



ADOPT A DOG — RESCUE —

POTTY TRAINING TIPS

House training your dog does not have to be stressful, for you or your dog! It involves patience, commitment and consistency. Every dog or puppy will have an accident, expect it. But if you stick to your routine, reward your dog for good behavior, he will get this down in no time.

Here are Some Do's and Don'ts for House Training your Puppy.

Establish your dog's safe spot. The safe spot acts as a "den" for your dog. This can be a crate, small sectioned off part of a room, like the laundry room or bathroom sectioned off with baby gates. The safe spot should be small when you are first potty training him, and then you can gradually make it larger. It should be big enough for him to stand, lie down comfortably, and turn around in. If you are crating your dog, you can section it off with a divider, and gradually make the space larger. They should not be in their safe spot all day and night, but a few hours during the day and at night until he is potty trained. This will help him make his safe spot his. Dogs do not want to eliminate in their dens, it is in their natural programming that they do not want to go to potty where they eat and sleep.

Crating caution... Never use the crate as punishment, or your dog may come to fear the crate and refuse to enter it. Also, leaving your dog in a crate for long periods of time can make the dog feel trapped and frustrated, leading to unwanted behaviors. You may need to hire a dog walker or have someone available to take your dog out while you are away. Puppies under six months old should not be left in the crate for more than 3 hours or 4 hours. Crate your dog only until you can trust him not to destroy your house, after he is house-trained, the crate will be a place he goes voluntarily.

Crate training is a process. You'll want to introduce it to him over a period of a few days to a few weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. Place the crate in an area that the family spends a lot of time in. Put a soft blanket or small dog bed in the crate, and let your puppy explore the crate at his leisure. If your dog doesn't start sleeping in the crate right away, encourage him to enter the crate with treats around and inside the crate, along with toys. Also, feed his meals in his crate. The first time he does this, you can close the door while he's eating but open it as soon as he finishes his meal. Over a period of time you can leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until he's staying in there for ten minutes or so after eating. If he begins to whine while he's in there, don't let him out until he stops, or he'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is by whining.

Slowly over a period of time lengthen the crating periods. Use a command when you do put him in the crate such as "kennel" and encourage him with treats. Reward him with praise and the treat once he enters the crate. Sit quietly near the crate for a few minutes, and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a couple minutes, and then let him out of the crate. Repeat this process several times a day, gradually increasing the length of time you leave him in the crate and the length of time you're out of his sight. Once your pup will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you mostly out of sight, you can begin leaving him crated when you're gone for short time periods and/or letting him sleep there at night. This may take several days or several weeks.



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Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged—they should be matter of fact. Praise your dog briefly, give him a treat for entering the crate, and then leave quietly. When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to him in an excited, enthusiastic way. Your arrival should be matter of fact to avoid increasing his anxiety over when you will return. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so he doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

You can use these same steps if your are instead house training him using a safe spot sectioned off in your house.

Establish a routine. This teaches your dog that there are times to sleep, times to play, and times to potty. A regular eating and walking schedule is comforting to the dog, and structure creates an easier environment for training. Routines also reduce stress for your dog. Simply knowing when he will be walked, fed, taken out to go potty and played with will help make your dog feel comfortable, confident, relaxed and secure.

Take your pup out to potty frequently. The puppy's digestive tract works very quickly. 5-30 minutes after your puppy eats, he will want to go potty. As a rule of thumb, you should take your puppy potty as soon as you've finished playing with him, after eating and drinking, and as soon as he wakes up (including naps). If he doesn't go to the bathroom when you take him, you can place him in his crate or safe spot for 10-30 minutes, and then take him out again. To reduce the likelihood your dog may need to potty during the night, put your pup's water dish away about 2-3 hours before bedtime. If you do have to take him during the night, don't make a fuss about it and turn on as few lights as possible when you take him out to do his business. This way he won't think it's playtime in the middle of the night.

Pick a bathroom spot outside. Always take your puppy to that spot using a leash, and use a word or phrase (like "go potty") so that your dog will learn the what the phrase means and you can remind him what to do as he gets older before he eliminates.

Reward your puppy every time he potties outside. Praise him and give him a small treat immediately after he's finished eliminating. Do not wait until you go back in the house or he won't know why he's receiving the treat or praise.

Watch for signs your puppy needs to go out. When you are not actively playing or training him, keep him nearby in the same room as you and make sure he can't wander out of your sight. Watch for signs such as scratching or barking at a door, restlessness, sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately grab the leash and take him outside to his bathroom spot, then praise and reward him when he does eliminate.

