out. Repeat by having him enter, praise and/or treat, and then have him come out again. Do this several times in order to begin creating a positive association with the crate.

Many dogs initially dislike the crate because they don't want their freedom restricted by being forced to stay inside. The benefit of this method is that it shows your dog that going inside the crate doesn't always end with being shut inside for hours. Sometimes he is allowed to come right out and sometimes he stays in. In showing him that there is a good chance that he will be able to come right out

you are able to eliminate a lot of the initial apprehension.

After he seems okay with the crate start giving him his daily meal inside the crate. Have him walk in, set down the food, close the door and allow him ten to fifteen minutes to eat his food.

After that time allow him out. When you take him out of the crate be very casual. Don't go crazy with petting and verbal praise. At this stage we don't want him clamoring to get out of the crate so he can play with you. We want him to just have an accepting attitude and lay down quietly.

The fearful dog

If he doesn't go in easily there are a few options. If he appears afraid just help him out initially. Perhaps get on the floor near the crate and try to coax him in. When he goes in, keep the door open, and just remain calmly near him and pet him slowly. When he does go in give him an irresistible treat like a piece of hot dog or a liver treat.

After a few sessions like this entice him in, close the door, remain by crate and give him a few treats to nibble on through the grate in the door. As you give him some treats walk away calmly and without ado.

Return after a few moments and let him out calmly. Repeat this step several times and each time stay away from the crate for a longer period. If you continue with this method you will make the crate have a positive association because he will come to know that in the crate he gets treats and can relax calmly.

The resisting dog

There is also, at times, a dog that won't go in the crate just for the sake of resisting you. This is the type of dog that loves to test everything or perhaps he is so fearful that the idea of going in that confined space is too much. If your dog has shown signs of aggression before be very careful with this. If it is an extreme problem you may want to consult a trainer that has extensive experience with dog aggression. But if he is a dog that likes to push the limits by resisting going in the crate you can fix this problem.

Take him up to the crate on leash. As he digs in with his feet merely use your leash to drag him into the crate. It may be tough but you've got to show him he can't win by resisting. As he goes in shut the door, praise him calmly, and give him a few treats through the door. Have him stay in there for a few minutes, return, let him out and repeat this process. Repeat this process many times in order to make the idea stick in his head. He will soon learn that as much as he wants to resist it is not going to work.

Once you get him into the crate for a short period, using any of the above methods, increase the time he is in there. Make sure he has had a chance to go to the bathroom and then have him stay at first for twenty minutes, then an hour, then three to four hours, all the way up to eight or nine if you must leave him while you are at work.

You can occasionally bait the crate before he goes in with a treat so he gets an unexpected surprise when he goes in. All this can be accomplished within one to five days depending on your dog.

Do NOT do these things

There are a few no-no's with crate training:

1) Don't put regular dog toys in the crate with him. Most dog toys can be destroyed after hours of chewing. Little pieces of these toys can become lodged in your dog's throat if he is allowed to chew unsupervised for hours. For that reason I normally suggest that you avoid putting anything in the crate at all, but if you must give him something to chew on get him a toy that is very strong and basically indestructible. There are toys like Kong toys that may fit the bill and many pet stores now sell big, thick, bones that are indestructible for many dogs.

2) Don't put any type of bedding in the crate. This is a tough one for most people. They want Buddy to be comfortable inside the crate which is understandable. The problem, however, is that if Buddy is going to spend time in the crate chances are he will chew the bedding and either choke on the pieces or merely ruin expensive bedding. Trust me, dogs can be very comfortable without bedding.

Another problem with putting bedding into a crate, especially with young dogs, is that it will cause the dog to pee in the crate. Dogs like to pee on absorbent material. By putting something soft in there it is an invitation to pee.

3) If possible, don't put his crate in an isolated part of the house. Dogs are social creatures and like to feel that they are a part of the action. I have known people that have even used their crates as end tables in the family room. This may not be in tune with your decorating style, but try to come up with something that doesn't leave Buddy way out of the loop.

There are times, however, when I go in complete opposite of this rule. Some dogs are only able to relax when they feel isolated. For dogs like that try to keep the crate in a quiet part of the house.

