



10 Tips to Housetraining Success



No one wants their dog to eliminate in an unwanted place. That's why, whether you have a new puppy or grown dog, housetraining is one of the most important lessons to teach.

The following steps can make it easier to achieve housetraining success!

- 1 Start early.** If you have a puppy, housetraining should begin as soon as it arrives home. Puppies are most receptive to the process between 8–12 weeks of age.
- 2 Be consistent.** Use a simple cue word or phrase (e.g., “Go potty”). Most young dogs tend to use the same area each time they eliminate so take the puppy or dog to a consistent spot every time. Never punish the puppy for eliminating in the wrong area.
- 3 Supervise the dog when it is not confined.** If a puppy eliminates in the house, it learns that it is acceptable to do so. To prevent this behavior, watch the puppy every second if it is out of its crate or confinement area.
- 4 Confine the puppy when unsupervised.** If you need to leave the puppy unsupervised, confine it in a small space like a bathroom or crate with just enough room for a water bowl and defined bedding area. Dogs generally avoid soiling their bed area.

Housetraining doesn't have to be stressful for owners or their puppies. Patience, supervision, and positive rewards are the keys to a happy, housetrained dog.

- 5 Set the puppy's preference for eliminating outdoors.** By around 8 weeks of age, dogs often learn to prefer one surface for elimination, possibly to the exclusion of others. Newspaper, grass, concrete, or

asphalt commonly become the chosen surface at the prompting of the owner. Dogs that will be expected to eliminate outdoors as adults should learn as puppies.

- 6 Take numerous trips outside.** Generally, there are 4 times a puppy eliminates: after waking up; after eating; after intense activity; and at bedtime. While routines for these activities can regulate elimination, it is important to remember that puppies can generally only hold their bladder for one hour for each month of age plus one so you should take your puppy out frequently. Even adult housetrained dogs should be taken out a minimum of five times a day.
- 7 Interrupt unwanted elimination.** While housetraining, accidents may happen. If a puppy begins to urinate or defecate in an inappropriate area, try a distracting noise to interrupt the action and immediately take it outside to the correct area.
- 8 Make sure the dog has completed urinating.** Some puppies will urinate or defecate more than once in order to fully empty their bladder and bowels. Be sure to wait until the puppy has completely eliminated before bringing it back indoors.
- 9 Reinforce correct behavior.** Rewards are strong motivators to reinforce the learning process. Quiet praise is best given while the dog is eliminating. The puppy can then be given a food treat immediately as it finishes. *(Giving the puppy a treat after it returns to the house will reward the puppy for coming back into the house, not for eliminating.)*
- 10 Talk to your veterinarian.** If you're having difficulty housetraining your puppy, see your veterinarian. Health problems can interfere with housetraining.