



Your New Dog: House Training

Most adult dogs will catch on to the idea of house training with relative ease. Remember, human babies are usually not introduced to the idea of using a toilet until they are at least 2 years old. Furthermore, most human babies are not reliably toilet trained until they are around 4 years old. Even then, accidents will happen. The age of your dog and any possible medical issues they may have will also affect your house training. Situations such as stress, change in diet, intestinal upset, intestinal parasites and urinary tract infections can make house training difficult to impossible. It is important to talk to your veterinarian if you have these concerns.

When dealing with a puppy or a young dog, a good rule of thumb is to relate their age (in months) to the number of hours they are physically capable of controlling their bladders and bowels. A puppy at two months should be capable of controlling their bladder for about two hours. A four month old puppy can manage about four hours. If you have adopted a puppy or a young dog, there will be some time before you may be able to manage a full night's sleep.

Just like every other aspect of your dog's life, consistency is the key when it comes to house training. The more consistent the feeding and walking schedule the more successful you will be house training with your new dog.

Designating a Relief Spot

When designating a relief spot, certain factors should be considered. Will this area be easily accessible all year round, including during the winter months? What about garden areas and walk ways? Once you have designated a relief spot take your dog on-leash to the designated toilet area. Stand quietly, so that the dog can sniff around. Most people may instruct "go do your business" or "potty time," but do not repeat this request and distract the dog. Do not praise the dog during their search. If after about 5 minutes your dog hasn't gone to the bathroom, return them to the house, keeping a close eye on them for about half an hour, then try again. Once your dog has completed their business outside, make sure to praise and make a fuss about how smart they are and, of course, don't forget a treat!

Good Morning!

When people wake up in the morning, their first stop is usually the bathroom. If another family member already has the bathroom occupied, we know how uncomfortable it can be to wait. Your dog will appreciate access to relieve himself as much as you do in the morning. Take your dog out to use the bathroom as soon as you can after you wake up.

Scheduling

Create a schedule that is practical for you to maintain. If you cannot stick to your schedule, you cannot expect the dog to adhere to it. Try to feed your new dog one to two hours before you have to leave them. This should provide your dog enough time to digest their breakfast and ensure they have an opportunity to use the bathroom before you leave for work. Schedule your dog's bed time and waking-up time. Adhere to these times as closely as possible. If you have a puppy or young dog and will be away from your home for more than a few hours, you will need to arrange to have somebody come in to take the dog out to their designated relief spot. Keep track of your dog's routine. Some dogs will "potty" two or three times per outing in the morning, but only twice per outing in the evening. Even if the weather is foul, do not let your dog know that you don't want to be going outside with them. By teaching your dog that even in bad weather going outside is "the thing to do," they will be more willing to convey their needs to you.

Supervision in the House

Any mistakes your dog makes while you are at home are due to your inattention. You should always know where your dog is and what they are doing. If you realize it's almost time for a potty break, don't delay by thinking "after I finish the laundry." After the laundry may be too late and you will have missed an opportunity to positively reinforce your dog's bathroom habits. By observing your dog you will quickly learn to tell the difference between a dog exploring his new home and his searching for a location to relieve himself. If you cannot supervise the dog for a period of time, put the dog in a confined area such as a crate or room where you are. Have the dog on their leash if it will help. When you are relaxing, watching TV, reading or on the computer, have your dog with you as well. Try giving your dog some of their toys to play with.