



# House Training Made Simple

*For Dog's Sake:*

## Your New Dog Has A Lot To Learn!

Congratulations on the arrival of your newest family member! Your new pup or adult dog has an awful lot to learn before he can become a productive part of your household. He has to figure out who's who in the family, what the schedule is (when's dinner?), if it's OK to sleep on the sofa or not, lots of things. But one of the most important skills your new pet will need to learn is where to go to the bathroom!

Since dogs and people don't really think alike, people

tend to have lots of problems communicating to their dogs where they should 'go' and where they should not. But if you learn just a little bit about the canine mind and body, house training can be a breeze.



To get started, make sure you have realistic expectations. Make sure you remember that it's going to take about 3 weeks for an adult dog to learn all the rules of the house. Puppies can take a little longer be-

cause of their baby brains and tiny bladders. Most pups at 8 weeks can begin housetraining, and if all goes well, most pups can be graduated from potty prep school by the time they're 4 months old.

Your greatest assets in a good house training program are a little planning, a good schedule and some human patience. Most puppies are eager to please their new human family members, so if you can help them be successful in their training program and lavish them with praise when they get it right, you'll have a happy, clean pup in no time!

## What Goes In, Must Come Out!

This is the first simple rule of housetraining! Whatever food and water you put in your pup will be coming out at some point.

Although we don't care to restrict our dogs' water intake during the day (pick up water about an hour before bed time), it is very impor-

tant to feed on a schedule (if you want to free-feed, wait until all the house training is complete!)

For puppies up to 6 months, feed 3 meals a day. Older dogs do fine on 2 meals a day. Put the dog's food bowl down at meal time and give him 15-20 minutes to finish his food.

Dry food alone is fine! If anything's left at the end of meal time, pick up the bowl and don't feed again until the next mealtime. A regular feeding schedule will help your dog eliminate on a schedule, which will help both of you be successful in your training plan.

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### Stuff to Remember

- ☺ Make sure your new dog gets a thorough physical at the vet before you start your house training program. Lots of medical problems can make house training tough, such as incontinence, bladder infections and intestinal parasites (worms). Make sure the dog has no physical ailments that would inhibit training.
- ☺ Remember that teething puppies tend to have lapses in housebreaking, so watch for those falling teeth.
- ☺ Stressful times can cause your dog to forget his house manners. People moving in and out of the home or moving with the dog into a new home may be a signal that more house training is necessary. Even re-arranging the furniture or getting new rugs and carpets may result in a house training lapse. Remember your pup when these kinds of changes occur!

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### That Special Place!

Dogs learn fastest when the potty spot is one very specific place. Choose a single place just a few square feet in size in your garden, lawn or other acceptable location. If you consistently use this place, your dog will have a much easier time figuring out where to 'go'!

## Confinement: The Key to Success

Most dogs are very clean about their living space and won't soil where they eat, sleep and play. You can capitalize on this by making sure your pup does not have the run of the house until house training is complete. Make sure the dog has a confined area to stay in where bedding and toys are placed at one end, and an acceptable place to eliminate is set up at the other. You can use an exercise pen, or just baby-gate off a room like the kitchen or bathroom where the floor is easy to clean after accidents. Line the 'other' side with newspapers or puppy pads.

Take your dog on-leash from his confined area to his "special place" at least every two hours so he has a chance to eliminate. Stay in the area up to 10 minutes; you can encourage the dog to 'go' by speaking in an excited fashion or using a special cue word ("Potty!"). If the dog urinates or defecates, praise him enthusiastically and reward with an extra-special food treat and some play time; this will help teach the pup that going in the "special place" is a highly rewarding experience! If nothing happens after 10 minutes of encouragement, bring the pup back to his confined area and let him rest there for 15 minutes. Then repeat the cycle again.

Remember your pup is more likely to 'go' soon after rising from sleep or a nap and after periods of excitement, high activity or play. Potty breaks are frequently needed within 30 minutes of eating a meal, too (see why eating on a schedule is so important?)

## Stay Clean, Stay Positive

During the house training period, make sure to keep your pup confined when you can't supervise him to prevent accidents. Even if you are very careful with your pup's supervision, accidents are bound to happen.

If you catch your pup in the act, you can register your displeasure by saying "Oops!" in a disappointed way, and then quickly moving the pup to the "special place" as soon as possible. DO NOT PUNISH the pup for making a mistake. Spanking or hollering at your dog or rubbing his nose in the mistake doesn't accomplish anything but making him fearful of you and the house training process.

If you find a mistake after the fact, there's nothing to be done about it, so resign yourself to do better next time

and just clean the spot very carefully.

The scent of urine and/or feces can linger in wood floors, carpet and other floor surfaces and fabrics for quite some time, even if you clean carefully, so it's important to use special cleaning agents designed to remove the stain and kill the odors. The smell from an old accident may trigger future accidents in the same spot, so thorough cleaning is key!

To get all the scent and stain out, use a good enzymatic cleaner you can find in any pet store (Nature's Miracle is just one brand). Make sure to thoroughly

soak the site of the accident and allow the solution to dry naturally to ensure a perfectly clean result.



Another option is any oxygenating cleaner (Oxyclean is one!). Mix a strong solution of the cleaner with warm water according to package directions. Shake well in a squirt bottle and then thoroughly soak the area, allowing the solution to sit for 30 minutes.

Then use absorbent towels to remove the remaining solution as much as possible. You can also find the sites of old stains using a special black light flashlight you can get at your local pet store. Pet stains glow in the dark under black light!