



## *Enhancing the bond between dogs and their families*

---

### **General Houstraining Tips**

Houstraining is one of the first things we need to teach a new puppy when we bring her home. A puppy is most likely not used to having an entire house or apartment available to her. She needs to learn this entire new building is home. If we bring home a new adult dog, we might also need to houstrain or re-houstrain her. Do not assume an adult dog has been fully houstrained.

Even if someone tells you your dog is houstrained, it might not translate to your dog's new home. Because a dog has not had an accident in a house for a while, it does not necessarily mean the dog is fully houstrained. For example, if your dog lived in a previous home where she was left outside all day while the homeowners were at work, she might never have learned to ask to go out when she needs to potty. She was already outside most of the time so there were no accidents in the house. Or, she might have had a doggie door or someone at home all day and could get out whenever she needed. She might know to potty outside when someone is there to let her out, but she might not know to hold it until someone gets home if no one is there.

In order to teach your dog to potty outdoors only:

- Take her out to potty frequently when she first arrives home – every one to two hours for starters. Always take her outside shortly after waking up, eating, or playing.
- All dogs are different, but as a general rule, potty breaks should be no further apart than your puppy's age in months plus 1 hour. For example, if your puppy is 3 months old, she should be taken out at least every 4 hours. Expect to take her out at least once during the night.
- While adult dogs should be able to hold it longer than young puppies, it does not mean every dog can hold their bladders all day while you are at work. Some dogs can last longer, and some cannot. Most dogs can hold it for around 8 hours, but don't be upset if your dog is not able to do so. Initially, take your adult dog out frequently, much like you would a puppy.
- Reward her immediately when she potties outside. Use praise, petting, playtime, a toy, or a treat. Teach her that going potty outside is very rewarding!
- When she is indoors, watch her very closely. If you see signs she might need to potty, take her out immediately. Signs might include: sniffing the ground, circling an area, pacing, fidgeting, squatting or lifting a leg.
- Watching her closely means keeping a constant eye on her, not simply being in the same room. If you turn your head away for a brief moment, you can miss an accident.
- If your dog tends to disappear quickly or is difficult to keep an eye on, consider tethering her to you for the first week or two. This means, when she is not



[www.lovedogtraining.com](http://www.lovedogtraining.com)

outdoors or confined to a smaller area of the home, you have her on leash with you. You can attach the leash to your belt loop and keep her with you at all times. This way it is easier to watch her every movement, and she cannot wander off from you. It might seem rather cumbersome, but your dog will be housetrained much faster, and you will have far fewer accidents to clean up!

- When you cannot watch her closely, confine her to a smaller area of the house, such as a crate, an ex-pen, or a small room. Give your dog her food and a bed in this area so she learns not to potty here.
- Limit your dog's access to your home while she is learning to potty outside. Gradually give her access to more rooms as she learns and earns those privileges.
- If you do catch her going potty in the house, do NOT punish her! Simply clap your hands or find some other way to stop her from going potty, and then take her outside immediately. Reward her for going potty outside. If you punish her, she might become afraid to go potty with you standing nearby for fear of being punished - even when you are outside.
- The best way to have a fully housetrained dog is to never allow her the opportunity to potty in the house. If she only potties outside and not inside, she will learn very quickly where the appropriate place to go really is.

If your dog does have accidents in the house, be sure to clean the area thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner. An enzymatic cleaner will remove the smell. Other cleaners could set the smell into the floor. Dogs will often soil areas that still smell of urine, so careful cleaning is essential to successful housetraining.

Some dogs are not simply emptying their bladders but marking territory. In these cases, dogs will release smaller amounts of urine rather than emptying their entire bladder. They are more likely to mark on vertical surfaces, such as walls, furniture, etc. If this is the case, you will need to take the same steps as you do for housetraining, but you might also need to implement some training. A strict Nothing in Life is Free plan often helps with these situations.

If your dog potties frequently, or your housetraining does not seem to be effective, consider the potential for a medical problem such as a urinary tract infection. Take your dog to your veterinarian for a checkup. The most diligent training will not be effective if your dog has a medical cause for her frequent soiling of the house.

For more detailed info, consider reading Patricia McConnell's [Way to Go!](http://lovemydogtraining.com/html/suggested_reading_3.html#Housetraining) On our Recommended Reading List at: [http://lovemydogtraining.com/html/suggested\\_reading\\_3.html#Housetraining](http://lovemydogtraining.com/html/suggested_reading_3.html#Housetraining)