Confine your dog when you're unable to watch him. You should confine him in his crate or safe spot. As soon as you take your dog out of his crate or safe spot, take him out to go potty and praise him when he eliminates.



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Expect a few accidents in the house. It is the normal part of housebreaking. When you catch him in the act, interrupt your puppy and make a startling noise (but do not scare him) like clapping and saying “OUTSIDE” and immediately take him to his bathroom spot. If he finishes eliminating in his bathroom spot, praise and reward him. If you find a soiled area in the house, it’s too late to correct him for it, scolding or punishing him after the fact won’t help with housebreaking as he won’t know what he did wrong, and can make him afraid to eliminate in your presence even when you take him to his bathroom spot. Since dogs are inclined to continue to soil areas that smell like urine, make sure to clean the soiled areas in your house thoroughly, using a product designed to clean areas soiled by pets.

When you’re puppy is left home alone, make sure he is confined to his safe spot or crate. A puppy under six months cannot hold his bladder for more than a few hours (a good rule of thumb is they can hold their bladder for one hour for every month of age, so a 2 month old dog would only be able to hold their bladder for 2 hours).

If you’re going to be gone for more than 4-5 hours during the day while you are potty training your dog, make sure you have someone who can come during the day to take your dog out for a quick potty break. If you spend too much time away from him during the day while potty training, he will not be able to hold it. What you’ll want to do as a last resort is paper train him while you are away from home. You’ll want to use pee pads (specifically designed products you can find at most pet stores) and place them in his safe spot. You’ll need to make sure he still has room for laying down and moving around, and place the pee pad outside his sleeping space, so he has a separate space to play, enough room to sleep, and a separate space to eliminate. This can make the potty training process last longer and might become more difficult, but the days and hours you are home with your pup, you’ll need to make sure to really reward him lavishly when he does eliminate himself.

Done correctly, housebreaking should not be a stressful production but just a matter of putting a little extra work into getting your puppy on a schedule during the first weeks after he arrives at your home.

Potty Training an Adult Dog

Physically, your adult dog is able to hold their bladders for 5-8 hours, but keep in mind if they are not house trained they have not learned that they can or that they are *supposed* to. Remember, if given a choice, dogs always prefer to eliminate away from areas where they eat and sleep.

In addition to following these same steps above for house training a puppy for your adult dog, you’ll want to also:

- Keep your dog on a consistent feeding schedule and remove food between meals.
- Take your dog outside on a consistent and frequent schedule: first thing in the morning, last thing at night, during the day after play times, and before being confined or left alone.

If your dog is house trained but is still having occasional house-soiling problems, there may be other reasons for his behavior.



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Medical Problems: If his soiling seems unexplained, it may be due to gastrointestinal upset, an bladder or urinary infection, parasite, age related incontinence, or other illness. You should have your Vet rule out any illness.

Surface Preference: It's possible your dog has been trained to potty on certain surfaces in his previous living situation (or lack of training and supervision led your dog to prefer certain indoor surfaces). If you notice your dog eliminating in one area of your house, make sure to thoroughly clean that area, and block your dog's access to that area. Follow the steps above to retrain your dog to prefer to eliminate in the designated spot outside.

Fear of Being Outside: Your dog may have come from a completely different environment, for example a dog who rarely ever went outside or was raised in an indoor kennel, may become overwhelmed when taken outside and will not eliminate. In addition to general house training guide above, you'll need to spend some time outside with your dog to help them become comfortable with the outside environment. This may take some time, but spending extra time outdoors playing or exercising with your dog will help build his confidence and comfortability eliminating outdoors.

Anxiety or Excitement Induced: Separation anxiety and other anxiety induced scenarios can cause house trained dogs to potty in the house. Often times, separation anxiety is also accompanied by other destructive behaviors. If you think his anxiety is related to a change in the household (for example, new human or dog member, or loss of a human or dog member), you can try some exercises to deal with the conflict. Some dogs temporarily and occasionally lose control of their bladders when they become excited or threatened. This would normally occur during greetings or meeting new people, or if they feel they may be punished. Please read our guide about Behavioral issues to learn how to work with your dog to lessen his anxiety or excitement. Mentioned above, if you're dog picks a spot in your house to eliminate, you'll want to block off your dog's access to places he likes to soil in the house while working to lessen his anxiety.

Fears or Phobias: When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your dog is afraid of loud noises, such as thunder or fireworks, he may soil in the house when he's exposed to these sounds. Check out our guide on Behavioral issues to learn how to deal with your dog's fears.