4) Don't leave Buddy's crate in a stuffy area. If you are going to leave him for any length of time it could be hazardous to his health if you were to leave him in a poorly ventilated area on a hot day or in a frigid, drafty area on a cold day.

5) Don't leave water dishes in the crate. If you allow Buddy to drink while he is in the crate it is going to make him need to go to the bathroom, which he won't want to do in the crate. Don't worry, dogs can typically be just fine for hours at a time with no water.

6) And the final, most important rule of all with crate training: Never, ever, ever use the crate as a means of punishment. Ever. Did I say never, yet? It may work with your kids to send them to their room when they have done wrong but it won't work for Buddy. We want everything associated with the crate to be all happy and smiles and butterflies and rainbows. As far as Buddy is concerned nothing ever goes wrong in the crate. If he does something wrong and you immediately rush him off to his crate in frustration Buddy will soon come to realize that the crate is the bad zone. So even if he has been mischievous all day, make sure that if he needs to go in his crate that you calm down and keep your cool as you calmly put him in his crate.

Even if you do everything right there are times when problems can come up with the use of a crate.

Fixing crate problems

Allow me to list a few problems that can arise with the use of a crate.

- Your dog goes to the bathroom in the crate.

I already mentioned some of the possible causes of why this may happen. I will address the puppy issue in the next section when I deal with acclimating puppies to the crate.

With regards to your adult dog, however, if you have left him for a very long time in the crate you may find he goes to the bathroom. This is somewhat understandable. However, if you gradually build up the time that Buddy has to control himself then you can have him go quite a long time without soiling the crate. The ability for a dog to control his bowels is actually tied to the strength of the muscles that control that action.

The record for my personal dog controlling herself was sixteen hours. She was past the crate stage so I left her in the house as I went to New York from Boston for the day to pick up some dogs from the airport. I ended up getting held up and by the time I had returned 2/3 of the day was gone. I say this to show that dogs can hold it for a long time when they are built up gradually to longer and longer periods of time. I wouldn't recommend leaving your dog in a crate for this long of time, but eight to nine hours is a reasonable amount of time.

If Buddy does go to the bathroom you must bathe him thoroughly and wash out the crate with a pet-safe disinfectant. If any smells are left over from his elimination it could motivate him to use the

crate again for his bathroom. Dogs want to go to the bathroom in areas where they have gone before, so leaving any trace of smell in the crate could be disastrous.

Sometimes Buddy may go to the bathroom because you haven't properly shown him that it is his den. Maybe you used the crate as a punishment or maybe you left him for too long of a time too quickly. Or maybe you didn't clean the crate properly after he had an accident and now when he enters the crate it smells like a place where he should go to the bathroom. Remember, dog's have very well-tuned noses. Or maybe he is too isolated and because of the stress he feels he relieves himself. Whatever the case may be, try to pinpoint where you went wrong and then go about fixing it.

I also mentioned that there are some dogs that have nervous system problems, and as a result relieve themselves in the crate. A nervous system problem is a result of a chemical imbalance in the brain. In this case the dog is unable to handle the stress caused by being in a crate or being separated from you and a side effect is that he goes to the bathroom. There are medications that your vet can recommend that may help. You can also sometimes help Buddy to accept the crate, even if he has these problems, by very gradually turning the crate into a positive experience through treats and praise and other such motivational techniques.

- Excessive barking in the crate.

Dogs bark in the crate for many reasons. Perhaps there is some sort of stimulation, like a cat in the room. Sometimes a very vocal dog will bark just for the sake of doing something while in the crate. And sometimes your dog will bark hoping that his barking will bring you

back so you can let him out.

Let me address the latter issue first. One of the mistakes that many owners make is that when Buddy starts barking they immediately think "Oh, poor Buddy. Let me go get him." Buddy, being the intelligent dog that he is thinks, "Aha, if I want to get out all I have to do is bark and here comes dad and mom."

