Housetraining

The key to housetraining your puppy is to prevent accidents inside and to reward successful elimination outside. Crate training is a wonderful aid to housetraining because dogs will typically not soil their sleeping area. To properly crate train your puppy, refer to the crate training write-up.

When housetraining a puppy it is important that you take her outside at the times she is most likely to eliminate. These times include:

1. first thing in the morning
2. after each meal
3. after play time
4. when coming out of her crate
5. once an hour when you are home

Go out with your puppy each time so that you can provide feedback when she eliminates.

Choose an area outside where you will take the puppy each time. Pace back and forth for a maximum of 5 minutes. Do not interact with the puppy. If she eliminates, provide huge praise and a food treat when she finishes. Then, if you have time, have a play session or go for a walk. If she doesn't eliminate, go back into the house and either put her in her crate or supervise her by keeping her leash on. Try again in a half hour. When she eventually eliminates, pour on the praise and goodies. Only when you know she is "empty", can you allow her more freedom when you go back inside the house.

When inside the house your puppy should be supervised at all times. Learn the signals that indicate she needs to eliminate (circling, restlessness, sniffing). Whenever you see these behaviors, say "want to go out" and take her outside.

If you catch your puppy starting to eliminate in the house, interrupt her with a sharp sound (clap your hands). Then urgently say "outside" and take the puppy out. Stay outside for 5 minutes and praise and treat her if she finishes eliminating.

If the puppy has an accident in the house and you did not see it happen, you must not punish her for it because she will not connect the accident with the punishment. This will only cause your puppy to be afraid of you. Simply clean it up (with an odor neutralizer) and pay better attention next time.