

## Housebreaking a Miniature Pinscher

### Option 1: Indoor

*Courtesy of: Debra Shigematsu*

When we brought our two min pins home at 7 weeks old, we had already decided where we wanted them to eventually use the newspaper. We placed a portable exercise pen in a tiled area near the kitchen, and put their crate at one end and several layers of paper at the other end, in the same spot we wanted them to learn to use permanently. We put their food and water as far away from the paper as possible. When we were not at home they stayed in the exercise pen.

At all other times we made sure we had them in sight. After every meal or nap we would carry them to the Newspaper and use the cue words "get on the paper" If they went we would REALLY praise them. At first they would just run off or, even worse, think it was something to shred or dig up. We just would say NO and make another attempt to hold them there a little longer if we were sure they had to "go". When they were playing we just made sure they stayed in sight so we could catch any accident as fast as possible. If they started to go somewhere else we would pick them up (sometimes in the act!), and take them to the spot ALWAYS using the cue word, "get on the paper". If they had an accident that we didn't catch we would just clean it up out of their sight. We tried to avoid letting them make too many mistakes, but when they did, a simple NO and then "get on the Paper " was our relentless routine.

In the beginning they didn't seem to be getting it at all but we never changed our program and after a few weeks they began to understand. However it took almost TWO months of this repetition before they were 100% reliable! At the time it seemed like forever! But now that our min pins are a year and a half old, and can get out of our bed in the middle of the night, travel all the way through the house to "go" on the paper, and then come running back to joyfully leap under the covers, it really seems like time well spent!

#### A FEW USEFUL NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS:

1-Under the newspaper we put a large pan from a large wire pet crate. It's easy to clean and doesn't slide. We tried kitty litter under it but that seemed to encourage them to dig.

2-Once they are paper trained you can safely let them have the run of the house while you are at work. Or at least the run of a few rooms! Use that portable exercise pen to block off the area you'd like them to stay in.

3-When you travel you can put down newspaper ANYWHERE and they will go to that spot if they need to.

4- It's very important not to get discouraged no matter how little they seem to understand at first. With patience and relentless perseverance you can teach them anything!

### Option 2: Outdoor

*Courtesy of: Samantha Brown*

I have owned toy breeds for about a decade now. Housebreaking a toy breed has been the most difficult of any breed I have ever owned. I started thinking of ways to do this almost impossible task about eight years ago. I realized one very important fact when it comes to dogs and training: Dogs

learn by a routine and that routine lasts for a life.

When I started into Min Pins I noticed that out of all the toys I had had, this was the hardest breed to deal with when it came to training. These little guys are stubborn and it is hard to break them once started; especially once they have been doing their business in the house. I started my Min Pin on a routine of going out every one and a half hours to two hours. I fed her in the morning and afternoon so that her food was digested by night and this prevented defecation during sleeping hours. Dogs, as they grow older, have more tolerance to hold their bathroom duties till morning, but puppies usually need to be taken out at least once in the middle of the night.

The routine of being taken out every few hours (this depends on your puppies individual needs) will then engrave itself in your dog's mind that it needs to take it's "business" outside and not in the house. I started off by giving a small cookie (I used kitty Pounce in chicken flavor which can be found in your grocery store in the cat food section) and praised her a lot when she did what I asked of her. When she first started and made mistakes I took her outside and told her that she is to do it outside.

When training a dog you should use command words like "Pee Pee" and "Poo Poo" and that way the dog knows what you want when you are taking them outside. Never abuse your dog when it comes to making a mistake in the house. Remember, it is as much a fault of yours as it is the dog that they had that mistake since they cannot ask to go out or take themselves out. You might want to keep the dog on a leash, even in a backyard, to show them where you want them to go. This is so that if they start to stray from doing what you ask, you can easily give a command and have them do what you ask. Do not baby the dog at this time or they will look only to go inside and not want to stand outside with you; especially if it is winter and snowing. The cookies you give will reinforce the good behavior, which is going to the bathroom outside, and it helps the dog understand that when it goes to the bathroom the dog will get a cookie; something all dogs love.

