



Housetraining Your Dog.

by Angi Lenz, APDT, AHT

Happily, housetraining your new dog can be quite simple! If, after following the steps outlined below for 2 weeks, your dog is not completely house-trained, please consult a professional trainer for assistance. Other reasons why your dog goes to the toilet in the house may include: stress and tension in the household, anxiety (for example, about being left alone or changes in routine), illness and submissive urination.

Before beginning any training program, a clean bill of health from your dog's veterinarian is advised.

1. Clean

Thoroughly clean all areas your dog has previously soiled in your house by using biological washing solution or a specially formulated enzyme product (Anti Icky Poo, available at PetStop 738-3663) to remove all traces of the smell. If possible, keep your dog away from these areas until the training is complete. Dogs are instinctively clean animals. If they can avoid it, they would rather not soil themselves or their usual eating and sleeping areas. Dogs also naturally develop habits of where they would like to eliminate. For example, dogs that have a habit of eliminating on grass or dirt would rather not eliminate on concrete or gravel. You can use these natural tendencies for rapid and successful house training.

2. Supervise

Keep your dog under constant supervision.

Until your dog is 100% reliable they should be in 1 of 5 places only:

1. Interacting with you inside (i.e. you are playing or training with your dog)
2. Interacting with you outside (i.e. you are playing or training with your dog)
3. In long term confinement (x-pen area with a grass or potty pad)
4. In crate, with door closed
5. Attached to you with a leash on your belt.

If you must take your eyes away even for a second (or longer) confine your dog either in a crate (see crate training article), or long term confinement. Do not let your pet wander the house. The idea is to not allow them to make a mistake by preventing it from happening.

As you can see no where does this say its ok to have situation like the following:
You watching TV and the dog wandering around the room
You washing dishes and the dog playing in the other room
You are sleeping and dog is unattended in bed with you
You are on the phone and dog is wandering around at your feet
His success is 100% dependant on YOU!

3. Pick A Spot

It is easiest for a dog to understand going in one spot is what you want, rather than just outside. Pick a "potty" spot, be it in your yard, a grassy area out front, or a corner of your patio. Most dogs prefer porous surfaces (dirt/grass/gravel/carpet/newspaper) if you have a bit of what the dog has gone on before, you can place it where you want the dog to go. **Always take your dog out on a leash**, do not simply "let the dog out" You need to reward your dog immediately after he goes, and you can't do that if you are inside. Or if he is 25 ft across the yard.

4. Make A Routine

Get your dog and yourself on a strict schedule of sleeping, feeding and play/exercise, and the dog will start to go to the bathroom on a schedule. And you can make sure he's at the right spot when the time comes! A typical schedule when you are home would include first thing when you wake up, after breakfast, then at set intervals. 1-2 hours apart. Longer times will work; it will just take longer for your dog to learn to be able to physically hold it for longer periods. Take your dog to his potty spot at the times you've set and wait (on a leash of course). Be patient and wait for at least 15 minutes. If he starts to relieve himself, praise quietly until he is finished, then praise him very enthusiastically and reward him with a game or food treat. Make the treat a high value one... no dry crunchy biscuits here! Soft cheese or jerky treats work great. We want small morsels of food, not big chunks. Food reward needs to be given within 1 to 2 seconds after the dog stops urinating or defecating. If he doesn't go, it's back to supervision until the next set time. Continue with the routine, and once he's going when you take him out, gradually increase the time between visits to the potty spot. When you're down to three to five times a day and no more accidents inside, you've housetrained your dog.

5. Learn The Command

"Get Busy" or "Go Potty" or any set phrase can really help to get your dog to understand when and where to go the bathroom. Use it just like you use any verbal command – like "Sit," you say it before you want your dog to do it, and then if he does, give him lots of praise and treats. It won't work to say it too many times in a row (two or three is enough), and should be said in a happy tone of voice, never as a punishment. Also, if you catch your dog in the act of "getting busy" in the correct spot, you can say "get busy!!" Good dog! Get busy! Good good!!" so they associate that phrase with what they are doing.

6. Punishment?

Yelling, making a loud noise with pennies in a can, swatting your dog or your hand with a newspaper, pushing your dogs nose in its mess... aside from being inhumane, they often have the effect of making the dog afraid of you or afraid of going in front of you, and housebreaking will take even longer, or may

never happen. This is usually what has happened to dogs that go in the house only when left alone, or in a back room **when you aren't watching**. Positive reinforcement is the fastest, easiest way to train. Punishment is the slowest and least pleasant way to get a dog to do what you want, and usually doesn't work at all. The worst is punishing your dog for 'accidents' that you discover after the fact. Dogs cannot make a connection with punishment for something they did in the past. Some owners will say, "Oh, but he knows he has done wrong because if I show him the mess he looks guilty." The dog has simply learned that if humans are present and there is a mess on the floor, he is likely to be told off or punished. He has not learned not to make the mess in the first place. If you see your dog about to, or in the middle of, relieving himself indoors, you can say 'Ahh Ahh' firmly, but not raising your voice or yelling. Then take him, on leash, immediately to your chosen place outside and reward him - praise, treats or play, which ever he most enjoys. Although he has done nothing to be praised for, it is essential that he associate going to that place with reward. If you have caught him in time he will still need to go. If he does go, praise and rewards!

7. Feeding Schedule

In order for a dog to pee and poo on a schedule they need to eat on a schedule. Do not allow your dog to free feed! Feed your dog twice each day, allow them to eat for 20 minutes if they do, GREAT, if not no food until next feeding. No big snacks during the day until your dog is potty trained. The only exception is for tiny dogs, they often need a small snack at noon as they are pre disposed for low blood sugar issues.

8 Know your dog!

Most dogs pee and poo first thing in the morning, after eating, before bed and after a play session (often 3 to 5 times a day). Small dogs can be more frequent in urination and often will pee up to 8 times a day

9. Keep a log

Write down when you are taking your dog out and if he is going potty or not. This will help you know his body and own schedule. Keep the log for a minimum of 10 days. By doing this you can look at your dogs potty habits to prevent an further issues. (use attached log on next page)

Remember, your dogs' success relies on you! The more consistent you are the more reliable he will be. If, after following the steps outlined below for more than 2 weeks, your dog is not nearly or completely housetrained, please consult a professional trainer for assistance.



