

Housetraining

Contributed by Admin
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Puppies are easy to housetrain. They have circuitry built into their brain which tells them not to urinate or defecate in their den. Their den is your house! Puppies are like babies. They make mistakes until they are completely housetrained. This is normal and you should not be upset with your pup if this happens during the first several weeks of housetraining.

Before starting a discussion of how to housetrain your older dog, we must first rule out poor health. Health problems usually result in housesoiling problems. So, get a thorough medical check-up for your dog before you do anything.

For whatever reason your dog is soiling in the house, let's proceed as if he had not been housetrained and start at the beginning. An older dog, or a pup, that messes in the house does so because he has not been taught the boundaries of his den. In nature, dogs do not soil in their den. So, you must teach him where to go and how to let you know that he needs to go.

It takes patience and a bonding which teaches him to trust you. He needs to know that you are going to teach him where to go and that you are not going to punish him for forgetting and doing it in the house. A dog does not have the ability to relate punishment after the act with the act. A dog that makes a mess, comes wiggling up to you, then gets his nose rubbed in the mess, cannot figure out why he was punished for wiggling up and greeting you. Punishing a dog for making a mess in the house will create stress and cause more messes as a way of relieving that stress.

The best thing to do if your dog has an accident during the training period is to say nothing, clean up the mess with soap and water, overspray it with a 25% white vinegar mixed with 75% water solution which masks the odor. Then, continue the training.

The training is simple. First, feed and water him twice a day. After he has eaten and had his drink, take the bowls away. A dog that eats and drinks all day is going to poop and pee all day! About an hour after eating and drinking, take him outside for a brisk walk, then take him to where you want him to go. Stay with him until he goes, and when he does, give him lots of praise. Take him to the same spot each time. For a very young pup, it is a good idea to take him outside every hour. Be sure you go out with him to give him praise for going. Yes, this process requires a lot of patience and time. Plan on taking a week to accomplish the housetraining. This is nothing compared to a human animal! If he has an occasional accident in the house, you can place the feces in the yard where you want him to go and the odor will encourage him to go there in the future.

Just before bedtime, take him outside for a walk and if he goes, give him lots of praise. Let him sleep in your bedroom during the housebreaking period. This becomes a sleeping den. Most dogs will not soil their den. (I say "most" because

dogs who are raised in filthy kennels and cages will be very difficult to housetrain. The imprinting for not going in the den is broken for these dogs.) Prepare a special bed or you can train him to use a crate. A crate is a kenneling box with a door into which your dog goes to spend the night. He will feel perfectly comfortable in a crate and he will not be able to roam the house. First thing in the morning, upon his stirring, take him outside to urinate. Give him lots of praise.

A most important step is to teach him the signal for letting you know that he has to go outside. Each time you take him out during the day, stop at the door, wait until he sits, say, "Good Dog!" then open the door and go out with him. After a while, he will learn that going to the door and sitting is the signal for letting you know that he needs to go outside. Some dogs will improvise on this by going to the door and letting out with a little "woof" or by scratching the door. Do not let him out if he scratches the door or you will have a door-scratching dog. Wait until he stops, then open the door. It should not take more than a week to housetrain your dog following this training plan.