

House Training

The sooner you get your pup or dog house trained, the easier life becomes. House training can be broken into two components; the first is ensuring that your pup has no accidents in the house. The second is to teach your dog that going to the bathroom outside is the rewardable and expected behavior.

The more effective you are with the first part, the sooner your dog will learn the second part. Ensuring that your dog has no accidents means you need to be extremely watchful. The responsibility is yours to make sure your dog only goes to the bathroom outside. Your dog doesn't understand that it is not acceptable to do his business anywhere; you need to teach him what you want.

Being watchful means exactly that. You need to be actively watching your dog or pup, and get him outside when he has to go to the bathroom. Most dogs will indicate that they need to go; you just need to learn their signals. Some very common ones are sniffing the ground, or circling. When you see your pup do either of these, pick him up and take him to the spot you want him to use. If your dog is too large to pick up, then lead him to his spot. If he does anything, make sure you reward him with praise, a treat, or a play session. If you are going to play with him make sure it is AFTER he does his business, not before. If you play with him first, before he goes and then bring him inside after he goes, you will be teaching him that the fun stuff stops after he pees, so he will hold off peeing for as long as possible. The last thing you want is a dog that makes you wait forever-especially in the middle of winter.

To ensure that your dog only does his business outside you need to make sure you take him outside with great regularity. Once the pup gets older or on a solid schedule you will not need to take him as often, but for the first few weeks you should try to follow this plan as closely as possible.

Take him outside to his spot at these times during the day:

- As soon as he wakes up
- After he eats
- After he has had a good drink of water
- After about 10-15 minutes of play
- every half hour to forty-five minutes

Even though you are watching him, you may miss a signal and see him start to pee. If this happens you want to interrupt him and get him outside to his spot as quickly as possible. If he finishes his job outside praise and reward him. Remember that if he does pee in the house it's your fault for not watching closely enough, not the pups. He just hasn't learned the rules yet. Make sure you clean any messes with an appropriate product meant for eliminating pet odors.

Vinegar won't do the job, dogs noses are far superior to ours, just because you can't smell anything doesn't mean your dog can't. Dogs will go back to the same spot over and over again, so you need to eliminate any odor not just mask it.

Always watching a young dog for bathroom signals can be very time consuming. There are only a few times when you can be safe that he won't go to the bathroom. When you bring him back inside after doing his business you can be pretty safe for about ½ an hour. Dogs will not soil their living/sleeping areas, so when a dog is in a properly sized crate you are pretty safe that he won't have an accident. So if you can't be watching your dog, put him in his crate.

If you have been watching your dog closely and taking him out on a regular schedule, and putting him in his crate when you can't watch him, you have probably gone some time without having an accident in the house. Congratulations! But your dog is NOT house trained-you are. You have become so good at watching and taking him out on a schedule, that you have eliminated accidents. But your dog is not truly trained until he is letting you know that he needs to go outside to go to the bathroom.

When you get to the point that your dog goes to the door and indicates that he has to go outside, and then does his business-you are well on your way to having a house trained dog. Continue being watchful over the next few weeks just to make sure that he truly knows.