

Housetraining

Many adult rescue dogs need help with their housetraining skills - even dogs who were potty-trained in their previous homes sometimes need a refresher course if they didn't get regular walks at the shelter. The good news is it's fairly easy to teach an old dog this new trick! In fact, adult dogs are often easier and faster to housetrain than puppies, especially if you use a crate.

Start Using a Crate Right Away

Crate training is the easiest way to teach a dog bladder and bowel control because dogs generally don't like to go potty in their sleeping and eating areas. Most dogs actually enjoy having a safe, closed-off space to rest and recharge, so don't worry about them feeling confined.

The crate should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down in comfortably, but no bigger. If it's too big, your dog may feel like they can go potty in one corner and still keep their living space clean.

Make sure you give your dog a lot of time outside the crate for exercise, training, and just hanging out and bonding with you. If you keep them in their crate too long, they'll feel trapped and frustrated.

When you do have your dog outside of the crate, make sure you know where your dog is at all times – if your dog tends to go out of sight to pee or poop in the house, consider “umbilical cord training”: using a leash or rope to connect your dog to you so that they cannot go out of your sight.

Bathroom Breaks

While you're housetraining, give your dog **at least six bathroom breaks a day**. Aim to take your dog out first thing in the morning, before you leave for the day, twice during the day, once after dinner, and one more time before going to bed.

Once you know they've got it, you can move them to **four** bathroom breaks a day—the standard for adult dogs. Also, take your dog for a walk or give them some playtime as a bonus reward. If they always have to come straight back inside after eliminating, they'll learn to hold it to prolong their time outdoors.

Watch for signs that your dog needs to go potty. Signs might include:

- Pacing
- Whining
- Circling
- Sniffing
- Leaving the room



Pick a Bathroom Spot

When going outside with your dog, use the same “elimination station” each time. This means that when you take your dog out to go potty, go to the same area every day. Dogs usually have a favorite spot for pooping and peeing, so make it easier and choose, right from the start, the place you want them to go.

When you and your dog go to your “elimination station”, don’t distract your dog with games and chit-chat; just stand still (quietly!) and let them circle and sniff. As soon as your dog begins to go, give a cue, such as, “go pee” or “do your business.” Before long, your dog will eliminate on cue – handy when you’re traveling or don’t want to spend walks carrying bags of poop.

Shower them with verbal praise and yummy treats when they use the bathroom outside—throw a potty party! Make sure the treats and praise come right after they finish eliminating. Make the praise enthusiastic and the food treat top-notch. You want to make it clear that going potty outside is a great thing. Don’t wait to get back to the house to give a treat; they won’t connect the reward with what they did to deserve it.

Don’t Punish Them

Don’t punish your dog for accidents in the home. If you catch your dog having an accident, startle them midstream with a clap, then quickly move them outside to finish. The purpose of clapping is not to punish them, but to startle them so you have enough time to move them outside to finish. Praise them when they’re done going potty outside so they learn that eliminating outside isn’t just allowed, it’s rewarded! Remember, it is important to not punish your dog for going potty in the house.

Dogs are not able to connect punishment after the fact to the bad deed. Rubbing her nose in it will only make her find a hiding spot to go potty inside. Just clean it up and keep going with these housetraining tips.

Cleaning Products

There will most likely be an accident here or there while housetraining, no matter how closely you stick to a training routine. It is important to clean up after your dog thoroughly so they’re not drawn to go potty in the same place by the smell of leftover poop or urine. Use a cleaning product that contains live bacteria or enzymes that break down the mess, rather than masking it with another fragrance.

Stay away from ammonia-based cleaners; they’ll smell like urine to your dog, and they’ll want to pee again on the same spot.

Stick with your training routine, and your adult dog should be doing their business where they’re supposed to in no time. Good luck!