

Bell Training Your Dog

Method of Potty Training



“With concentrated effort, it is possible to train your dog to ring a bell whenever they want to go outside to relieve themselves.”

Source for information:

Drew Vogel
vogelap@email.uc.edu

Bell training is not difficult, but it requires a great deal of consistency and dedication during the training.

Preparing For Training

- »Get a dog.
- »Get a bell (parrot bell or jingle bells)
- »Get a small square piece of fabric (wash cloth or bandana)
- »Get a cord to tie the bell in the fabric to the door.(shoe string, nylon leash or rope)
- »Attach the cord to the door, at about dog-paw height. You may need to adjust the height of the bell depending on your dog's comfort level to reaching for it

Recommended

A crate for the dog. The crate should be large enough for the dog to stand up, lie down, and turn around in. If your puppy is going to grow into a big dog, you can buy a crate for the size they will grow to be, but temporarily partition it down to the correct size for your puppy. There are several compelling reasons to use a crate, but the most relevant to this discussion is that dogs are reluctant to mess where they lay, and this will encourage development of bladder/bowel control.

However, be aware that **puppies cannot hold their bladders for a full 8-hour work day!**

They need to be given the chance to relieve themselves frequently. The rule of thumb is to take the number of months your puppy is and add one to it. This is how many hours you can allow your puppy to hold it before needing to go outside.

Another reason to crate train your puppy is it allows the owner to leave the home without worrying about coming back to find an overturned garbage can, messes on the floor, or other signs of doggy-destruction, and a crate is like a little apartment for the dog.

Remember that dogs do not like to mess where they lay.

The Training

At first, I fed Stanley only twice a day -- once at 8:30am and again at 5:30pm. (Stanley is now a self-feeder. I don't measure or time his feedings.) About 20-30 minutes after each meal, I'd take him to the bell hung on my back door. Then, I'd take his paw, hit the bell with his paw (**very important -- the dog must hit the bell, not you**), verbally praise him, and take him outside. We'd stay outside until he did his duty or a reasonable amount of time (5-10 minutes) then it was back inside with loads of praise and a treat only if he did his potty while outside. Stanley can also ring the bell by moving it with his nose or shaking it in this mouth. Introduce all these methods to your dog.

If Stanley made a mess in the house, he would get a verbally “No, potty outside” over the mess. (**never ever** push the dog's nose in it!). I would then take Stanley outside. (Remember that before you exit the house your dog rings the bell). Then, clean the mess. (Keep your dog with your while cleaning the mess) After the mess is cleaned Stanley is placed in his crate for a few minutes. Once I am ready to let him out of his crate he is taken outside again.

The hard part is - a short time into the training, Stanley begins to get the idea that ringing the bell means that he gets to go outside. He wants to test the idea *every 30 seconds*. Yes, **every 30 seconds**. And guess what? You have to follow the steps listed above each and every time. Remember that this is when the dog is learning and making the bell training their own, and when you're most likely to get frustrated. You'll certainly get your exercise opening the door for them! Stay strong and take the dog out each time. A little inconvenience at this point will lead to a well-potty-trained dog.