



HOUSETRAINING

By: Patricia Calderone, CPDT-KA

When housetraining a new puppy or recently rescued dog, it is best to create a consistent routine. Housetraining tends to go more smoothly when you have a schedule. A good rule of thumb is to take your pup out eight times a day, paying particular attention to times such as:

- in the morning
- after a nap
- after playtime
- after meals
- before bed

When you take your dog outside, lead them to their desired area to eliminate. It is important to go outside with your dog to provide immediate, positive reinforcement with praise and treats when the dog finishes. Giving the dog a treat outside immediately after finishing will help speed up the training process, because the dog will make the connection much faster. It is a big mistake to reinforce your dog after it comes back into the house after going outside to potty, as this will not send the right message to your dog. It's more likely be interpreted by your dog as a treat for coming back in when called. Keeping a schedule may help in better planning when your dog is most likely going to need to go out.

When you have your dog outside and you observe him sniffing and circling, it is an indication that he is about to eliminate. This is the time to add your cue. You can say "Go potty" or "Do your job" as soon as the dog appears ready. Saying your cue will teach the dog to associate the word with the action, which over time will allow you to say the cue and the dog will understand what to do, which can be helpful in many different situations.



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You can further your dogs' training by hanging some bells on the door, and training the dog to touch the bell when it needs to go out. Be observant of your dog as your housetraining progresses; as the dog learns not to eliminate in the house it will likely develop signals to let you know it needs to go out; however, these signals can be subtle and you must train yourself to notice them.

Another way to speed up the process is to limit your pup's freedom. If your pup has access to multiple rooms in your home, he may find out-of-sight areas in which to eliminate. Use baby gates or exercise pens (available at pet stores) to block off access to all but one room, such as the kitchen. Another issue with allowing your pup multiple rooms in which to roam is that you won't be able to keep your pup in sight. When housetraining your pup, you should never let it out of your sight, as accidents happen in seconds. If your pup does have an accident, it's best to catch them in the act.

When you catch your pup eliminating in the house, interrupt as it is happening, **not** after the pup is through. When you interrupt you don't need to scare your pup, or carry on about him being a "bad dog." Simply interrupt your dog by saying "No" or "Stop," and immediately take your dog outside to show it the proper area. If your dog then finishes outside, provide positive reinforcement for making a good decision.

Scolding and punishing your dog for eliminating in the house can backfire by making your dog think it cannot eliminate in your presence and that it should find a safe place away from you and out-of-sight, such as a different room or under a table in which to eliminate. Becoming loud and upset at the dog when soiled areas are found reinforces to the dog that you are the "angry bad guy" who is going to punish him. This may result in your dog only feeling safe to eliminate when you are gone, creating a vicious cycle. By using positive reinforcement when the dog uses the desired area and well-timed interruptions when accidents happen indoors, your dog will be well on the way to being housetrained.



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Tips:

- Take your dog's age in months; add one and that will give you an approximate idea of how long your dog should be able to "hold it." For example, if your dog is four months old, it should be able to hold it for around 5 hours.
- If there is an accident in the house you should use an enzymatic cleaner, as that will kill the enzymes in the urine and eliminate the scent. This helps prevent repeat accidents in the same area. *Nature's Miracle* is a product I would recommend.

Clicker Canines can help you and your dog with all of your housetraining problems.

Call Patricia, 708-557-4913 for more information.

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