

HOUSE-TRAINING TIPS

Preparation and patience are key to building a happy relationship!

House training your dog or puppy requires patience, commitment, and lots of consistency. Accidents are part of the process, but if you follow the basic house-training guidelines, you can get the newest member of your family on the right track within just a few weeks.

Establish a Routine

Like children, dogs do best on a regular schedule. The schedule teaches them that there are times to eat, times to play, and times to do their business. Generally speaking, a puppy can control his bladder one hour for every month of age. So, if your puppy is two months old, they can hold it for about two hours. Don't go longer than this between bathroom breaks or they're guaranteed to have an accident.

Take your dog outside frequently, at least every few hours, and immediately after he wakes up, during and after playing, and after eating or drinking.

Pick a potty spot outside, and always take your dog (on a leash) to that spot. While your dog is relieving himself, use a specific word or phrase that you can eventually use before they go, to remind him what to do. Take him out for a longer walk or give him some play time, only after he has eliminated.

Reward your dog every time he eliminates outdoors. Praise or give treats, but remember to do so immediately after he's finished, not after he comes back inside. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for going outdoors is the only way to teach what is expected of him. Before rewarding, be sure he's finished. Puppies are easily distracted and if you praise too soon, they may forget to finish until they are back in the house.

Put your dog on a regular feeding schedule. What goes into a dog on schedule, comes out of a dog on schedule. Depending on their age, puppies typically need to be fed three to four times per day. Feeding your puppy at the same time each day will make it more likely that he will eliminate at consistent times as well, making house-training easier for both of you.

Pick up your dog's water dish about two and a half hours before bedtime, to reduce the likelihood that he'll need to relieve himself during the night. Most puppies can sleep for approximately seven hours without needing a potty break. If your puppy does wake you up in the night, don't make a big deal of it; otherwise, they will think it's time to play and won't want to go back to sleep. Turn on as few lights as possible, don't talk to or play with your puppy, take them out and return them to bed.

Supervise Your Dog

Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house; keep an eye on him whenever he is indoors.

Using a six-foot leash, tether your puppy to you or to a nearby piece of furniture if you are not actively training or playing. Watch for signs that your dog needs to go out. Some signs are obvious, such as barking or scratching at the door, squatting, restlessness, sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately grab the leash and take him outside to his potty spot. If he eliminates, praise him and reward him with a treat.

Keep your dog on a leash in the yard. During the house-training process, your yard should be treated like any other room in your house. Give your dog some freedom in the house and yard, only after he becomes reliable house-trained.

When You Can't Supervise, Confine

When unable to watch your dog at all times, restrict him to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there.

The space should be just big enough to comfortably stand, turn around, and lie down. You can use a portion of a bathroom or laundry room, blocked off with baby gates.

You may want to crate train your dog. Be sure to learn how to use a crate humanely as a method of confinement. If your dog has spent several hours in confinement, you'll need to take him directly to his potty spot as soon as you return.

Mistakes Happen

Expect your dog to have a few accidents in the house, it's a normal part of house-training. Here's what to do when that happens:

Interrupt Your Dog When You Catch Them in the Act

Make a startling noise (be careful not to scare him) or say, "OUTSIDE" and immediately take him to his potty spot. Praise him and provide a treat if he finishes there.

Don't punish your dog for eliminating in the house.

If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Just clean it up. Rubbing your dog's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him or any other punishment will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence.

Punishment will often do more harm than good.

Clean the soiled area thoroughly. Puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. It's extremely important that you use these supervision and confinement procedures to minimize the number of accidents. If you allow your dog to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to go, which will prolong the house-training process.

Make Plans for When You Are Away

If you have to be away from home more than four or five hours a day, this may not be the best time for you to get a puppy. Instead, you may want to consider an older dog who can wait for you to return.