The way to fix this is to basically ignore Buddy when he barks. Remember, things that are positively enforced are repeated. So if his barking brings you to the crate, he is going to continue barking. But if his barking does not produce the desired result then chances are he will quit barking.

Ah, you got me. I said chances are he will stop barking. You are right, this isn't going to fix every dog. If it doesn't work you have to go to the next step. This next step is also the fix that you will use if the dog is barking because of an outside stimulus or because he is merely a vocal dog. So lets analyze the problem. Buddy keeps barking inside the crate. If there is any action that is done repeatedly it is done because Buddy gets satisfaction out of it. He has a positive association toward that behavior, in this case, barking. In order to get him to stop barking, we've got to change his association from positive to negative.

There are many ways to turn a positive barking association into a negative association. One of the best ways is a bark collar that emits an electric correction when the dog barks. It is so effective because it works whether or not you are around. It also kicks in the omnipotent principle. The dog doesn't see where the correction is

coming from, all he knows that when he barks he feels a correction. Soon he learns that barking is not the best option. The only drawback to this type of collar is that there are many poorly designed collars on the market. An associate of mine used a poorly designed collar and every time a car drove it would trigger the collar and his poor dog would get corrected. Other collars are known for giving corrections at the wrong time and for the wrong things. Visit my website for collars that I recommend.

For those that don't have the funds to buy a bark collar there are other options. One is to hide in a position such that when Buddy starts barking you can immediately appear and spray water in the crate with a spray bottle. (Make sure the crate isn't on your expensive oriental rug when you do this.) For a lot of dogs having water splashed in their face is a negative experience and if you can do it consistently several times Buddy will begin to associate barking with this negative spray and will stop.

Another method also deals with hiding very close and waiting for his bark. When he starts barking you can immediately appear and shake his crate while telling him 'No' repeatedly. Again, if you can do this consistently it may create a negative enough association with barking to oblige him to stop.

If these methods aren't working you can also employ a pattern interrupt. A pattern interrupt employs the idea of startling the dog into a new behavior.

For example, when Buddy begins to bark you can throw a tin can on the floor near him. It obviously isn't going to give him a correction

but it may startle him into not barking. That is to say that his energy is now expended toward paying attention to where the sound came from and not toward barking. As he stops barking you praise him. If he starts barking, you interrupt the pattern again with the can and praise him for not barking. This method can work but will typically take longer than the other methods.

Try these methods and see which one works best for you and your dog in your particular situation. Either by employing one or the combination of several you will be able to curb Buddy's barking.

- Self Mutilation

Some dogs will self mutilate i.e. chew on their fur, normally on their feet, when left in the crate. It is done either due to a weak nervous system, plain boredom, or both.

The first thing to consider is that your dog is not getting fulfillment out of some part of his life. Is he going on regular walks? Is he being stimulated mentally? Does he get enough attention from his owners? See if you can treat the cause and not merely the symptom.

The next thing you will want to try is bitter apple spray. This is a spray that you can purchase at any pet store. It is designed to stop dogs from chewing. It has a bad flavor and will encourage most dogs to stop chewing on themselves. Spray it on the areas that he is biting and when he goes back to chew those areas he will be left with a sour taste in his mouth.

If this doesn't work it means that the crate is still a stressful place for him. Show him through repetition that it isn't. Put him in for very short periods and gradually increase the time until he no longer views the crate as a tough place to hang out.

A self mutilating dog is also quite possibly a dog with neurological problems. You may want to consider consulting with your veterinarian regarding medication to help your dog deal with stress.

Acclimating a puppy

If you have a puppy you are going to follow the same steps to acclimate him to the crate with only a few exceptions.

Your puppy, Buddy, at eight to twelve weeks may not have control over his bowels yet. That is to say that even though he doesn't want to soil the crate where he is laying, he may not have a choice.

For that reason, when you are acclimating a puppy to the crate you have got to give him lots and lots of opportunities to go to the bathroom outside. If possible, take him out every half hour to hour. I would caution you against leaving him in the crate for more than two hours when he is very young except during the night when he is sleeping. If you can't take him out that often I would recommend that in the first few weeks of ownership that you design a pen or divider to be put up in a laundry room or bathroom so that his range is very limited, but that he can go to the bathroom and have enough room to get away from it.

