

Housetraining

Having a reliably housetrained dog is a very important goal for most owners. Whether you've just gotten a puppy or adopted an older dog that isn't housetrained, the same training principles apply. A dog who was previously housetrained may need a refresher since time spent in a kennel or changes in their schedule can make affect their habits.

Understand their instinct

When you housetrain a dog, you're taking advantage of their built-in instincts to not soil their own den, or where they live. Most homes are larger than a dog's normal sized den, so we must teach them that going in the house is not preferred and instead teach them when and where we would like for them to go.

Be Consistent with Surfaces and Timing

When your dog is learning where they are going to eliminate, they will instinctually remember, and in the future begin to seek out, the material that is under foot when they eliminate. For this reason it is important that you make sure that each time your dog eliminates, they are going on top of the surface that you ultimately want them to eliminate on.

Similarly, housetraining will be much more successful if you stick to a routine. Take your puppy outside at scheduled times throughout the day, including first thing in the morning, after naps, 10 minutes after meals, after playtime, after meeting new people and before bed. That sounds like a lot, but this will help your puppy get used to the appropriate times to go.

Clean up accidents ASAP!

Odors of urine and feces, whether they are their own or another dog's, will attract dogs back to the same spot. For this reason, it is important that all accidents and messes be promptly cleaned thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner.

Reward Successful Trips

Positive reinforcement is the best way to encourage preferred behaviors. Bring extra special treats with you on your walks - ones that your puppy only gets when they eliminate, such as a piece of cheese or lunch meat. Give them the treat immediately after they eliminate - don't wait until they go back inside! It's important that they associate the treat with eliminating, not the action of walking through the door.

It's Up to You

Never scold or punish your dog for having accidents. This will only make your dog afraid to eliminate in front of you, and they will instead eliminate in hidden areas or when you are not around. Make sure your puppy gets the chance to get outside several times each day. The puppy won't remember the routine or the rules unless you stick to them, so set reminders or alarms for yourself if needed.