

HOUSETRAINING--THE #1 PRIORITY

Housetraining--the #1 priority when a new puppy or dog arrives at home. Unless the new pet learns acceptable potty manners, he/she will, in many cases, either become an outside dog, or a short-term resident. Therefore, housetraining becomes your first training challenge. Handled properly, this can be a pleasant experience for both you and the dog!

While your new puppy or dog may have been housetrained before coming to the Humane Society shelter, he/she may have been residing in our kennel atmosphere for several days or weeks. Yes, this is long enough for his housetraining to break down. Also, a dog's housetraining learned in one location (his/her previous home) may not automatically transfer to your home. By placing your new dog immediately on a routine housetraining program, you should be able to re-establish his/her clean habits in a very short time. If your new dog was a stray before reaching the shelter, in all probability, he/she comes with built-in housetraining needs.

Before embarking on any housetraining program, be sure the puppy or dog is healthy and has been checked by its vet (a low grade urinary tract infection could be the real culprit making it difficult for him/her to hold their urine).

The method of housetraining we recommend for both puppies, and adult dogs, utilizes a confinement area for the dog, which will restrict access to the area to be respected (the inside of the house) by means of a dog crate, dog exercise pen, baby playpen, baby gate, or by securing the dog on a leash no longer than the length of his/her body.

This housetraining program requires a 10-day commitment to teach the dog:

1. Where the bathroom is located,
2. The route to the bathroom and,
3. To hold his/her elimination for longer periods of time.

Input (food & water) produces output. Therefore, the dog's food intake must be scheduled; water also if necessary. Random, free feeding (food left down all the time) is not recommended during housetraining. Put the food down for 15-20 minutes, remove and re-serve at next mealtime. Water can be made available to the dog while he/she is outside.

Good timing is essential. Watch your puppy or adult dog. Learn how he/she behaves when the urge hits him/her. Puppies usually urinate within $\frac{1}{2}$ minute on waking up. Sew a bell on his collar so you can hear him/her when they begin to move around, then you get moving! Be sure he/she can't eat the bell. Put his/her crate near your bedside overnight. Yes, when you hear the bell go off at 2:00 a.m., it's time to hit the deck running!

DAYS 1 thru 3:

- 100% confinement for the dog
 - Absolutely no freedom/activity inside the house
 - Eat/sleep/play in confinement
 - Out of confinement only when outside
- Take the dog out on a leash (carry if possible) every hour
 - Stand in one quickly accessible, convenient spot; do not walk around
 - This is a trip to the bathroom, not a walk.
- If the dog eliminates outside, can play or walk then return to confinement
- If the dog does not eliminate, he returns to confinement; take out again in 15-30 minutes.
- When the dog is eliminating reliably while outside
 - Extend the times between trips outside in 15-minute increments
 - All other procedures remain the same

DAYS 4 thru 10:

- The dog is allowed limited freedom inside of house;
But must be watched 100% of the time
 - If dog has accident inside the house, the entire 10 days must be repeated**
- When the dog cannot be watched 100% of the time, return dog to confinement area.
 - If the telephone rings, return dog to confinement area.
 - If you are cooking, return dog to confinement area.
 - If the baby needs your attention, return dog to confinement area.
 - If your favorite television show is on, return dog to confinement area.
 - If you want to take a nap, return dog to confinement area.
- 100% **ADULT** supervision/observation is required;
 - Do not try delegating/assigning this important responsibility to the children.

Yes, 100% supervision, for both the first 3 days of confinement and the second 7 days of observation, means just that--100%. There is no punishment for the dog. If a mistake is made in the house, the mistake was ours--not the dog's. The inside of the house must stay clean, with no accidents, for a full 10 days or the program must be repeated, yes, 10 days--only 10 days of the rest of his/her life.

To begin teaching the dog to let you know he/she needs to go out, he/she must learn something is required of him/her to make the door open. Tie a large bell on the doorknob using a string/rope long enough so the dog can touch the bell (be sure the bell is large so the dog will not try to eat it). Each time you take the dog out the door, touch his/her nose or foot to the bell to make it ring. Later, the dog may change this signal/activity, but this should teach him/her something is required to make the door open.

Confinement in a room (bathroom, utility room, garage), separated from family activity, usually works out unsatisfactorily as the dog's isolation may start undesirable behaviors such as barking, scratching, chewing, etc. Since a dog crate or kennel is mobile the dog can be kept close to family activity and it will minimize start of other problems.

Important, the dog crate or kennel is a training tool; it must NOT be used as punishment. It is his/her house inside your house, his/her bed, his/her safe space. For the dog's safety, remove any training collars; the dog should wear only a flat, buckle collar inside the crate. When dog is alone, or while you are sleeping, all collars should be off the dog inside the crate.

A healthy, awake, active puppy can only be expected to "hold" his/her urine for about 1 hour (some less) for every month of age—maybe shorter if very active, maybe longer if quiet or sleeping. The length of time between trips outside should be extended only to the extent of the puppy's or dog's age and ability to maintain a clean confinement area (an-8-week-old puppy cannot be expected to keep it's confinement area clean for 8 hours).

If clean up is necessary, do so while the dog is not present. Use a solution of $\frac{1}{2}$ white vinegar and $\frac{1}{2}$ water to neutralize the urine scent (careful on the hardwood floors & carpet). **Do not** use ammonia based cleaners. Some suggested commercial products are Nature's Miracle, Simple Solution or X-O.

Following successful completion of the 10-day housetraining program, while the dog may require being watched closely, he/she should be fairly reliable. Should housetraining falter, as a result of either physical or emotional stress for the dog, he/she should be immediately put back on the strict 3-day confinement program.

Connie Ellis
Pet Animal Behavior Specialist
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