

Housebreaking

Expect to help your new dog learn a houstraining routine. All puppies need to be taught good potty habits. Even adult dogs coming to a new home often need help or a refresher course. Remember, your new pet may have spent the first years of his life living alone in a backyard where no one taught him to be a housebroken dog. Even if he was housebroken in his old home, he may not understand that your living room is a place where going potty is prohibited.

Unless he's just pottied, keep him confined to a small area, such as his crate, exercise pen, or a small room such as a bathroom. If you want him to hang out with you, attach a 6-foot leash to your belt or belt loop, so he doesn't have the room to make a mistake. (This also teaches him to hang out with you – a great lesson for a companion dog!) When you leave the house, confine him to a crate, exercise pen or his special room. Never punish your dog for a mistake. It only adds to your dog's anxiety and slows down the process.

Take your dog outside – don't just put him out the door. Many dogs get lonely or distracted when they're sent outside by themselves. The best path to success is to go outside with him, and praise, praise, praise when he potties and USE A POTTY WORD! You want him to learn your word for potty, so when he goes outside, and you say, "go potty" he knows that you mean business, not play! This saves enormous amounts of time in your life and is a real help when you're traveling and when you take your dog to unfamiliar surfaces or it's 20 degrees and snowing out!

Select one toilet area outside for your dog. Not only is this aesthetically more pleasing but it will speed up the houstraining process. Paper or piddle pad training may be beneficial for smaller dogs. Put them in one area that is always accessible. If you want to encourage him to learn to go outside, start with them next to the door and move closer and closer.

[Read here about training your dog to ring a bell when it's potty time!](#)

Watch for your dog's signs he needs to go out. Some dogs never get the idea of going to the door and asking to go out. They may come and look at you, or they may circle, or trot around restlessly. Others sniff the floor. Some look at their owners and whine. Learn to read your dog's way of telling you that he needs to potty!

Have faith! Houstraining your dog can be a slow process – but one day the light will go on. Your dog can learn this!