

# Need Help with House Training?

## The keys to successful house training are:

### Containment

- Your dog will not eliminate in areas where he is not allowed to go. Using a crate is an excellent way to quickly housetrain a dog as a dog will generally not eliminate in the same space where it sleeps.
- If a crate is not an option, you can also contain your pet in a small area of your house such as a kitchen or bathroom using baby gates.
- Keep your dog confined at all times when you are not directly supervising (100%!) him until you are sure that he is housetrained.
- Another method is to tie a leash to your dog and loop the leash handle through your pant's belt loop, or tie the leash around your waist, so that the dog must be with you at all times. This also makes it easy for you to quickly move your dog outside if he starts to eliminate in the house.



### Schedule

- By adhering to a consistent schedule for food, water and walks, you will pattern your dog to the desired behavior.
- Do not leave food down in a bowl all day for the dog, but rather give him 15 minutes or so to finish whatever you give him to eat. Then, pick up the bowl when he is done. Your dog should always have access to water however.
- By controlling when and how much your dog eats and drinks, you can better predict when he will need to eliminate.
- Puppies will tend to eliminate a few minutes before or after he eats or drinks water.
- Puppies will typically need to eliminate:
  - o When they first wake up in the morning;
  - o After a play session (or even sometimes during!);
  - o After a nap;
  - o Just after drinking;
  - o Just before or just after he eats;
  - o After chewing on a bone or chew toy
  - o If he hasn't been out for an hour or two.
- Remember, young puppies are still developing control over their bladder so be patient and give them time to both learn, and to physically gain bladder control.
- If you have rescued an adult dog, the best tactic is to pretend your dog is an 8 week old puppy and start from scratch!

### Praise

- Always praise your dog enthusiastically when he eliminates in the correct place, as this will let him know that he is doing the right thing by going outside.
- NEVER hit or yell at your dog for eliminating in the incorrect place, or rub his nose in his mess. Punishing him is counterproductive as it teaches the dog that eliminating in your presence is a dangerous thing, but doesn't teach them not to eliminate in the house at all.

- If your dog eliminated in the house, it is likely because he was simply unable to hold his bladder for that long, or he was not confined properly or supervised properly. Dogs do not eliminate in the house because they were “mad” at you or “vengeful.” If your dog urinated on your favorite couch or fancy rug, the ONLY thought that was on your dog’s mind at the time was “hey, I need to pee!”
- If your dog starts to eliminate while you are supervising, use a sharp “eh-eh!” or clap your hands to distract him, and then quickly scoop him up or leash him up and run outside. When he finishes going, praise him and reward him effusively.
- Praise him when he is outside and eliminating – do not wait for him to come back inside to praise him. Otherwise he will think he is being praised for coming back inside with you (which is a good thing, but immaterial to house training!).
- If you want him to eliminate in a certain area of the yard, bring him out to this area on leash and wait for him to eliminate. You can add in a “Go Potty!” cue while he is eliminating so he can associate this cue with his bodily function.

## Odor Removal

- When your dog eliminates in the house, the most important thing is to remove all traces of the odor, or the dog will continue to eliminate in the spot.
- Using common household cleaners is typically not enough, and using ammonia products will actually encourage your dog to return to the spot to go again since the cleaner residue is very similar to urine.
- Use products sold specifically to eliminate pet urine and feces odors that you can purchase at most pet supply shops. Nature’s Miracle and Simple Solution are two brand names for such products.

## Other Tips

- Try to avoid paper training. The dog is still learning it’s ok to go in the house, albeit in a certain area, and it will make housetraining him take longer. Crate training is a better alternative.
- Don’t expect a puppy to be fully housetrained until they are at least 6 months or older. Puppies have very little control over their bladders until this age.
- If you bring the dog outside and you think he needs to eliminate but he won’t, take him back inside and crate him for another 10-15 minutes and take him out to the same place again. Don’t assume that he didn’t need to go after all and then let him run around your house unsupervised.
- Always take the dog outside to urinate on leash. Wait patiently until he eliminates and then let him off leash to play. If you let him wander around the yard on his own until he urinates, and then go back into the house, he will learn that his fun play-time outside stops when he urinates. You want him to learn if I potty first the I get to play!
- Likewise, if you do not own a yard and must walk your dog on the street, take your dog outside and calmly wait for the dog to eliminate before proceeding with your walk. You want the dog to understand that his fun walk is the reward for eliminating. If the dog goes before he comes back in, the dog will wait longer and longer to go, and sometimes they will hold it until you bring them back inside.
- Finally, another useful method is to have a rolled up newspaper ready at hand. Every time your dog eliminates in the house, pick it up and hit yourself over the head while repeating, “I forgot to watch my dog! I forgot to watch my dog!” Remember, house-training accidents are your mistake, not the dog’s.



If you feel your dog could benefit from the services of a professional dog trainer, contact the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) to find a local trainer: [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com) • 1-800-PET-DOGS (738-3647) • [information@apdt.com](mailto:information@apdt.com).