If this pen is outside in a shady spot or on the patio you are fine. If you design the pen indoors that is okay, too, but it is going to re-

quire a bit more work. If the pen is indoors it means that he is going to go to the bathroom indoors while you are at work.

Obviously you are going to put down newspapers or other absorbent material to catch the elimination but the downside is that Buddy is going to become accustomed to going to the bathroom in the house. The key is to pen him for a short duration of time, hopefully just those first few weeks.

While he is penned during the day make sure to acclimatize him to the crate when you return from work.

As soon as he is able to stay in the crate during the time you are at work, do it. Then, you must be very careful when you have him out of the crate. Buddy will now have several experiences going to the bathroom in that certain penned off area in the house and now will probably want to keep going there. You must prevent him from doing this. In the next few paragraphs I am going to talk about the proper behavior for Buddy when he is outside the crate and also how to correct him when he has his accidents.

All right. I'm through talking about the crate and how to get him to enjoy the crate. That is probably more crate information than you ever wanted. If you do it well, you will notice that during times of stress your dog will go by himself to the crate. And when he is in the crate he will become quite comfortable. I hope I haven't scared most of you. The truth is that over 90% of dogs, by my own estimation and experience, are fine with the crate from the get-go and won't need any of the problem solving solutions that I have previously mentioned.

Getting started with house training

Okay, so now that you have a dog that is crate trained, it is time to house train. When you aren't home, put Buddy in the crate. When you are home but can't watch him, perhaps you are cooking dinner or cleaning the living room, put Buddy in the crate. When you are sleeping, put Buddy in the crate.

In other words: if your two eyes can't see Buddy right now, he should be in his crate. This will prevent Buddy from making a mistake while you are in no position to correct him.

The biggest mistake people make with housebreaking is giving Buddy too much freedom in the house too quickly.

Many owners will allow Buddy to roam the house unsupervised and Buddy of course is going to have to go to the bathroom. If no one is there to let him know that this is a bad thing then he will believe that it is a good thing. From this he will quickly develop the habit of eliminating in the house. So bottom line, don't let him out of your sight unless you feel like cleaning things up and not house training your dog.

Okay, so you know what to do when you aren't around. What about when you are at home, what then? When you have Buddy out of the crate when you are home he must be with you at all times. That bears repeating. ***If Buddy is outside of the crate he must be with you at all times.***

That means that if Buddy is a puppy and doesn't have obedience training that you must keep him on a leash at all times in the house. Attach the leash to a table leg when you sit down to dinner. Loop it around your leg when you are walking around. Hold the end of the leash in your lap when you watch television. Have it with you always!!

If you are training Buddy in basic obedience he should already be on leash at all times anyway. As I instructed you in the section on obedience you need to integrate Buddy's training at random times throughout the day. Having him on leash will allow you to make sure that he follows you around all day.

If you have completed the more intense obedience, however, you can merely have Buddy follow you from room to room and do 'down-stays' whenever you are going to stay in one room. Whatever stage he is in with his obedience training, it doesn't matter with regards to house training. He still must be with you at all times. The reason being is that if he is under your supervision then you can catch him in the act of going to the bathroom in the house and you can correct it.

The key to housebreaking is giving your dog multiple opportunities to do the correct behavior while taking away opportunities to go to the bathroom in the house. You must prevent the bad behavior from happening, correct it when it does, and encourage the appropriate behavior.

The multiple opportunities equal taking Buddy out to the bathroom several times a day, including: first thing in the morning and the last at night, after mealtime, one hour after mealtime, when you

come home and take him out of the crate where he was staying in your absence, and any other time you take him out of the crate. I mentioned earlier that with new puppies that a greater frequency of potty trips will equate more successful training as well.

I recommend you keep this house training schedule for anywhere between a month and several months. This will all depend on your dog. I have seen some dogs progress faster and some much slower. Some dogs are ready to move on in a week and others in two months or more.

You know you are ready to move on when your dog has not had any accidents for at least a week or more and starts to have habitual locations in the yard where he relieves himself.

