

# Potty Train Your Puppy in a Week (Easy 3 Step Process)

### Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

### Transcript

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SG The number one challenge every new puppy owner wants to fix first is how do I get my puppy to go to the bathroom in the appropriate spot. Now for some puppy owners, this mystery never gets solved and there's a lot of adult dogs that are messing in the house as I speak. Today, that's all going to change because I'm going to share with you my three-part process that guarantees any dog of any breed of any age can become house trained.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And listen, if you have an adult dog who already is house trained, don't turn away from this podcast because I want to share some really unique dog training that I believe will be of interest to everybody because it's a different slant on a long, long unanswered question for a lot of people.

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How do I help train my dog? It comes down to this acronym **H-O-T**. I don't want you to get HOT if your puppy has a mistake in the house. **H-O-T**: *Habits, Observation and Timetable*. Now I'm going to share with you what I do if I get an inadvertent accident in the house, but in the meantime, if you follow this three-part process, I promise you literally within a week, you're going to have a pretty reliable puppy. In short of a month, it should be rare that you ever have an accident in the house.

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So, let's start. **H** that is *Habits*. Now, behaviour is just a collection of habits, my behaviour, your behaviour, and for sure our dog's behaviour. And success comes from creating really good habits. I suggest you look at [episode number 44: Using Coincidences and Positive Associations](#). In that episode, I introduced my training chart progress. And there, I suggest when we're teaching anything to our puppies or our dogs, you want to make the correct behaviour incredibly obvious and the incorrect behaviour almost impossible.

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So that might be, to make that correct behaviour absolutely guaranteed obvious your puppy would just live outside all the time because they would always be correct anytime they went to the bathroom. They'd always be going in the correct spot. Now that isn't reasonable. So, what can we do? The next best thing is we can follow these five simple habits that are going to help arrange those coincidences, so your puppy does learn to go in the right spot.

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Habit number one is we have to control the environment for that puppy. And I use three simple tools to do that. First of all, a crate. A crate, now for those of you who say, "Oh, I don't, my puppy, I want my puppy to live free. I don't want him to be in behind barriers and crates and stuff like that." Well then, you're going to have to get used to the smell of urine and the occasional stepping in poop around your house. And guess what, that stuff, it goes moldy and it stinks up your entire house. And there's no need for it. Three simple environment changes.



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Number one, a crate. A crate big enough that your puppy can be comfortable in it, but not so big that he can learn to pee in one area and sleep in another. So just big enough for him to comfortably sleep in there. He doesn't have to spend a lot of time in his crate. Only when you can't be there to supervise him.

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Number two, Ex-pen and I have an eight panel Ex-pen. I use various ones around my home. It's a simple little lodging that you can take with you and create a little four foot by four foot area for your puppy to just have their own little home, but have a little more freedom than a crate would give them.

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And number three would be barriers like baby gates, things that would block off rooms or doorways in your house. So that let's say you're chillaxing in your living room and you want to hang with your puppy, you can block off the entryway to the kitchen and so, there's just the small area in your den or your living room where the puppy can be.

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So, a crate, an Ex-pen, and a baby gate. And I will give you some links to some of my favourites in the show notes. I strongly recommend you dig into [episode number 6: The Art of Manipulation](#), where I talk about how you get success in training when you manipulate the environment that helps to create what is obvious for the puppy.

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So, we've got the puppy in a small area. Habit number two is, make home-base close to the area you want your puppy to potty in. Now, when I'm saying "potty", some parts of the world they're thinking I'm saying "party". Now it's "potty" and that's a, just a slang for going pee or poop, in an appropriate area. All right.

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So, make your home-base meaning the Ex-pen or the crate is going to be pretty close to the door. So, if the puppy's in an Ex-pen and you see that they have to go potty, you can quickly get them outdoors. Now the only exception to that is my puppies do sleep in my bedroom on a raised surface, right near my bed.

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And in [episode number 26](#), I talk about how to get a puppy to sleep through the night. And that is a big part of it. Other than that, the home-base starts for the first week or so, very, very close to the door. So, we have habit number one, make sure you control the environment. Habit number two make sure that you create home-base near an outside door.

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Habit number three, outside privacy. That is when you have your puppy home or the dog that you're retraining, every hour for the first week, you're going to say, "Let's go outside!" You're going to clip on the leash and you're going to go outside to the area, the same area every time where you want that dog to do their business.



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Now I say outside privacy, that means you get out there and you zip it. You don't interact with that puppy. If they jump on you and try to bite your pant leg, you're going to ignore them, zero interaction. Let them do their business. Now, I like to say I want a pee in three. I'll give them three minutes out there to do something.

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Most puppies are going to pee within three minutes. They'll go to the bathroom, you can quietly praise them, "good puppy", and then let them do some more sniffing and go about their business. You might get a number two or for some puppies they're a double pee-er. My dog Feature was a double pee-er. She still is to this day.

