



Training Handout | House Training 101

Bringing a new dog or puppy home is an exciting event. Housetraining on the other hand is where the work begins. Housetraining requires patience and consistency, but the job usually goes smoother if some preparation is done ahead of time. An adult dog from a rescue or shelter will have the physical ability to be housetrained quickly. A puppy will need longer to physically develop in order to have bladder control. The following tips can help get the new dog on the road to being housetrained.

House Training and Adult Dog

An adult dog has the physical ability to be housetrained through the night and for a regular work-day but this doesn't always mean that the dog learned this skill. If the dog was raised in a shelter or lacked a consistent environment, bad habits may be started. It is also possible that the dog had training but doesn't know how to generalize the experience to a new home. Either way, getting off on the right foot can help. It is advisable to purchase a crate and schedule some time off if possible. If this is not possible, have a family member available or schedule a dog walker to come in during the day. **See our handout on Crate Training.*

1. Pick a regular potty spot or area. On day one, take the dog to this specific area every couple of hours or until the dog relieves itself in this spot. Praise the dog or give a treat when this happens. By going to the same spot, the dog will associate that spot with going potty. This can be done while acclimating the dog to the new crate. If the dog is being trained in the yard, go with the dog to make sure the dog relieves itself outdoors and is not running around playing. A leash may be necessary at first to keep the dog on task.
2. Create a schedule. Once the dog begins to successfully go potty in the designated spot, start to extend the time between outings by adding 1 hour at a time. It is helpful to allow the dog a potty break about 15-30 minutes after a meal. Do not let the dog out of sight in between yet. It may be helpful to set up baby gates or close doors to prevent it from wandering off to have an accident. Interrupt any potential accidents by clapping your hands or saying "No" and taking the dog immediately to the potty spot. Again, praise for success at the designated area. Thoroughly clean any accident with an enzyme cleaner (sold at all pet supply stores).
3. Continue to supervise. If the dog is now comfortable for short periods in the crate, it can be used to start extending the time between potty breaks. Put the dog in the crate with his favorite stuffed Kong or chew whenever it is left unattended.
4. Watch for body language cues. Accidents can still happen so it's important to watch for suggestive body language such as circling, restlessness, or pacing in front of the door. Take the dog out immediately and praise for success!
5. Avoid punishment. Above all, never punish the dog for an accident. Remember to go back to the last stage of success and progress at a slower pace. Once trained, try to keep to a consistent schedule so the dog can feel comfortable. Continue to take the dog out first thing in the morning, about 15-30 minutes after a meal and last thing at night. Trained adult dogs need at least 4 potty breaks a day along with regular walks and exercise.