

It's A Dog's World™

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HOUSEBREAKING

The key to successfully housebreaking your dog is **consistency**. Dogs are creatures of habit and if you are consistently taking your dog out to the “bathroom” at the same time and through the same doorway, then your dog should be housebroken in no time!

It is important to keep in mind the typical times that your dog will need to go to the bathroom. They are:

- Immediately upon waking in the morning or from a nap
- 15 to 30 minutes after eating or drinking
- During vigorous playing or when encountering a new environment

In order to get your dog “potty trained”, you are going to have to get him/her on a fixed feeding and watering schedule. Typically for puppies under a year of age, you will want to feed them a minimum of 2-3 times a day (1-2 times a day for adult dogs). Try to feed at the same times everyday. Usually, what goes in must come out within 15 to 30 minutes. So, once you have fed your dog, prepare to take him or her outside to eliminate. This means restricting your dog's movements to either a crate, a puppy-proofed area or tethered to you. If you need to, set a timer to remind yourself to take your dog outside within the 15 to 20 minute time period after he/she eats. Do not feed or give any water after 7 p.m. at night, if possible.

Do not “free feed”. “Free Feeding” involves putting one large bowl of food down for your dog and leaving it down all day. There are several problems with free feeding. First, you cannot monitor your dog's “intake” and “output” because your dog is nibbling and eating at will, throughout the entire day. This will make it extremely difficult to potty train, since you don't know exactly when your dog has eaten and, therefore, when to take your dog out. Second, if your dog stops eating because of sickness, you may not notice right away. Therefore, you may not catch the illness until it is too late. Third, if you ever plan on traveling with your pet, it will make it extremely difficult to keep food out at all times. You will want your dog to eat as soon as you make a pit stop so that he or she can eat and go potty all at one stop. In addition, only give your dog 15 minutes to eat the food that you put down. Whatever isn't eaten in this period of time should be picked up until the next scheduled feeding. Your dog will learn to eat when you set the food down. If you have a picky eater, you may want to add a spoonful of wet dog food with a little hot water. Keep in mind, though, that wet dog food can stain the teeth and cause your dog to need more dental visits than necessary.

Do not use wee-wee pads or newspaper to teach your dog to go potty in the house (unless your dog has absolutely no way to get outside during the day). You are going to teach your dog to go outside from the very beginning. You don't want your dog to get confused that it is ever ok to go potty in the house.

If your dog is unable to access the outdoors during the day, then you may try using a cat litter pan lined with a wee-wee pad or you can purchase a product like the **UGODOG®** indoor potty mat. Keep only one pad or mat down and be sure to keep it in the same spot at all times. **Do not put a pad in each room of the house!**



UGODOG® Potty Mat

In the early stages of housebreaking, it is important for you to physically accompany your dog outdoors. This allows you to not only direct your dog to the specific spot you have set aside for his bathroom area, but it also gives you the ability to know that your dog did, indeed, go to the bathroom. Plus it gives you the opportunity to praise your dog for a “job well done”. You may also want to encourage your dog when you go outside by saying something like, “Let’s go potty!” Eventually, your dog will understand this as a command and you can actually get your dog to go to the bathroom simply by saying the “magic words”!



Most dogs, once they are successfully housebroken, will try to alert you to their need to go outside. Some dogs may bark, scratch at the door or come and stare at you, hoping you’ll get the message. If you are concerned that you may miss your dog’s signal, especially if you are out of the room, you can try placing a set of wind chimes or a ribbon with bells on it near the door the dog uses to go outside. When you are initially training your dog, brush your dog’s nose against the bells or chimes every time you take

him outside. Eventually, he will put two and two together and will start ringing the bell when he wants you to let him out! You can make or purchase bells, such as **Poochie Bells®** for just this purpose.

You are never going to correct or scold your dog if he/she has an accident in the house. If you left the room for ten minutes, and when you came back there is a fresh spot where your dog has soiled, you are not going to correct your dog. The primary reason for not correcting after the fact is that dogs learn “in the moment” and need to be stopped while they are in the act of soiling. If you scold or punish your dog after the soiling has occurred, your dog will know that you are obviously upset about something, so he will learn to go potty behind the couch or some other area that is out of sight to avoid being corrected.

If your dog actually starts to go to the bathroom in front of you, it is perfectly okay to clap your hands together, followed by a loud, “No!” This may be enough to stop



your dog in the act so that you can quickly get him outside to finish. Wait five minutes for your dog to finish, and let your dog back inside. If your dog doesn't finish (because you scared it right out of him), you can let him/her back inside but keep a watchful eye on your dog.

