

House Training

House training will most likely be one of the first tasks you will tackle when bringing a new puppy home. House training a puppy has a similar structure to potty training a child, although there are some instances that can appear well after the basic ideas of house training have been learned. Basic house training is all about establishing an allowable "toilet" area for your pet. This may need to be reinforced should submissive wetting and marking occur. Submissive wetting is urination occurring upon greeting, disciplining or high excitement; during puberty some dogs, male or female, will mark their territory.

House Training:

House training should only take approximately two weeks to establish as a routine provided. The process will go quickly if you are consistent and committed, prepared to train right away, and maintain a schedule. Retraining a previously trained dog can take up to six weeks.

Before you get started, have your puppy checked by a vet as soon as possible. A check-up can tell if your pup has any medical conditions or complications that make house training more difficult. Situations such as intestinal upset, intestinal parasites and urinary tract infections can make house training difficult to impossible.

The designated toilet area can be as general as outside of the house or as specific as a particular corner of the backyard. A specific plan should be set up in advance; you can't teach the dog what is acceptable if you're not sure yourself.

Your attitude is very important in training. The dog doesn't know what is wrong, so if there is an accident tell them "no" but don't be too severe with discipline. There needs to be a balance for the training to be successful. When the dog has gone in your designated area, praise them and let them know they did well.

Scheduling:

Create a schedule that is practical for you to maintain. If you can't stick to your schedule, your dog can't be expected to, either. Do not let your dog free feed until house training has been established.

Try to avoid giving too many snacks or foods that may upset your dog's stomach. Set a bed time and wake-up time for your dog (this also includes naps); the closer you stick to this, the less nighttime accidents there will be. You should always let the dog out after waking up and before bed. The dog may also need to go out after situations where it may be badly scared or wound up after a rowdy play session.

Within 2 to 3 days most dogs will be able to keep control for 8 hour intervals at night, but keep your daytime schedule flexible.

Supervise in the House:

You can avoid accidents by knowing where your dog is and what he is doing around the house. If play abruptly stops and you notice that he starts looking for a "good spot" then he needs to go. If an accident does happen, firmly but quietly say "No" - don't yell, then take the dog straight to

his bathroom area. You need to pay attention to your dog until they have significant bladder and bowel control.

If you can't supervise the dog for a period of time, put the dog in a confinement area prepared with papers, or confine him to the room where you are. Try to keep the dog with you when you're watching TV or on the computer.

When you can't be with your dog, provide the same confined room with papers. Don't leave food or water in the room or give them too many treats. Try to feed your dog 2 hours before you leave so he has time to digest and go before you leave. Don't leave the dog unattended, without water, or unable to relieve itself for more than 8 hours.

Taking the dog out:

Take your dog on leash to the designated "toilet area." Stand quietly so that the dog can find the right spot without being distracted. Do not praise the dog during his search. If after about 5 minutes your dog hasn't gone to the bathroom, return him to the house, but keep an eye on him; after half an hour try again.

As the dog starts to relieve himself; calmly praise him. When the dog has finished relieving himself praise him more enthusiastically, letting him know that you are very proud of him.

Remember your dog's routine. Some dogs will go two or three times per outing in the morning, but only twice per outing in the evening. Urination is often followed by defecation, while some dogs will do the reverse.

Even if the weather is bad, don't let your dog know that you don't want to be going outside with him. This will teach the dog that even in bad weather he needs to go outside.

Catching the dog "in the act":

Without yelling, firmly say "No." If you still don't have the dog's attention, clap your hands. Get the dog outside, to the designated bathroom area. If the dog relieves himself outside praise him. Proceed with the general routine.

It's important to use a cleanser with a deodorizer, if the dog smells his own scent as having been used as a bathroom area, the dog will continue to use the area. Here's a helpful tip - If the cleanser is not able to eliminate enough of the scent so that the dog can not detect it, you can help mask the scent over with vanilla extract. Just one or two drops will make it impossible for the dog to smell any lingering odor.

If you find a mess after the fact:

Don't punish the dog. Accept the fact that you were not paying attention. Don't show the dog that you are upset. Calmly put the dog on his leash and bring him to the location of the accident. With the dog at your side, firmly scold the accident; do not scold the dog.

Blot up some urine, or pick up some stool with a piece of paper and take it to the designated bathroom area. Place the paper on the ground and with the dog watching praise the potty for being in the "right" place. Temporarily leave the paper there; remove it when the dog isn't watching. Clean up the remaining mess in the house as outlined above.