

Housebreaking your dog.



There are no big secrets for housebreaking. Having a well housebroken dog is achieved by establishing a routine and staying consistent. This manual breaks housebreaking down into simple steps that are easy to follow.

Be patient, housebreaking isn't immediate. Like all living beings, dogs learn at individual rates. Some dogs pick up on housebreaking in a day or two and others may take several weeks or longer. There is no specific amount of time to expect your dog to be fully housebroken. You want to start proper housebreaking for your dog as soon as possible.



CONFINEMENT AND WHY

This is the part about housebreaking where people tend to make the most mistakes. People often feel guilty about crating their dogs. They put human characteristics onto their dogs. Some people have the thinking that if they were in their dog's place that they would not want to be left alone in a crate. Dogs have needs that are **different** from humans. A dog is a den dwelling animal by instinct. Spending time in a crate gives them a sense of security as well as making housebreaking much easier. When I say crate, I am talking about the plastic

kennels as referred to as flight kennels. I don't usually recommend using wire crates. Wire crates are more open and don't give the dogs the same sense of security and contentment as the enclosed ones. If you already have a wire crate, you can drape a large towel or blanket over it to make it more den-like. This will only work if your dog doesn't chew on what is draped over the kennel. Your dog will become accustomed to the crate and regard it as a quiet place to relax. A dog will feel more secure and safe in a crate than loose in your home when left alone. Dogs left alone in large open areas often become anxious and can become destructive. Understand that the confinement stage is only temporary. Although, even after your dog is completely housebroken, it is in the dog's best interest to keep a crate accessible so they can continue to have a private den.

HOW THE CRATE WORKS

The crate is utilized for housebreaking because dogs will not normally eliminate in the area in which they sleep and/or eat. It's in their nature to want to go to the bathroom as far away from that area as possible. However, it is not uncommon for a dog to soil the crate a couple of times in the beginning. Once your dog realizes that the mess can't be escaped from, it will be an incentive for the dog to control himself/herself until let outside. If you are not at home during the day, your dog will be more likely to sleep if crated than if loose inside the house. When sleeping, your dog won't have the urge to go to the bathroom.

A common problem people have is that they take their dog out to go to the bathroom, the dog gets distracted when outside and doesn't take care of business. The dog then comes back inside and has an accident. If your dog doesn't eliminate within 10 minutes when taken outside, return the dog to the

crate for about 15-20 minutes. Then take the dog back outside for another opportunity to go to the bathroom. Repeat this process until the dog eventually eliminates. Your dog will soon learn that it needs to go to the bathroom when given the opportunity or he/she will be put back into the crate.

Once your dog eliminates, the dog is then allowed to be out of the crate but is still supervised. When the dog is free in the house, keep the dog in an area that you can watch him/her. Close off other areas of the house. Don't let your dog wander off to areas of the home where you can't see what the dog is doing. After your dog consistently shows you that he/she is dependable, you will gradually bring the dog into larger areas of your home. Your dog has to earn his/her freedom. Should your dog start having accidents, then you've given too much freedom too fast. Restrict the dog's freedom again. Gradually reintroduce your dog to more areas of the house as the dog seems able to handle it. Until your dog becomes reliable, make sure the dog remains in the crate when you are not at home or when you or a family member cannot supervise him/her.

If the dog is alone most or all of the day, it is unrealistic to expect a young dog to not go to the bathroom for a long period of time. In this instance, a larger sectioned off area in a kitchen, laundry room, or play pen would be more appropriate than having the dog crated during this time. Have the crate open and accessible to the dog with his/her water inside the crate. Have paper covering the entire floor area that the dog has access to so he/she will be able to relieve him/herself. It will unfortunately take longer to housebreak a dog under these circumstances because you are sending the message to your dog that it is ok to go to the bathroom inside. Do not expect a puppy to be able to hold itself from going to the bathroom more than one hour per month of age. So a three month old puppy should be let outside at least once every three hours. If you are home during the day with your puppy, let him/her outside every hour or two.

GETTING YOUR DOG USED TO THE CRATE

If the dog is resistant to being crated, gradually get your dog used to it. Start by throwing a couple of treats into the crate. Let the dog walk in and get the treats and then come right back out. When your dog is comfortable with that, shut the door behind the dog for a couple of seconds before letting the dog back out. Gradually increase and vary the time your dog spends in the crate. Feeding the dog in the crate with the door open also helps your dog to quickly become accustomed to the crate.

KEEP THE CRATE A HAPPY PLACE

Never use the crate as a punishment. Do not crate your dog if he/she has done sometime wrong. Don't allow young children to invade the dog's crate. The crate should be your dog's private space that he/she can retreat to when wanting to get away.

SIZE IS IMPORTANT

Do not put your dog in a crate that is too big! The crate should ONLY be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around and lay down. If your dog can soil in one are of the crate and move away from the mess then it's TOO big! Do not put any bedding or towels in the crate if the dog is having accidents in it. If the mess is being absorbed by the bedding then the incentive to avoid soiling the crate is taken away, Once your dog realizes that the mess isn't going anywhere and cannot be avoided then the dog will not want to soil the crate. When your dog has reached this stage, and NOT going to the bathroom in the crate, you may add bedding if you desire.

KNOW YOUR DOG

There are several things that stimulate your dog with the need to go to the bathroom. Your dog will need to go outside after waking up from sleep, eating, drinking, exercising or playing.

HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOUR DOG HAS TO GO



When taking your dog outside, go to the same door every time. As you are approaching the door, enthusiastically ask your dog "Want to go outside".

