



Houstraining Your Dog: Praise, Patience, Persistence

Important tips: Use this plan anytime you have a houstraining issue

Note for senior dogs: Houstraining is different from incontinence. If you think that there might be an underlying medical condition, contact your veterinarian.

The key to houstraining is getting a history of rewarded trials in the desired area!

What you need:

- Crate only large enough for dog to lie down and be comfortably stretched out - A schedule for going outside
- High-value, special, irresistible treats when you go outside with the dog
- Patience!

Schedule

Provide the dog with a set schedule for eating and for going outside. If you are away for longer than 4 hours, have someone come to the house to take him out. Optimally, there is always someone at home during the houstraining period.

The following typical puppy outing schedule. You can modify this schedule for an adult or senior dog, or simply stick with this schedule.

1. First thing in the morning and whenever the dog wakes from a nap.
2. After each meal.
3. Depending on the dog's age, every 30 to 90 minutes. Take the dog outside to the same spot each time so he begins to associate the area with its purpose. Don't interact with the dog. If nothing happens after five minutes, bring him back into the house and crate him for thirty minutes. Then try again. If he does eliminate, he may have a free period in the kitchen or confinement area, or, better yet, a nice walk. This acts as an added bonus for performing.
4. A very young puppy (6-8 weeks) may need to go out once during the night.

Treats!

Every time the dog eliminates outside, lavish him with enthusiastic praise and a treat. If the praise makes him stop in the middle of eliminating, save it until just after he finishes. Make it a party!

Good Observing Skills

Dogs give signals prior to eliminating. Common behaviors include circling, restlessness and sniffing. Whenever you see these, take the dog out! Have treats and leash ready near the door.

Patience

Don't lose your cool. Most dogs will have accidents, especially in the beginning of training.

If you see him starting to eliminate, urgently say "outside" and then get the dog there as quickly as possible. Stay outside for the 5-minute period and praise and treat if he finishes eliminating. If not, bring him back inside and either supervise or crate him for another try later. Never punish as this may inhibit the puppy from eliminating in your presence.

If the dog has an accident in the house or in the crate and you did not see it happen, it is futile and even detrimental to punish him after the fact. Simply clean up the spot and then apply a commercial odor neutralizer.

The Procedure

1. Decide where your dog's bathroom is going to be.
2. Go there regularly.
3. Go out with the dog so you can cheer and reward at the right moment
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5. Confine to one room: Never give an untrained dog or puppy access to more than a small, easily cleaned area.
6. Supervise whenever he's uncrated, especially if he's "full." If you must take your eyes off him, even for a minute, crate him.
7. Interrupt mistakes. Catch him as he starts to go, not afterwards. After interrupting him, hustle him outside to the bathroom area: praise if he finishes here. Then clean up the indoor mess.
8. Never punish late: If he made the mistake one hour or ten seconds ago, you are too late. It is unfair and abusive to punish late.
9. Catch him in the act of doing it right: Follow the rules so you are the good guy. Treat and praise!

