

HOUSEBREAKING YOUR GREAT DANE PUPPY

Dane puppies are generally very clean animals and easy to house-break, provided you follow a few important rules. If you are diligent and follow a structured schedule, housebreaking should be a breeze.

Once in awhile, a puppy will have problems controlling their bladder. If the puppy is a female, the possibility of a bladder infection should be checked out. Also, some puppies have an intolerance for Vitamin C and/or MSM. To find out if these supplements are causing a problem, try removing them from the diet for a couple of days and see what happens.

Housebreaking a puppy doesn't have to be a horrifying experience. If you remember a few things about canines and commit yourself to a schedule and consistency, the process will go very smoothly.

First, dogs are den animals. They have, in nature, a home. If you watch young puppies, you will find, if given a choice, they will readily go and sleep in an enclosed area. You might note that your puppy has a tendency to sleep under or beside something; following his instincts to have a den.

In the wild, dens are to be kept clean. As soon as the puppy is able to learn, his mother teaches him to eliminate outside of the den area. If you observe young puppies while they are still in the whelping box you will note they attempt to leave the sleeping area to eliminate as soon as they can walk. Also, if the breeder has kept the puppy area very clean, the puppy will be easier to housebreak.

We can imitate nature by proving your dog with his own den. In this case—a crate. The puppy owner can choose between wire and plastic; plastic is easier to clean in the even of a messy accident and is the preferred choice for young puppies. (Once a Dane is housebroken, a larger wire crate can be used.)

When you start housebreaking, you must use a crate that is large enough to just fit the puppy. He should have enough room to stand up, turn around, and lie down in comfortably-but no more! Remember, the idea is for the puppy to keep his den clean. If the area is too large, he simply will get up, walk a little distance from his sleeping area, and eliminate. By keeping the area small he will be unable to find a corner in which to eliminate. Your young puppy is coming to you with an open mind. It is up to you, with consistency, repetition, praise, patience, and kindness, to help him develop into a dog of which you can be proud. A simple rule that *must* be followed is when the pup is left unattended, he must be restricted to his crate. In other words, the puppy is never left unsupervised. He's either in his crate, outside in a fenced area, or under your direct supervision.

Common sense tells you to take the puppy outside after he eats, drinks, or awakes from a nap. Remember, after he has eliminated outside praise him!

Restrict your puppy to his crate at bedtime or when you are away from home for several hours. As long as he is old enough and has control, he will wait to relieve himself until given the opportunity to go outside. Remember, be fair-he is only a puppy!

Furnish the crate simply. Use a rug, crate mat, old blanket or towels to provide him with a comfortable area. Make sure the entire area is covered. This will convey the idea that no part of the area should be used as a washroom.

The crate is his home. Favorite toys should always be returned to the crate when playtime is over.

The crate will serve as his home for his lifetime. He will feel comfortable and secure in it. It will be an asset when traveling or restricting his activity when non-doggy friends or relatives come to visit. The crate can also be used to house the dog when you just don't want him underfoot. If you have young children, you can teach them the crate is

“off limits”. The puppy will soon learn he can go to his crate when he has had enough of the kids!

A crate is a helpful investment that will be worth its weight in gold. Use the following schedule to assist in a step—by-step account of how to housebreak your puppy.

1. Bedtime-take the puppy outside and give him ample time to eliminate. Take him to a spot where he has eliminated previously; this will help him get the idea. If you have a fenced area, let him loose. If on leash, be sure not to choke him. Use either a buckle collar or a training collar on the inactive ring. Using a command is helpful.
2. When he eliminates, praise him. Let him know how good he was for doing his business outside.
3. Keep praising and take him inside and put him in his crate for bedtime.
4. Morning-*the very first thing*-pick him up (don't expect a young puppy to walk outside without stopping to pee!) and take him outside. He's tried to be clean all night, so you hurry to get him outside, and he will do his business in a rush. Now, bring him in and give him his freedom in a confined area like the kitchen with the door blocked as long as you are going to be with the pup. Remember-always supervised! Baby gates work well for this.
5. Feed-after you have done your first morning chores and after your briefest, feed him his food. He's had his freedom up until this point, but after he eats, take him outside or put him in the yard.
6. After you have seen him eliminate, bring him inside and put him in his crate.
7. At lunch time take him out of the crate and put him in the yard.
8. Bring him in after he eliminates and give him confined freedom with you for one or two hours-then take him outside for a “quickie”. Now, put him back in the crate until late afternoon.
9. At dinner time, take him outside from the crate for another “quickie”. Bring him in for confined freedom while you prepare your dinner and his. After you eat, feed the pup, then take him outside just as soon as he finishes. Naturally, you can feed him before you eat, provided you have

the time to follow the “exercise” procedure. Do not feed later than 6:00 p.m.!

10. After dinner, allow him controlled, confined freedom until about 8:00 p.m., then out for another quickie.

11. Before you retire for the night, go through the bedtime (#1) routine.

If you keep this routine for at least two weeks-diligently!-of preventing him from doing toilet duties in the house, showing him how to be right and praising for correct actions-the pattern should be set. You can now start to check on his learning by allowing a little more freedom from his crate. Incidentally, when the puppy is out of the crate, the door is always left open in the event he wants to go in. The extended freedom is still only in the confined area-just in the morning; so, if he’s “good”, the next day try the afternoon. Do not test your puppy all night after only two weeks! After a few more weeks, if the pup is good, then confine him to his crate only at night and when you leave the house. Then, test whenever you please!

Once you are confident of his progress, start limited introduction to the other room, but only when you are with the puppy and when your attention can be on him. It won’t hurt to have him on a leash while you watch TV. Important-during these lessons of freedom, be sensitive to any whining or attempts to go to the door; to any loss of interest in you or a toy; to any circling-get the puppy outside immediately!

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