

## Houstraining - Building Healthy Elimination Habits

Even well-trained dogs may have a couple of accidents due to stress and uncertainty when settling into a new home. Others may not pee or poop at all within the first day. With a good plan, your new dog can quickly learn to use the outdoor bathroom area you establish. However, prevention is key!

### Do's

- Houstraining involves proactively taking your new dog out routinely to prevent accidents in your home. Designate a specific area outside as your dog's potty area.
- Supervise closely when indoors, keeping them in the same room as you. This may involve keeping your dog on a leash, or crated to prevent them from roaming and having an accident.
- Young dogs have weak bladder muscles, puppies especially, and even older dogs who never were houstrained. Most dogs can wait 2 hours between breaks.
- Consistently take them out every 2 hours for the first week, right after they wake up and 15 minutes after a meal or a rigorous play session. A good rule of thumb is if your dog has had no accidents in the home for 12 straight weeks, they are houstrained.
- Create a routine. Leash them and then walk them to the designated bathroom area and wait. Don't chat or play with them until they relieve themselves. As they are eliminating, say "potty" to teach them to go on command. Each week add 15 to 30 minutes between potty breaks.
- Pay attention to body language. Every dog gives different signals when they need to go out. Common ones are: sniffing the ground and circling.
- When your dog pees or poops, praise and give them a treat. Bring treats with you every time you go for a potty break.
- Some older dogs only go to the bathroom on walks. If you're having trouble with houstraining try taking them for a short walk around the neighborhood.
- If your new dog doesn't pee or poop when you take them out, return inside and keep them tethered to you or confined. Wait 10 minutes and try again.
- If you are regularly going to be out for longer than 4 hours, set your dog up in a playpen with puppy pads or newspapers on the floor. You may need to find a dog walker to take your dog out until they learn the rules of your home.

### Don'ts

- Don't reprimand your dog for having accidents. If you see an accident happening, gently interrupt them and take them outside to the designated bathroom area.
- Your dog needs fresh water, accessible at all times. Restricting water won't stop potty accidents.
- Don't leave your new dog unsupervised during potty training.

