

POTTY TRAINING

Housebreaking requires a combination of creating a routine for your puppy or dog, setting up a management system, and constant supervision. The more consistent you follow these guidelines, the quicker and more reliable your puppy or dog will understand where to eliminate. Believe it or not, house training is one of the easiest things to teach a dog because dogs are clean by nature and don't like to soil their den area. Using this concept, begin by always supervising your puppy when she is not in her den/crate environment. The largest reason people fail with house training is that they give the puppy more freedom than the pup or dog is capable of handling. An un-supervised pup or dog is bound to make mistakes. Think about a toddler; you wouldn't leave a 2 year old unattended, would you?

Firstly, it is important to create a routine for your puppy or dog. Set up a feeding and watering schedule. This might consist of feeding and watering your dog two to three times a day (ask your vet for proper feeding instructions). Also, provide water after you exercise your dog. Free feeding is not recommended until your dog is completely housebroken due to the fact we cannot regulate when they will have to eliminate. By setting up a feeding and watering schedule, you will better predict when your puppy is going to eliminate. Ask the breeder or rescue organization where you got the dog if puppy already has a schedule and what it is.

Take your puppy out regularly, every 2-3 hours. Also, your first action in the morning should be to take your puppy out of their crate and bring them outside to the spot where you want them to eliminate. You may want to carry your puppy out if he is very young and you think they might try to eliminate inside the house. Also, take your puppy outside to eliminate about 20 minutes after each meal. During the 20 minutes prior to letting your dog out, refer to the management system and supervision discussed below. When eliminating tell your puppy to "go potty", or whatever command you want to use while he is eliminating. The goal is for your puppy to eventually eliminate on command, so the "go potty" phrase linked with the action of going to the bathroom will help him understand to eliminate on command later. Praise your puppy when he is done.

Supervising your puppy is important, because with proper supervision you will be able to catch your puppy in the act of eliminating in the house and will be able to direct him to the proper spot to eliminate. Tying a leash from the puppy to you is a great way to make sure you always have an eye on your puppy. Some of the elimination signs to look for are constant sniffing, spinning in a circling, and squatting. If you catch your puppy in the action of eliminating in the house startle him with a loud noise and pick him up immediately and walk to his elimination spot.

Catching your dog in action is a very important part of the process of housebreaking. Remember, do not punish him or, among other possible issues, he will learn, because he is scared, not to eliminate in front of you.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Creating a management system for your puppy is also a critical step in housebreaking. The management system is used when you cannot physically supervise your puppy, such as a play pen or a crate. Crate training is the most common management system used today. The crate should not be used as a punishment tool, but as a way to know your dog will not eliminate in the house. Conversely, using a crate to replicate a den can help the dog feel safe and secure in their new environment. If you cannot supervise your dog, place him in his crate. Most puppies will be able to stay in a crate for their age in months plus one. So, an 8-week-old (2 months) puppy should be able to stay in a crate for 3 hours without eliminating. Remember this is a rule of thumb and every dog is different. If the puppy or dog is given the opportunity to get out of his crate when necessary, it can aid your house training efforts enormously. As the puppy is let out from the dog crate, take him out on a leash to the spot you will want him to eliminate. If he goes, praise him. If not, put him back into his crate and try again in about 15 minutes or so.

Continue with this cycle until you and your dog have a routine going. Success earns the pup freedom for twenty minutes or so. Gradually extend the time as he grows older and more reliable. Remember a seven-week-old pup does not have a great deal of bladder control. Don't expect him to go more than a couple of hours without having to eliminate, and don't expect him to wait once he is out of his crate to eliminate. If you decide not to use a management system, you will find accidents all over the house, and you will be creating a habit that will be more difficult to fix later.

OTHER HOUSEBREAKING ISSUES

Other housebreaking problems may exist, such as marking and submissive urination. Proper training, coupled with supervision and management systems will either eliminate these problems or minimize them. Marking, performed by male dogs, is not a housebreaking issue. It is an issue related to instinctive behaviors. Your dog may be fully housetrained and would not think of peeing in the house but to a dog lifting his leg to scent mark is not the same as having to go to the bathroom. We as humans tend to think of dog urine as something unpleasant, but to a dog it is something of great interest. A dog leaves its scent to tell other dogs a message. This message could be about whose territory it is, about the dog's social order or advertising mating availability. Dogs use urine marking to show their dominance or to claim something as belonging to them.

Submissive urination usually diminishes with training. Most importantly, remember that you are dealing with a very sensitive dog with little confidence. When training commences, the submissive dog has structure and guidance in his life and becomes more confident. Hence, the submissive urination starts to diminish.

If your pet has an "accident" in your house, it is important to neutralize the spot with an enzymatic cleaner to completely get rid of the odor and proteins related to the urine. Otherwise, the smell is a call to the animal to mark the same spot again. Enzymatic cleaners such as Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution absorb the odor and proteins from the urine. These products are safe for use around pets and children.

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