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Housetraining for Dogs

Why housetrain your dog?

Everyone appreciates a dog who goes potty outside! Housetraining success is all about rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors, keeping a consistent schedule, and paying attention to your dog's body language in order to prevent accidents.

How to Teach It

Step 1. Choose an outdoor spot that you would like to be your dog's toilet. On each potty break, wait with your dog at the spot until they potty in that area. Praise them, play with them, and give them treats after they do so.

Step 2. Create a schedule for regular potty breaks so that they always have plenty of opportunity to potty in their outdoor spot, instead of indoors. Start with breaks every hour.

Step 3. Keep track of all accidents, successful potty breaks, and unproductive potty breaks on your schedule so that you can adjust accordingly, and be prepared next time they need to go.

Step 4. Supervise your dog closely. Close doors to bedrooms or other parts of the house where you are not able to keep a watchful eye on your dog. If you have to leave your dog unattended, place them in a long term confinement area (see below for details).

Step 5. Watch for signs that your dog needs to go potty. If you notice your dog suddenly getting distracted, walking away and sniffing, scratching, circling, arching their tail over their back, lifting their leg, or releasing gas, it may be time for a potty break. Swiftly, but cheerfully, get your dog out to their potty spot, and praise them when they eliminate outdoors.

Step 6. If they have an accident inside - don't fret! Calmly clean up the mess using an enzymatic cleaner, designed for doggy accidents. Regular cleaners can leave behind scent markers, which signal to your dog that this is now a potty spot.

Training Tip: Dogs usually need to go potty shortly after they eat, after any physical activity such as play, and just after they wake up from napping or sleeping. At the end of each activity, take your dog out to their potty spot.

Training Tip: Put potty on cue. Yes, you can incorporate a cue to let your dog know it's time to go. You can do so by saying your cue, such as "go potty", just as your dog starts to potty. Do this consistently and your dog will eventually connect the word with the deed.

TrainingTip: There's an app for that! Try "PawTracks" app or "DogLog" app to keep your schedule for you. You can also use a generic shopping list type app to create a schedule that can be shared with the whole family. A simple recurring alarm and sheet of paper with dates and times of all potty breaks (both successful and not) also works well.

Long term confinement space:

This is a space where your dog can safely stay if you are not home, or cannot actively supervise them. Set this up by dog-proofing a room (bathrooms or laundry rooms often work well), or a small area in a room as shown below. It should include the following:



1. Waterproof floor
2. An open crate or bed
3. Water
4. Chew or feeder toys
5. Toilet space: boot tray or litter pan with turf, paper, or pee pads

Sample schedule:

Date	Time	Type of elimination	Indoor or outdoor?
4/15	8 AM	Pee and poop	Outdoor
4/15	9 AM	None	N/A
4/15	9:30 AM	Pee	Outdoor
4/15	10:20 AM	Pee	Indoor