



Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog

Many adult dogs adopted from animal shelters were housetrained in their previous homes, but every dog needs the opportunity to learn the rules of their new home. Your pup may have been previously trained to use a dog door or ring a bell when they needed to go out, or they may have had a special signal that only their previous owner recognized. It'll take some time for you both to figure each other out, but there are definitely a few ways to help the process move along as quickly as possible.

For the first few weeks after you bring your new dog home, you should assume he is not housetrained and start from scratch. If he was housetrained in his previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and reward him when he goes in the appropriate place.

Establish a Routine

- Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning when he wakes up, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed. You may need to take him out more often at first, but try to work towards a routine you can both keep up with long-term.
- Praise your dog every time he eliminates outdoors. Give lots of love, affection, and treats! You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he has finished and not wait until after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he will know that is what you want him to do.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your dog, on leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he has eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, leave the soiled rags or paper towels in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your dog recognize the area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate.
- While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty" that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he is supposed to be doing.
- Feeding your dog on a set schedule, once or twice a day, will help make his elimination more regular.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Do not give your dog an opportunity to have accidents in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash or use baby gates to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate,

like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him outside on a leash to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog closely, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down and turn around in. This could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your dog and use the crate to confine him. If he has spent several hours in confinement, take him immediately to his bathroom spot when you let him out. If he eliminates, praise and reward! If not, supervise and take him out again soon.

Accidents

Most dogs will have an accident in the house at some point. This is completely normal!

- If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating in the house, interrupt him and immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him, and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there. You may want to let him drag a leash around the house so you can quickly pick up the end of the leash and encourage him to go outside.
- Do not punish your dog for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, just clean it up calmly and move on. Rubbing your dog's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other type of punishment will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Try to learn from the mistake and prevent it from happening the next time.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.

Other Types of House-Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your puppy continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for his behavior.

- **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems, such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they're about to be punished.
- **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when there is a major change in their environment or if they are not spayed or neutered.
- **Separation Anxiety:** Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may

house soil as a result. Usually there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization.

- **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds.

If you believe your dog is house soiling due to one of the reasons above, please consult Homeward Pet's Animal Behavior Manager or another certified dog trainer or behavior consultant for additional help.