As time goes on and your dog is learning what it should and should not do, slowly take the cookies away. If you constantly are giving cookies for a long period of time, you may find your dog will not go to the bathroom unless the dog knows a cookie is present. A lifelong commitment of giving cookies every time a dog goes to the bathroom is not the most ideal situation.

Patience is the key to any training. Keep up with the routine and your dog should be housebroken in no time. Every dog is has a different personality and agenda. No matter how long it takes, never give up. Good Luck!!

## **Toy Breeds Benefit From Real Training**

*(Courtesy of: Gina Spadafori (used with permission. Gina Spadafori is the pet-care columnist for the Universal Press Syndicate and special correspondent for pets.com. She is also the author of "Dogs For Dummies.")*

Toy dogs have more than a few special things about them, most good, some not so good. The upside: They're adorable. They're portable. They're usually long-lived. On the downside, they seem to be exceptionally hard to house-train. The problem, says small-dog expert Darlene Arden, is mostly human.

"People don't have the same expectations of a toy dog that they would of a golden retriever or Great Dane," says Arden, author of "The Irrepressible Toy Dog" (Howell Book House, \$17.95). "Everyone looks at a toy dog as a perpetual infant. "And because of that and the difference in the amount left behind, people just don't seem to care until they step in it at 2 in the morning, or until company's

coming and the house smells bad."

This lack of consistency on the part of doting human isn't the only problem, she says, pointing out that many small dogs are in trouble from the moment they're brought home as puppies. Many small dogs in the most popular breeds - such as Yorkies, Maltese or Toy Poodles &mdash; come from puppy mills or other large-scale breeders who simply don't take the time to lay the groundwork that makes house-training easier

"These puppies grow up on a paper, eat on the paper, sleep on the paper, go on the paper," says Arden, who notes that puppies raised under such conditions learn to live in their own filth. Buying from a reputable breeder is essential, she says, not just for proper early training, but also for health screening and socialization.

Even poorly raised dogs can usually be trained, says Arden.

You have to start by looking at things from a small dog's point of view &mdash; and that can be very hard for people who think their dogs are little people.

For example, you have to make sure your dog can feel safe in the outdoor spot you've chosen for him. The act of elimination is one when a dog's guard is down , and when you weigh 10 pounds or less, it's important to feel you're not going to be attacked. "They feel vulnerable," says Arden. "You need to find that one very safe spot for them." And keep the grass short so the dog doesn't foe.! as if he's hacking through a jungle, she adds.

Cold weather can also make house-training more difficult. Little dogs lose heat rapidly and would rather use a nice corner of a warm house than venture outside. Sweaters, says Arden, are not silly for the little dog and can help with house-training.

Despite the special challenges the small dog presents, Arden says house-training is possible. Once your dog has that safe spot outside, you can teach him to use it with the aid of a schedule, praise, and a dedication to consistency

"Feed on a schedule," says Arden, "and be aware of when the puppy has to go. You must take your dog out after he eats, after play, after any kind of stimulation.

"Take a very special treat and your happiest voice to the special spot. The moment the puppy's feet hit the ground, get excited." When the deed is done, says Arden, praise to the heavens and deliver the treat.

Limiting a dog's range in the house helps, too. "I'm a firm believer in crate-training&mdash; as a tool, not a punishment," says Arden. "A crate keeps a dog out of trouble when you can't watch him."

Mistakes are part of the learning process and should never be punished. "If you see the dog starting to go in the house, pick him up and run him to that special spot," says Arden, and praise when the dog finishes up outside.

Your biggest ally in the struggle to get your dog house-trained is the typical toy dog temperament. They want to please you, says Arden. "Because they bond so tightly with their owners, toy dogs want to do what you want." You just have to help gently steer them in the right direction.

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