YOU MUST GO OUTSIDE WITH YOUR DOG. If you don't, you won't know if the dog has went or not nor will you be there to immediately praise your dog for a job well done. Seeing if your dog goes to the bathroom and praising him/her are very crucial steps in housebreaking. Take your dog to the same area in the yard each time and continually encourage him/her to go to the bathroom. Use a phrase such as "Take

a break" or "Go potty". Your dog will soon learn what you are wanting. Praise immediately as soon as your dog begins to eliminate.

Keeping a doggie diary is very helpful with housebreaking. For about a week, keep track of every time your dog goes to the bathroom. Write down what they did, at what time, and if it was outside or an accident inside.

You will soon see the pattern of your dog's habits and will learn when the dog needs to be let outside. There is a doggie diary at the end of this manual that you can make copies of and use.

SCHEDULED FEEDING

It is important to feed your dog at the same time every day. If your dog eats at the same time then your dog will also eliminate at the same time as well. You will then know when and how many times your dog will need to go outside.

HOW TO FEED YOUR DOG

Put the dog's food down for 10-15 minutes. After that time, take up any food your dog hasn't eaten. Do not put the food back down until next feeding time. If you allow your dog to graze or free feed it will be hard if not impossible to get your dog on a bathroom schedule. A dog that eats at their leisure may need to eliminate when no one is around to take the dog outside.



WHAT TO FEED YOUR DOG

Feed your dog a high quality dog food.

You will actually feed less of a top quality food for proper nutrition which will result in smaller and firmer stools. This makes it easier for the dog to "hold it" until being let outside. For information on the dog food that we feed our own dogs and recommend to our clients, please ask us or refer to the website greendogtraining.com.

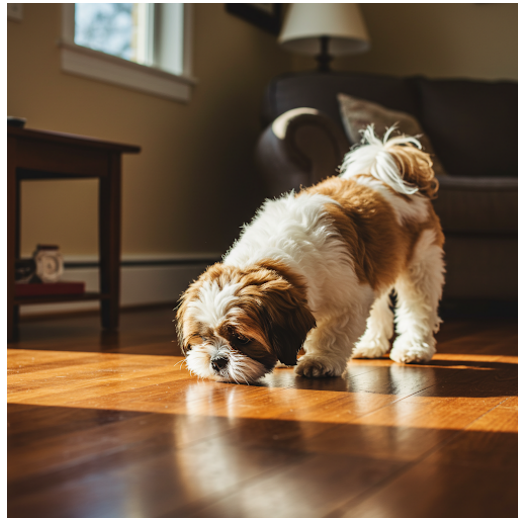
Any change in diet should be gradual. Have water available for your dog at all times during the day but take it up about an hour or two before bedtime. Make sure the dog is let outside one last time right before bed.

PREVENTION

The more you prevent accidents from happening in the very beginning, the fewer accidents your dog will make. The opposite is also true. The more accidents your dog has, the more accidents your dog will continue to have. If you don't give your dog the opportunity to have accidents or at least limit them, it will be easier and quicker for him/her to be completely housebroken.

BODY LANGUAGE

Watch your dog when he/she goes to the bathroom. Observe the dog's posturing and what the dog does right before eliminating. Does he/she start to sniff the ground intently and walk in circles? Or maybe your dog's walk changes and then arches his/her back prior to going to the bathroom. If your dog takes these positions or postures in the house, get your dog outside fast!



CATCHING AN ACCIDENT

In the event that you catch your dog in the act of having an accident or your dog starts to take bathroom posture, immediately say a very loud and strong "NO!" Sharp enough to startle and stop the dog momentarily. Immediately rush the dog outside while saying "OUTSIDE". If your dog is small enough, scoop the dog up and carry him/her outdoors. Once outside, tell your dog to go to the bathroom.

REPRIMANDING ACCIDENTS

To correct your dog, you have to catch your dog in the act. Never scold a dog for an accident that happened earlier. Many owners believe that their dog knows what he/she has done wrong by the way the dog is acting when the owner finds the accident. The dog is just sensing that the owner is angry. If every time the owner walks into a room and gets angry when they find an accident, the dog will associate that the owner gets mad every time the owner walks into the room. The dog may not understand that the owner is angry about the accident that happened earlier.

Some dogs will urinate out of excitement. This usually happens when the owner returns home and is greeting the dog. This is a behavior that should never be reprimanded. It is something that the dog cannot control. It is a behavior that is common to puppies and will usually ease as the dog matures. To help avoid this, don't make a big production when you leave or return home. When arriving home, let your dog outside first thing to go to the bathroom. Don't immediately give your dog a big greeting. Wait 10-15 minutes after you have been home before giving the dog attention. That way, the dog's excitement of your homecoming will have worn down a little.

Never spank a dog with your hand, newspaper or anything else as punishment for accidents. These methods stress a dog which can create fearfulness of you which can result in behavior problems down the road.

MARKING

Marking is when an unaltered male dog urinates to mark their territory. When they start exhibiting this behavior in the house it can create a big problem. Typically the dog will lift his leg and urinate on furniture or other household items. Once they start marking, they continue to mark to keep their scent strong. To prevent this behavior, neuter the dog. Neutering helps prevent behavior problems and is beneficial to the dog's health.

WHEN TO SEE THE VET

In the event that your dog seems unable to hold itself from going to the bathroom for a realistic amount of time, you might want to schedule an appointment with your vet. Sometimes there are underlying health issues such as an infection which makes housebreaking difficult. Usually if it is some type of infection, the dog will make repeated attempts to urinate when outside but not releasing much urine at a time. The dog may also have frequent and urgent urges to urinate.

CONCLUSION

What you are working on is getting your dog in the habit of exclusively going to the bathroom outside. Once your dog gets in the habit of going outside to relieve himself/herself, it will be the only place your dog will want to go to the bathroom.

Consistency is the key to housebreaking. The more consistent you are with the steps, the quicker your dog will become dependable in your home



MY DOG'S BATHROOM DIARY