



HOUSE TRAINING YOUR DOG

Whether your newly-adopted dog was previously house-trained or not, make no assumptions that your dog will not have accidents in your home. Assume your dog has the housetraining skills of a puppy who has no idea where a bathroom is. Keep an eye on your new dog at all times by keeping him on leash or closing off parts of your house.

Pick a spot

When you get home from the adoption center, take your new dog outside where you want him to potty and walk around with him. He may not go, and that's okay. Dogs usually urinate in one spot and defecate in another. Take note of the areas that your dog prefers. Familiar smells stimulate elimination. When you let your dog out, let him out the same way each time. That way, he learns how to tell you he needs out.

Timing is everything

Plan for frequent trips outside often, at least every 30 minutes, and at times that would be consistent with a need for elimination (i.e., first thing in the morning, after nap or playtime, after eating or drinking). Don't wait for him to "tell" you he needs to go, since you might not pick up on his cues until you get to know him better.

Bring treats!

Go outside with your dog and reinforce him for going with praise and 'high-value' treats like a small piece of chicken, cheese, or hot dog. Keep them somewhere handy so you can grab them on your way out. Don't wait until you go back inside to give him the treat; it needs to be delivered IMMEDIATELY after relieving himself. Remember that some dogs do not like eliminating on leash, so be patient.

Accidents happen

If you catch your dog trying to eliminate in the house, simply interrupt the behavior and redirect him outside where he can earn a treat for getting it right. Dogs don't understand punishment after the fact, so if you find a mess in the house, it's best to just clean it up and keep trying.

If at first you don't succeed...

If your dog doesn't go potty outside during the allotted time, bring him indoors and put him in the crate or tie the leash to your belt loop for the next 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, return to the appointed spot and try again. Repeat until the dog potties outside.

Strive for consistency and prevention

Do all the above steps for at least 6 weeks. Even if your pooch doesn't have an accident for a week in the 6-week period, continue to follow each step so the dog has a consistent routine. If your dog has not had an accident at all in the 6-week period, you're well on your way to having a potty-trained dog! Now you can give your dog a little extra room and let them work his way up to total freedom!

Animal behavior questions?

Contact our FREE Behavior Helpline!

402-905-3421 | bhelp@nehumanesociety.org | www.nehumanesociety.org/behaviorhelp