The next step is to give Buddy a bit more freedom. Now instead of following you around the house with you holding the leash, allow Buddy to merely follow at his pace. Where as before you kept the leash with you, allow Buddy freedom within the room that you are in. Make sure that he still is in the same room, however. At this stage Buddy is probably only partly house broken and were he to be allowed to venture in the next room and have an accident your entire training program would take huge leaps backward.

Every seven to ten days you are going to give Buddy more freedom. The next step is to allow Buddy to wander into the next room. From there it is a short time until you can allow him free run of the house while you are home.

At this point it is also time to reduce the number of times that you

take him out to the bathroom. You will probably have noticed trends and patterns in how often and when he needs to relieve himself. Begin working toward taking Buddy out three to four times a day instead of the seven to eight times that you have been doing up until this point. After Buddy has had free run of the home for at least two weeks without an accident you are ready for the next step. I normally find that the earliest a dog should have run of the house while you are home is seven or eight months of age. Don't push it, though. Only move on as your dog is ready.

Taking it to the next step

When Buddy has been on target with free run of the house for a good month or more you are ready to move on to the next step. Usually the earliest I take this step is 10 months to a year of age. At this stage you can now begin leaving Buddy on his own outside of the crate. Leave him first for five minutes while watching him through the window. If he does okay, then it is ten minutes and then twenty. Next, leave him for an hour, then two hours then three, four, five and so on. No, you don't have to watch him through the window once you get 20 minutes or more. If you do come home, however, and find that your dog has had an accident you know you have to take a step back in your training and not allow so much time alone.

Depending on the speed that your dog picks up the training, you can have Buddy completely house broken anywhere from two to ten months. I always tell people who bring a new, young dog into their home that if they can give this effort for the first several months then they will make the next dozen or so years much more enjoyable. It is better to be this strict for this period of time then to always have to deal with housebreaking issues for the life of the dog.

Correcting 'mistakes'

Well, I covered how to prevent accidents from occurring. What happens when those little accidents, despite your best efforts, do occur?

The good news is that if you do a good job with the crate training, allow Buddy numerous opportunities to go to the bathroom in the right place, and supervise him well when he is in the house, you can all but eliminate the accidents. In fact, with my current two dogs the 'accidents' that I had with their house breaking combined can be counted on one hand.

I have even had some clients that when following these instructions to a 'T' have never experienced an accident in their home. But, if you aren't one of the lucky ones you are going to have an accident or two. If you are doing things correctly, however, then the accident is going to occur while you are supervising him and will actually be a learning experience.

Here is what you do. As you see him making his move to go to the bathroom you must immediately begin giving a few firm corrections on the leash as you say 'No' several times and head to the door. Do this all in one swift motion.

If you have a small puppy you can take a page out of his mother's book by grabbing him by the scruff while repeating 'No' and carrying him out to the yard. Go immediately to the place you wish him to relieve himself and encourage him to go to the bathroom. When he goes, lavish on the praise. If he doesn't have to go at all, because he already got it all out in the house, don't praise but merely take

him away from the spot.

The association that Buddy will take away from this experience is that going to the bathroom in the house is not fun but going to the bathroom outside is great. Sometimes your dog may not make the immediate associations so you may have to correct him several times when he makes mistakes in the house.

If you don't catch him within two seconds of going to the bathroom, however, you are out of luck. You missed your window of opportunity to correct him and any attempt to do so would make no sense to him. You have set your training back extensively. You have got to catch him in the act! You must supervise in order to catch him in the act!

Make sure you clean up Buddy's accidents with a powerful cleaner that will rid the spot of the smell. If the smell remains Buddy might later think that he should go to the bathroom in that spot. There are several good products on the market designed especially to neutralize these pet odors. If you have access to them use them so Buddy doesn't become a repeat offender. You can find them at any pet store.

With house breaking think small steps. Don't rush it! When you think about it, if it takes you an extra month to make sure Buddy is well house broken you will be saving yourself grief and heartache over the next decade. As a well known trainer once told me 95% of housebreaking is simple prevention.