



Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog

Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. Even if they were housetrained in their previous home, you might miss the request to go out, causing them to eliminate indoors. Additionally, scents and odors from other pets in the new home may stimulate some initial urine marking.

For the first few weeks after you bring a new dog home, you should assume they aren't housetrained and start from scratch. If they were housetrained in the previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and calmly and consistently show them where they're supposed to eliminate.

Establish a Routine

- Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning after waking, when you arrive home from work, after eating, before bed, etc. When you are home, take them out regularly, once every hour or so for the first few weeks, to give plenty of opportunities to eliminate outdoors and determine a routine.
- Each time they eliminate outside, immediately give praise and a treat. Do not wait until after they have come back into the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way they'll know that is what you want them to do.
- If you have taken your dog out and you are sure they have to eliminate, and they did not do so, do not allow free access to the house. Confine or tether them to you for 10 minutes, then take out and try again. Keep repeating until you are sure they have done all of their business.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your dog directly to the bathroom spot. Take them for a walk or engage in play only after they have eliminated. While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like "go potty," or "hurry up" that you can eventually use before they eliminate to remind them of what they are supposed to be doing.
- Feeding your dog on a set schedule twice a day will help make their elimination more regular.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. They should be watched at all times when indoors. You can tether them to you with a leash, or use a dog gate, to keep them in the room where you are. Watch for signs that they need to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately go outside to the bathroom spot. If they eliminate, give praise and reward with a treat.

Oops!

Your dog has an accident in the house, what now?

- When you catch them in the act of eliminating in the house, immediately take them to the bathroom spot, and calmly say your potty word or phrase. Praise and give a treat if they finish eliminating there.
- Don't punish your dog for eliminating in the house. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your dog's nose in it, taking to the spot and scolding, or any other punishment or discipline, will only make them afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. Use an enzymatic cleaner to help ensure the scent is gone.

It's extremely important that you use 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 eliminate which will prolong the house-training process.



Other Types of House-Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your dog continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for the behavior.

- **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by an underlying medical problem. Please see your veterinarian.
- **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play, or when they feel they are about to be punished.
- **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.
- **Anxiety:** Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization. See your veterinarian or a veterinary behaviorist to help with these issues.
- **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds. Seek professional help for these issues.