



House Training

Given the choice, dogs prefer to eliminate away from where they eat, sleep, and play, but they may still have accidents indoors for various reasons:

- Possible medical cause
- Not fully trained to go outside
- Marking territory
- Urinating due to excitement, fear, or stress

House training is achieved by teaching a dog where and on what surface to eliminate, while preventing accidents in inappropriate areas.

How to Get Started:

House training takes time and consistency. Puppies may not be fully trained until 8-12 months old. As a rule, a puppy can hold it for about as many hours as their age in months—so a 4-month-old shouldn't be left longer than four hours without a break, though they can usually last through the night by that age.

1. Keep the dog on a consistent daily feeding schedule and remove food between meals.
2. To anticipate and prevent accidents, you need to watch for early signs that he needs to eliminate. Signs include pacing, whining, circling, sniffing and leaving the room. If you see any of these, take the dog outside as quickly as possible. Not all dogs learn to let their owner know they need to go outside by barking or scratching at the door. Some will pace a bit and then just eliminate inside.
3. If you cannot watch the dog, confine him to a crate, a small room (with the door closed or baby-gated), or tether him to you with a leash that does not give him much leeway. Gradually, over days or weeks, give the dog more freedom. If the dog eliminates outside, give him some free time in the house



(maybe 15-20 minutes to start). If all goes well, gradually increase the amount of time out of confinement.

4. Accompany the dog outside and reward him with praise, treats, play, or a walk whenever he eliminates outdoors. It's best to take the dog to the same place each time, as the smells may prompt the dog to eliminate. Some dogs will eliminate early on in a walk; others need to move about and play for a bit first.
5. Take the dog outside on a consistent schedule. Puppies should be taken out every hour, as well as shortly after meals, playtime and naps. All dogs should get out first thing in the morning, last thing at night, and before being confined or left alone. Adult dogs must get out at least four times a day.
6. If you can catch the dog in the act of eliminating inside, make loud noises. Immediately run to the dog and rush him outside. If he is small, pick him up; otherwise, just grab him by the collar and run outside with him. The idea is to startle him, which should stop him in mid-stream. Allow the dog to finish outside and reward him. If you do not catch the dog in the act, do not do anything to the dog.
7. Clean accidents with an enzymatic cleanser to minimize odors that might attract the dog back to the same spot.

What not to do:

- Do not rub the dog's nose in his elimination (this teaches him nothing).
- Do not scold the dog, unless you catch him in the act of eliminating in an inappropriate place.
- Never, ever physically punish the dog for accidents; that includes hitting with a rolled-up newspaper.
- If the dog enjoys being outside, don't bring the dog inside right after he eliminates—he may learn to “hold it” to stay outside.
- Do not use an ammonia-based cleanser. As urine contains ammonia, this could attract the dog back to the same spot to urinate again.



Above all, please be patient! If your dog has an accident, it isn't due to spite or an inability to learn. It usually means they needed a bit more supervision, more frequent trips outside, or clearer support in recognizing and responding to their signals.

For AAWL adopters who need more information or if you have additional questions, please reach out to our support team at 602-273-6852 ext. 105.