



Housetraining Tips for Adult Dogs

Housetraining adult dogs follows many of the same rules as training puppies but often goes much more quickly. Adult dogs can generally control their bladder and bowels much more easily. The following tips will help you and your dog get off on the right paw:

- Until your dog is housetrained, supervise him when he is loose in the house. Consistent supervision will prevent accidents and save you a lot of frustration down the road.
- If you can't supervise, confine your dog in a crate or in a safe area where it is ok if he potties. (See our tip sheet on Crate Training.) Adult dogs will do their best to keep their space clean. Using a crate will help you with housetraining.
- Follow a schedule. You'll need to help your dog understand that he needs to "go" on your schedule (for example, before work, after work, and before bed). Avoid mistakes inside by starting off with frequent and regular potty breaks. You want to be outside when your dog decides it's time to go!
- When your dog goes to the bathroom outside, use verbal praise to reinforce his behavior. For example, you can say "good boy" or "good potty." A treat may also help! Be sure to reward your dog as soon as he finishes.
- If you catch your dog having an accident, interrupt him by getting his attention with a clap or "aah" and then take him outside.
- If your dog has an accident, do **not** yell at or smack him, and **never** rub his nose in his mess – none of those punishments mean anything to a dog after the fact and can cause behavior problems later on. For example, harsh punishments can cause your dog to avoid going potty in front of you, making it harder to clean up mistakes and harder to reward him when he potties outside.
- Be sure to clean up accidents with a stain remover specifically for pets. These products will fully eliminate any traces of odor your dog may notice.

As your adult dog starts to "get" the idea of housetraining, you can start to give him more freedom in the house. Start by allowing him access to one room, then two, then three and so on until he has access to the entire house. If he has an accident, go back a step or two and start over. With patience and consistency, all healthy dogs, of any age, can be housetrained.

Medical Problems Related to Housetraining Problems

Problems with housetraining, especially in pets who were previously trained, can be a sign of medical problems such as a urinary tract or parasite infection (roundworm, hookworm, or whipworm). You may need to consult with your veterinarian to rule out medical issues when housetraining.