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Don't just say, "Oh, I've got to pee. I'm rushing them back inside." That's when some puppies will have a little pee outside and then go have a bigger one in the house. Don't rush them. Make sure to give them 30 seconds or a minute at least after their last episode outside before you say, "All right, we're going to go inside."

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You want to establish when we go outside, it is for you to do your business. So that's why you're going to give them privacy. You're not going to be chatting and talking to them. You're not going to have them pee and then throw a Frisbee or a ball or something for them. It's just, we're going outside, we're going to do our business. Now, if you wanted to go for a walk after, you could then move away from that special area where you want them to potty and then you can start chatting to them. Once they potty and they've done their business, like I said, quietly praise them, take them back in the house.

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If after three minutes, nothing happens, take them back in the house, but put them in a crate. You want to make sure that you're controlling access to their environment. When they come out of their crate, when you're going to take them out of the crate next time, take them back outside. You want to have them go to the bathroom. So, puppies, young puppies may have to go to the bathroom, depending if they're really small every hour or every couple of hours, depending on their age, that eventually will grow out to three hours or four hours.

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But I would at first take them outside every hour. Now, if they have an accident in between, you might up that up to every 30 minutes, right? So, habit number three outside it's quiet time, it's privacy, same spot, do your business, get back inside. Pee in three or we're out. Habit number four, and you are going to thank me for this one at some point in your dog's life. Every time you take that puppy outside, they are pottying on a leash. It doesn't matter if you have a fenced in backyard. It doesn't matter if you trust your dog, just do this for the first, say month or two.

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And if your puppy has never had a leash on before, just drag it for the first couple episodes until they get used to having that leash on, right? They potty on a leash, then you praise them and then they're back inside. All right. So that is habit number four.



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We're going to habit number five. That is bedding check regularly at least twice a day. So, you're going to take the bedding out of your puppies' crate, whether it be a towel or a mat check to make sure you haven't had any accidents.

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If there has been any accidents in the crate, I reduced the bedding. So, if I've had a big fluffy bed in there, I'll go to a towel. If the puppy still has accidents on the towel, they get no bedding in there for a little while. Because what happens the towel absorbs the urine and they don't mind, "I'm still dry."

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So, we want to make sure that you do bedding checks regularly. That is any fluffy bed that's in their environment if you have one in their exercise and their Ex-pen or in their crate, any mats that they may have any interaction with, do that bedding check regularly. So those are really good habits that are going to help establish good pottying exercise for your puppy that they know "I have to go outside. I go to the same area. I do my business. I get praised and then I'm in a controlled area when I'm not outside."

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The next part of the process, the **O** is *Observation*. And this isn't what you might think. It's a two-part process. And listen, are you familiar with the game poker? A good poker player can anticipate what another poker player is going to do. They get tells; it's called tells. The other player will have these little quirks, some physical quirks that they have that give away what they're about to do. Your puppy, it has tells as well.

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I want you to start picking up what your puppies tells are, and you're going to do this outside. So, you're going to take your puppy outside and start observing what does that puppy do just before he pees or poops? Does he sniff a certain way? Does he always turn a circle in the same direction? How does he hold his tail? When he's about to pee, does he do something? Does he paddle his feet? Look for those little tells and write them down.

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Observe those every week or so, see if they're changing. And then what you're going to do is put yourself on high alert in the house. And if you see any one of those tells you are going to then say to your puppy, "Let's go outside." Clip the leash on and get out there. The puppy will have tells. They don't suddenly just drop urine. Right. So, look for those tells. And then you're going to be able to anticipate and the puppy is going to learn, "Oh, so when I need to go, I go to the door."

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And you're going to very quickly, you're going to see the puppy start to initiate that "I need to go outside" rather than just, you know, starting to squat on your floor, they're going to say, "Now I've got to do something." But your observation skills, they are required all the time. Anytime your puppy is out of their crate, even when they're in their exercise pen, in that Ex-pen, it doesn't mean that you don't have to be on high alert. I can be cooking and just watching that puppy, I'm still watching for those tells. You don't ever want them to have an accident in that exercise pen.



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Every accident that they have, you've got to say, "That is on me." That I could have done my job better. And guess what? That's just a rehearsal of something you don't want to have. And the more rehearsals they have, the better they get at pottying inside. Now, if you're like me and live in a cold climate country, a lot of puppies don't want to go outside in the wintertime.

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So, you're going to have to get very, very good at following the powers of observations and those five good habits to make sure that puppy gets outside. Because remember, you need to be clear with your expectations. As Brené Brown says, "Clarity is kind." So be super clear by having those good habits and keeping your powers of observation on at all times when that puppy is outside of their crate.

