

# House Training

## The keys to successful house training are:

### 1. Containment

- \* The idea is to contain the dog in a small area with their bed, because a dog will generally not eliminate in the same space where it sleeps. By then taking the dog directly outside at regular intervals, you only give the dog the opportunity to eliminate outside, until he/she learns to do so.
- \* Keep your dog confined at all times when you are not directly supervising (100%), until you are sure that he is housetrained. Each “accident” in the house reinforces a habit of the dog going in the house, so you want as few accidents as possible.
- \* Using a crate is an excellent way to quickly housetrain a dog (see Crate Training).
  - o If a crate is not an option, you can also contain your pet in a small area of your house (such as the kitchen) using baby gates. However, as this isn’t entirely their “bed”, you will need to keep a very close eye on the dog and take them outside even more frequently. Even so, accidents are to be expected.

### 2. Schedule

- \* By adhering to a consistent schedule for food, water and walks, you will pattern your dog to the desired behavior.
  - \* Do not leave food down in a bowl all day for the dog. Give the dog 15 minutes or so to finish whatever you give him to eat, then, pick up the bowl when he is done (even if there is food left in it). Your dog should always have access to water.
  - \* By controlling when and how much your dog eats and drinks, you can better predict when he will need to eliminate.
  - \* Puppies will typically need to eliminate:
    - When they first wake up in the morning;
    - After a play session (or even sometimes during!);
    - After a nap;
    - Just after drinking;
    - Just before or just after eating;
    - After chewing on a bone or chew toy;
    - If he hasn’t been out for an hour or two.
  - \* So at these times, take the dog outside and wait for them to “go” – praise if they do.
  - \* Remember, young puppies are still developing control over their bladder so be patient and give them time to both learn, and to physically gain bladder control. A housetrained adult dog should be able to hold his or her pee for 4-5 hours during the daytime and 8-9 hours overnight.
- **If you have rescued an adult dog, the best tactic is to pretend your dog is an 8 week old puppy and start from scratch!**

### 3. Praise

- \* Always praise your dog when he eliminates in the correct place, as this will let him know that he is doing the right thing by going outside.
- \* NEVER hit or yell at your dog for eliminating in the incorrect place, or rub his nose in his mess. Punishing him is counterproductive as it teaches the dog that eliminating in your presence is a dangerous thing, but doesn't teach them not to eliminate in the house at all. He will simply learn to hold it while you are around, but will pee once you leave and there will be no one to correct him. If you come home and the dog has peed in the house, it is too late to correct! The dog will not understand why you are mad. Just clean it up and next time you leave the house, crate the dog because he clearly is not yet housetrained enough to be left alone.
- \* If your dog eliminated in the house, it is likely because he was simply unable to hold his bladder for that long, or he was not confined properly or supervised properly. Dogs do not eliminate in the house because they were "mad" at you or "vengeful." If your dog urinated on your favorite couch or fancy rug, the ONLY thought that was on your dog's mind at the time was "hey, I need to pee, and this place works."
- \* If your dog starts to eliminate while you are supervising, use a sharp "eh-eh!" or clap your hands to interrupt him, and then quickly scoop him up or leash him up and run outside to a spot where you want him to go. When he finishes going, praise him and reward him effusively.
- \* Praise him when he is outside and eliminating – do not wait for him to come back inside to praise him. Otherwise he will think he is being praised for coming back inside with you (which is a good thing, but immaterial to house training).
- \* If you want him to eliminate in a certain area of the yard, bring him out to this area on leash and wait for him to eliminate. You can add in a "Go Potty!" cue while he is eliminating so he can learn to associate this cue with his bodily function.

### 4. Odor Removal

- \* When your dog eliminates in the house, the most important thing is to remove all traces of the odor, or the dog will continue to eliminate in that spot.
- \* Use products sold specifically to eliminate pet urine and feces odors that you can purchase at most pet supply shops. Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two brand names for such products. Bleach is also excellent, if the surface allows it.

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## Other Tips

- \* Don't expect a puppy to be fully housetrained until they are at least 6 months or older. Puppies have very little control over their bladders until this age.
- \* If you bring the dog outside and you think he needs to eliminate but he won't, take him back inside and crate him for another 10-15 minutes, then take him out to the same place again. Don't assume that he didn't need to go after all and then let him run around your house unsupervised.
- \* Always put the dog on leash when you take him outside to urinate. Wait patiently until he eliminates and then let him off leash to play. If you let him wander around the yard on his own until he urinates, and then make him go back into the house, he will learn that his fun play-time outside stops once he urinates. You want him to learn: if I potty first, then I get to play!
- \* Likewise, if you do not own a yard and must walk your dog on the street, take your dog outside and calmly wait for the dog to eliminate before proceeding with your walk. You want the dog to understand that his fun walk is the reward for eliminating. If you take the dog back inside as soon as he has peed, the dog will learn to wait longer and longer to go, so that he can stay outside longer, and sometimes they will hold it until you bring them back inside.