If you find an area where your dog has gone potty and you didn't catch him or her in the act, you are going to put your puppy away, and clean up the mess. You don't want your dog to see you cleaning up the area, because your dog will learn that "Mom" or "Dad" will clean the messes. Use a product called **Nature's Miracle®** or other "enzyme" cleaner to clean the area. This product completely neutralizes the odor to prevent your dog from wanting to come back and re-mark the area. Place any stool that is left behind outside in the area that your dog goes potty in.

Unlimited freedom in the house is a privilege! Until your dog is reliably housebroken, your dog has not earned the privilege to roam unsupervised in the house. There are five options that you can use while your dog is in the house.

1. **Keep your eyes on him.** Whenever your dog is in the house, it is important that you keep a watchful eye on him or her at all times. Look for signs of pre-elimination. Pre-elimination are signals that your dog may send out that he or she is looking for a spot to go potty. Typically, your dog will pace, turn around in circles while sniffing the ground. If you see any of these signs, immediately take your dog outside.
2. **Body tether.** If you are unable to watch your dog closely, you may choose to body tether him or her. For instance, while you are picking up around the house, put your dog's leash on and tie the leash around your waist or belt loop. This will keep your dog with you at all times while you are working and enable you to see any pre-elimination signs.
3. **Fixed tether.** If you are relaxing watching television, you may choose to use a fixed tether. You can use your dog's leash for this purpose or you can make a fixed tether by purchasing a length of nylon clothes line and bolt snaps (leash clips) from *Wal-Mart* or *Target* (you can find it in the camping or hunting section). Cut the light line into small 4' pieces. Burn the ends to keep it from fraying. Attach the bolt snaps. You may need to treat the light line in a no chew solution like vinegar and hot pepper to keep your dog from chewing through it. Place these fixed tethers throughout the house. Tie them around unmovable, heavy objects like coffee table, posts, etc. While you are watching TV, or working at your desk attach your dog to the fixed tether. This way you can have your dog with you, but he or she is limited to the area that they can explore. Most dogs do not like to go potty in their immediate area (with the exception of pet store or puppy-mill puppies). Do not make the fixed tether so long that he or she can go potty and get far enough away from it to be comfortable.
4. **Crate.** A crate is one of the best options in getting your dog potty trained. They have many uses that can become invaluable later on. Remember that dogs are den-oriented animals. Unlike humans, they like confined areas to sleep in. At first, to get your new puppy used to the crate and to keep him or

her from going potty in the middle of the night, crate your dog. You may need to remove the crate from your bedroom at first if your dog is keeping you awake at night with his or her crying.

Once your dog is used to the crate, bring the crate back into the bedroom. Dogs are pack oriented and see you as an extension of their pack. They like to sleep with their pack. To eliminate any future frustration, consider finding a spot in the bedroom for your dog. Puppies that are four months and older can start holding their bladder and bowels throughout the night. There should be no reason to have to wake up in the middle of the night to let your dog to go potty.

Crates have many great uses. Before you say this just isn't for me consider these points. If it is a 110° or raining outside, you can leave the dog in the house while you run errands. If you intend to travel, your dog can ride safely in the car in the crate. Crates confine hair and dirt from your dog to one area. If your dog ever gets hurt or needs surgery, your vet may tell you that he or she needs to be confined to one area. If your dog is already used to the crate, there is no additional stress for dog staying in the crate. When you are busy and cannot directly supervise your puppy from going potty, you can keep him or her in the crate in the house with you. When using the crate, keep in mind that your dog can be in the crate 12 hours TOTAL during a 24-hour period of time. This means that after sleeping in the crate all night, your dog can be in the crate 4 hours during the day.

5. **Puppy proofed room.** The least desirable option is to use a puppy-proofed room like a bathroom, kitchen or laundry room. Usually, these rooms should not be carpeted. Make the area small enough that the dog would not be comfortable to go potty. Remove any objects that the dog may decide to chew on or get into. The problem with this option is that you usually cannot make the area small enough and the dog will get into trouble by finding things to chew on like wall plaster. However, a puppy-proofed room is a good option to use once your dog is a little older and understands housebreaking. You can use the puppy-proofed room to get your dog used to being in the house unattended. It works even better if you can install a doggy door that leads to the outside from this room. Professionals can install doggy doors into walls, windows, or just about anything. This way, your dog has the choice to be inside or out. As your dog is successful, you can open up this room to a slightly larger area like your bedroom and then keep opening up portions of your house until your dog has full access to the house while you are away.

Follow these steps closely and you will have your dog potty trained in no time!