

HOUSE TRAINING FOR YOUR NEW DOG OR PUPPY

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Dogs are naturally clean animals. At a very early age, as young as 3 weeks, they learn to leave their bed area to eliminate. In your home, giving them lots of opportunities to go outside and be rewarded while they take care of bathroom duties will ensure these clean habits continue.

When you first start house training your puppy or dog it is essential to have a small area in which he will be happily confined. Crates or play pens are ideal for this or a baby gated area.

The puppy should sleep in the crate or safe area overnight. Set your alarm to wake early. Put the leash on, pick the puppy up and take him to a designated outdoor bathroom spot. Stand and ignore the puppy until he eliminates. After a long night in confinement this will probably be immediately. Praise the puppy lavishly and give him a small food treat. Allow the puppy to wander on the leash in this designated area until you feel he has taken care of all his bathroom needs.

Return to the house and allow the puppy to have some freedom under your watchful eye while you prepare breakfast and start your day. The puppy should be in a baby gated area of the kitchen where he can play with his toys and have some room to move about. He needs to be close to you so that you can give him constant guidance. This is very similar to having an 18 month old child to whom we would constantly be giving feedback in order for him to learn. This same level of supervision is necessary for the young puppy (or new adult dog). Your puppy should never be out of your sight at this stage. You will be giving your puppy feedback not only on bathroom habits but on what he may and may not chew as well. If you need to leave the puppy while you shower or cannot watch him for any reason he should spend that time in his crate or play pen.

After your puppy has had breakfast, take him to his toilet area again. Be patient while he performs, praise him and then you may go off on your morning walk or have a fun exercise session in the yard. Before going back into the house, visit the toilet spot again. Now the puppy is ready for some down time and can be confined to his crate or play pen with a chew toy while you continue with your own life.

This routine is repeated continually throughout the day. With this tight schedule there should be very few accidents in the house but you should expect mistakes. The odd accident is all part of raising a puppy or helping a new dog to adjust. What do we do if the puppy soils in the house? NO punishment! Not even a sharp agh! agh! (even if you catch them in action). Just ignore the mistake, take him outside and clean up.

NEVER punish the puppy for eliminating in the house either during or after the event. It simply teaches him to be afraid of you and he will sneak off next time into another room or behind a chair. Clean up accidents with a special organic product from the pet store. Remember that puppies like to return to a spot they have already soiled. Consider covering soiled areas with an item of furniture. A bizarre room design for a couple of weeks may be better than a damaged carpet.

With this routine the puppy will gradually learn that the inside of the house is his den/living area which he will want to keep clean. At first this is a very time consuming schedule but it will have big pay backs later.

NOTE: Puppies and dogs cannot be left in crates for more than 4 hours at a time during the day (5 on the odd occasion). An 8 week old puppy can only be left for 2-3 hours during the day between bathroom and activity breaks.

If your dog, whom is usually housetrained, develops unusual behavior such as urinating in the house you first need to consider the possibility of a health problem and have him checked by the vet.

Also, if your puppy does not seem to be making progress also get a urine check. UTI's are very common in puppies.

FREQUENTLY ASKED HOUSE TRAINING QUESTIONS!

I am at work all day. How can I use this schedule?

Our best suggestion would be to hire a pet sitter to walk your new puppy/dog every few hours. If this is not an option you will need to create a secure area, usually in the kitchen or preferably a puppy play pen. Cover part of the floor with newspaper and position the crate, with the door open, at the other side of the area. The puppy will then be able to eliminate away from his sleeping area and keep his clean habits.

My puppy pees/poops in the crate. What should I do?

This could be happening for a number of reasons.

1. Are you leaving him too long between toileting/activity breaks?
2. Is the puppy soiling because of anxiety at being left alone? If the puppy/dog is frantic when put in the crate, soils the crate, (drools or chews constantly at the wire) he may be panicked at being isolated. This anxiety needs to be addressed immediately. Please contact us for help.
3. Occasionally a puppy or dog who has been raised in a bad situation (i.e. puppy mill, long term stay in shelter or tethered) and has been forced to use his living area as a toilet, will lose his clean habits. In this instance he cannot be confined to a crate. Instead use a baby gated area or a playpen with the crate open it. Usually the puppy/dog, given this choice, will regain his clean habits and keep his bed area clean. Feeding the puppy/dog in the crate will speed the process as dogs/puppies will not eliminate where they eat.
4. Check that the crate is not too big. If the puppy can snuggle in one end and walk to the other to eliminate you need to reduce the size of the crate with a spacer or use a smaller crate.

My puppy does not tell me when she needs to go out.

This comes much later but if you stick with the house training routine he should be able to wait for his toilet breaks. You will also learn to read his body language. Puppies usually sniff and walk in purposeful circles before urinating. Look out for this and take him out quickly. As he gets older and comfortable with the process you can ask him "Need to go out?" Eventually you will find him waiting by the door "asking" to be taken out. Some people use bells successfully, but as trainers we see a lot of puppies who have learned ringing the bell makes mum or dad run to them and open the door. They don't necessarily need to go out! So be careful with this method! It's much better for you to simply have your puppy on a regular bathroom schedule.

My dog pees on the floor when I come home and when I try to pet her.

This is common in young dogs who are timid or excited by our return. Puppies tend to grow out of it as long as you don't use punishment, but you can help any dog by not making a big deal of your greetings. Give him a quick "Hi" without making eye contact when you get home, put him on the leash and take him out to eliminate. Then you can pet him and have your fun time.

As your dog becomes more confident he will get more control over his bladder and this problem should disappear.

My dog has made great progress with house training but I still find mistakes in the dining room and guest bedroom.

This is a very common situation we hear all the time. You have done a great job at teaching your dog that the kitchen, den and sitting room areas of your house are his living spaces. But you don't live and hangout in the formal dining room and guest bedroom very much with your dog, so he thinks it is OK to use them as a toilet. This is dog logic!

The solution is to close those areas off and when you have the time take your dog in those rooms and play with him, especially rolling little treats on the floor and even feeding him in there. Soon he will realize that those rooms are his living space too and he will keep them clean as well.

Can I house train an older dog?

These routines are successfully used for housetraining new puppies, adult rescue dogs and dogs who have already learned to soil their environments. As long as you don't use punishment and you give your dog lots of opportunities to go outside you will always get your dog house trained.

PLEASE NOTE: If your dog, who is usually housetrained, develops unusual behavior such as wetting in the house you first need to consider the possibility of a health problem and have him checked by the vet. Urinary infections are common in dogs and puppies and usually respond quickly to medication.

A dog that has good training does not usually revert to eliminating in the house without good reason. Also look for changes in your lifestyle such as a move, new baby, new pet or other situations which may cause anxiety. Anxiety can cause a house trained dog to make bathroom mistakes in the house.

If you don't feel your puppy or dog is making the progress he or she should with these positive routines, please call us for help. A phone consult or a home visit may be needed to resolve the situation. 919-929-9115 or contact us through our web site at www.cheerydogs.com.