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Okay. The third part of the process, this is a biggie. It is **T** the *Timetable*. Now I'm going to tell you right off the bat, my dogs do not eat on any kind of a timetable. But when I have a puppy, the timetable is always around the times they do eat. So, we know there are times where in a puppy is more likely to want to pee.

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After any kind of sleeping episode, a little nap, take them out to their potty spot. Overnight, take them out to their potty spot. So, any kind of nap immediately they're going to give you something. And that gives you an opportunity to rehearse good behaviour. Any time you've had a big play or a training session with your puppy, take them out to their potting spot.

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I would say you're going to learn what that timing is for your dog, but for most puppies, 15 minutes to 30 minutes after a big drink. And if your puppy is a swimmer, always take them out several times after they've had a swim. Again, depending on the age of the puppy, it could be 15 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour, 90 minutes after they eat.

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Younger puppies, they need to get out immediately after they eat. And then you can drag it out as you learn the timetable of your puppy. And eventually they will become very predictable because you don't have to feed them at a certain time, but you do have to take them out at a certain time after they have had anything to eat. Because food in starts to stimulate food out.

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So, if you are very religious about that timetable again, you are establishing good rehearsals of what you want doing your business outside, which is going to give you a better chance at making sure that your puppy always does their business outside.

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Now, what I didn't say, and I maybe should have started this off is, if your puppy is having accidents in the house and you are doing all of this, please make sure to get your puppy checked out by a veterinarian and make sure there isn't anything physically wrong.





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And finally, let's talk about when an accident happens. Because let's face it, none of us are perfect. And our puppy may have an accident. It happens. There's two kinds of accidents. There's the accidents you happen upon. Those are the worst. Those are the worst when you're walking through the house and there's just a puddle. Oh, you're going to only hope that that puddle is near the door. The closer to the door is that's a good sign that your puppy is figuring things out.

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If the accident, the puddle or the pile is behind furniture you're in trouble. It means that you have handled these accidents inappropriately. It means that your puppy is worried and they're starting to hide so that they can eliminate somewhere in the house.

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What you need to do is create a Zen attitude. If there is an accident, it is not on the puppy. It is a hundred percent on you or a family member, but that's okay too, because you know what, maybe they were supposed to be looking after the puppy and they got distracted as well. It's not Earth shattering.

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Adopt a Zen attitude. An accident you find after the fact, all you can do is clean up and do a better job. An accident that you, the puppy, you're right there and you see them start, you miss the early tells and they're about to squat just quickly get to them and rush them outside. You know, clip that leash on. I like in the heat of the moment I just grab the leash and clip it over. You might even just grab a leash in one hand and pick up the puppy and run them outside. And if they're in the middle of a poop, if you just press down on their tail head, quite often that will stop it so you can finish it outside.

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All right. Get them outside and then bring them back in, put them in the crate, clean up the mess and plan how are you going to do a better job with your powers of observation? That's it for the complete three step process on how to make sure any puppy that comes into your house gets house trained super early so that you don't have any accidents and the puppy gains this great confidence. Because they know what their expectations are or what your expectations are of them. And they, I mean, they're much happier when they can go outside and do their business as well.

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One last thing I'm going to say, if you want your puppy to potty in the house, you could follow this along. What I would recommend you do though, is you take an Ex-pen and you set up a potty area. A lot of people make the mistake of making this little, tiny, like a kitty litter box. Right. So, the puppy has like three quarters of the area to play in, and pee in, and poop in, and one little quarter where they're supposed to pee and poo.

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You know what, for the first week, make your Ex-pen three quarters of it a potty area. So, get a bunch of trays and then gradually when they start peeing in those trays, you can take one away. And so now half of your Ex-pen area is a potty area. And gradually get it down so that the puppy is consistently going in the area you want.



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It isn't the best, my first choice to have a puppy to go to the bathroom in an inside potty area. But I can understand that for some of you it's an absolute necessity, but you can still follow the **HOT** process to make sure that you get reliable results pottying in the same area in the potty tray rather than anywhere out on your floor.

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Okay. And finally, if you haven't checked out my [video on YouTube: Susan Garrett's Five Puppy Games](#), please do that. It will give you new insights into things you can do to exercise your puppies' brain and body while they are inside your house. And that's going to help set up another opportunity for you to run them outside, have a successful potty. I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

[Blog Post: It's Time to P-o-t-t-y! Inside Scoop on Housetraining](#)

[Podcast Episode 44: Using Coincidences and Positive Associations in Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 6: The Art of Manipulation](#)

[Podcast Episode 30: Why Dog Crates Are Not Dog Cages](#)

[Ex-Pen: Rover Modular Pet Enclosures](#)

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Podcast Episode 26: Pro Dog Training Tips to Get Your Puppy to Sleep All Night](#)

[Podcast Episode 43: Can a Dog be Happy and Well Trained?](#)

[YouTube Video: 5 Games for Puppies](#)



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### About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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