

Helpful Housebreaking Hints



A reference to help houstrain your new dog
or puppy!

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The basic principles of houstraining are relatively simple. Applied in the right manner with the right rewards, your new dog or puppy should catch on to this “unnatural” lesson you are trying to teach him in a timely manner. Keep in mind that dogs – or any animal for that matter – are not automatically hardwired to keep your house mess-free. Accidents will happen. Patience is key. Give him time to understand what you want from him. He is not going to be 100% housebroken in a month. Most children are not potty trained in such a short period of time either. Keeping consistent and always reinforcing the good behaviors will help your new houstraineer surpass your expectations in due time.

When the dog is allowed free time, keep a close watch out for sniffing and circling. These are pretty good indicators that he needs to go potty. If these signs are observed, take him outside immediately. When he eliminates (also known as “doing his thing”) in the right spot, reward him. Always reward your dog after he has finished his business, never during. Praising while he goes may distract him and he may stop before he is done. Do not allow him more than five minutes to sniff around and find a place to go. This will only make him think that the longer he takes to potty, the longer you will hang out with him. If he does not go during this time frame, you may bring him in but he must be confined. Try again in a few minutes.

When accidents do occur, spanking or rubbing the dog's nose in the accident is futile and counterproductive. Such punishment will make him hesitant to eliminate in front of you. What's worse, it could lead to him becoming a "hider". A "hider" is so afraid of being punished for an accident that he will try his best to hide his mess. For weeks you believe that he has been such a good boy – until you move the furniture around. And if too many mishaps occur in the house, you will need to better supervise the puppy. Otherwise, it will take a long time to housetrain.

In case of an accident in the process, make an inconspicuous noise to startle (but not frighten) the puppy, such as clapping your hands, to interrupt the deed. Take him outside immediately to resume his business and reward him once he has finished. Always clean up accidents with an odor neutralizing product, such as Nature's Miracle. Soap and other cleaners do not get rid of the smell of your puppy's accident. Leaving the scent behind will increase the chance that he will choose that spot on your rug again.

To better your chances of preventing an accident, take your dog or puppy out after:

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|  Waking up |  Playing |
|  Getting up from resting |  Training |
|  Drinking water |  Actively sniffing |
|  Eating | |

Making a trip outside after these activities will help set your dog up to succeed. He will have the opportunity to go out and do his thing, and receive the proper praise and reward. It may be frustrating at times but remember – the more opportunities you give your furry friend to succeed, the faster he will catch on.

You should always accompany your dog on bathroom breaks. It is risky to assume that he eliminated while outside in the backyard and then allow him free time indoors. This is a very common mistake that owners make. It is good to put a leash on and walk him to the potty spot each and every time. This way you can reward him once he has eliminated, which will help speed up your training. Being there to do the latter makes the bathroom area much more desirable.

Always remember that consistency is critical! You should create a daily housebreaking routine and keep it the same for each day, no matter what your schedule is. What goes in must come out, and having his meals on schedule will greatly benefit you and your houstraine. It is easier to know when he will have to go when you know just how long it has been since he ate.



Crate Training

Properly done, crate training can be an important tool for housebreaking and many other behaviors (such as separation anxiety, barking, and re-ranking). Dogs are den animals, and crates provide just that. Crates provide a safe place of their own. Providing a crate for your dog is just as necessary from a safety standpoint as providing a crib or playpen for your baby or toddler. Contrary to belief, it is **not** cruel if properly done. Never ever use a crate for punishment.

Your dog's crate should be in a quiet, but well-trafficked area of the house. Your crate should be 1 ½ times longer than the dog's body (excluding the tail) and tall enough to stand in comfortably. In



the case of a puppy, you can purchase a crate large enough to grow into. However, you should place a divider inside to make it smaller. The divider can be moved as your puppy grows. Make sure the area is small

enough so that he will not eliminate where he is forced to lie. Too large of a crate will allow him to urinate in one corner and sleep in another.

To get your dog accustomed to his new crate, take a day or two to place treats and toys inside and allow him just to go in on his own to eat. Leave the door open. After a couple days, try giving him a lot of exercise late in the evening so that he is really tired. His last meal and water of the day should be at least 2-3 hours prior to bedtime. When it is time for bed, give his final opportunity to eliminate and then take him to his crate. Place him inside, give him a new chew toy, and turn out the lights. If the crate is in your bedroom, be sure to go to bed the same time that your pup does.



Take into account the puppy's age to determine if he will need to go in the middle of the night. A good rule of thumb is taking the number of months old that your puppy is, and add 1. The total is how many hours you can crate him. For example, a 3 month old puppy should not be crated for more than 4 hours, even under the best circumstances where he has been properly exercised and has plenty of chew toys to keep him occupied. Some properly trained and exercised adults can be crated for 8 to 9 hours on occasion. Be conscious of his age and training, as well as his temperament, emotional, and physical state before determining how long you should crate both pup pies and adults. Most dogs and puppies will whine when they have

to go if the crate is of the right size and not full of absorbent bedding. If he gives no indication of having to pee and has accidents in his crate, set an alarm to beat him to the punch. Getting him outside prior to a midnight accident will set him up to succeed.

Again – be patient with your new dog or puppy. Think of him as a toddler if you become frustrated. He did not come into the world all-knowing. It is up to you, the owner, to teach him wrong from right.



Source: Animal Behavior College Course Text. Stage 6: Problem Solving