

The Ultimate Puppy Potty Training Schedule

This schedule is your blueprint for success. It's based on a simple rule: a puppy can typically hold their bladder for one hour for every month of age, plus one. Remember, this is a maximum during the day, not a goal. Always err on the side of more frequent breaks!

Key Factors:

1. **Age:** The biggest factor. Younger puppies need far more frequent breaks.
2. **Size:** Smaller breeds (e.g., Chihuahuas, Yorkies) often have tinier bladders and higher metabolisms, sometimes needing even more frequent breaks than the chart suggests.
3. **Activity:** Play, excitement, and training sessions stimulate the bladder. Always go out after these activities.
4. **Feeding:** Puppies need to eliminate within 5-30 minutes after eating.

Schedules by Age

8-10 Weeks Old (~2 Months) | Max Hold: ~3 Hours

Goal: Establish a routine and prevent accidents. This age requires the most vigilance.

- 6:30 AM: Immediate potty break. First thing!
- 6:45 AM: Breakfast, then water access.
- 7:15 AM: Potty break (15-20 mins after eating).
- 8:00 AM: Potty break & short playtime.
- 9:30 AM: Potty break.
- 11:00 AM: Potty break.
- 12:00 PM: Lunch, then water access.
- 12:30 PM: Potty break (15-20 mins after eating).
- 2:00 PM: Potty break.
- 3:30 PM: Potty break.
- 5:00 PM: Dinner, then water access.
- 5:30 PM: Potty break (15-20 mins after eating).
- 7:00 PM: Potty break & play.
- 8:30 PM: Final water offer for the night. Pick up the water bowl 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- 9:30 PM: Last call potty break! Then into the crate for sleep.
- Overnight: Set an alarm for one quick, boring potty break (e.g., 2:00 AM). No play, just business.

10-12 Weeks Old (~3 Months) | Max Hold: ~4 Hours

Goal: Start stretching the time between breaks slightly. You can likely drop the overnight break.

Follow the same pattern as above, but you can start extending the time between mid-day breaks to every 2.5 - 3 hours.

Overnight: If your puppy is sleeping soundly and not whining, you can try skipping the overnight break. If they do whine, take them out straight away—they likely need to go.

3-6 Months Old | Max Hold: ~5-7 Hours

Goal: Solidify the routine and work towards full bladder control.

- Potty breaks can be scheduled every 3-4 hours during the day.
- They should be able to sleep through the night without a break (7-8 hours).
- Continue with mandatory breaks after eating, drinking, playing, and napping.
- This is when you'll see the training pay off as they start to signal to go out.

6+ Months Old | Max Hold: ~8+ Hours

Goal: Maintain reliability and transition to an adult schedule.

Most puppies can hold it for 4-6 hours during the day.

They can sleep through the night (8+ hours) easily. They should have a strong understanding of where to go and should be reliably signaling.

Note: Large/giant breeds may mature slower and take longer to reach full reliability.

Tips for Success

The Magic Times: Always go out after these five things:

1. Waking up (from a nap or overnight)
2. Eating a meal
3. Drinking water
4. Playing vigorously
5. Being let out of the crate

- **The Last Call:** The final potty break of the night is non-negotiable. Make it the last thing you do before you go to bed.
- **Size Matters:** Small breed owner? Mentally subtract 30-60 minutes from the "max hold" time. They often need more frequent trips.
- **Consistency Over Everything:** A predictable routine is more important than perfectly timed breaks. Your puppy will learn to anticipate and hold it until the next scheduled break.

This schedule requires dedication but is proven to work. By following it closely, you're not just preventing accidents—you're teaching your puppy a lifelong habit of good bathroom etiquette.