House-Training Made Easy!

Congratulations on adopting your new family member!

Many dogs have their housetraining routine disrupted by a stay in the shelter and many other dogs have never lived in a home to be house trained. House training issues are very common in many dogs! In fact, it is the number one issues seen with dogs post adoption. Luckily, most dogs are fairly easy house trained as long as their new family is consistent and patient!

By following the guidelines below, your new dog will have an easier time adjusting to your home and schedule and you will be able to have a happy, healthy, long lasting relationship with your new family member!

Make it easy for your new dog to use the toilet area

- Select one toilet area outside for your dog. Not only does this make clean up easier, but it will speed up the house training process.
- Take your dog to the toilet area several times daily (every two to three hours to start or even more frequently for puppies) on a leash. Do so especially after just waking up, five to ten minutes after a meal, after greeting new people, after active play and before bed.
- Take delicious treats with you. After your dog eliminates, praise and reward him. Do not present the treat to your dog before they go potty as this can be really distracting for them! If you have a fenced in yard, a big part of the reward for going potty can be playing outside off leash! Remember, it should always be potty first and then play!
- Do not spend too much time waiting for your dog to eliminate. Five to ten minutes is sufficient. If nothing happens during that time, go back inside and crate or tether your dog for ten minutes or so before trying again. Do NOT let your pup loose during this time, he or she will most likely find a place inside to do their business.
- Have a regular schedule with your dog’s meals to encourage a more predictable pattern. To make it easier for your dog to last through the night, it’s recommended to not feed after seven p.m. (depending on when you go to bed and when you get up!).
- Teach your dog to potty on cue. When you take your dog to the toilet area and the search begins for the right spot, say the cue word “go potty” or whatever you want to use. Reward after the potty and soon the phrase will bring on elimination!
- Remember that all dogs are individuals and everyone house trains at different rates. Supervision, consistency and patience are the key to helping your dog learn the concept as quickly as possible!
Use a comfortable area of confinement when you can’t supervise your dog.

- When you can’t supervise your dog, confine him or her to a safe, comfortable area or tether him in a safe place inside. Your dog will be unlikely to eliminate in his area of confinement due to a natural instinct of not soiling where they eat and sleep. This is one of the reasons crate training coincides so well with house training!

- When your new dog isn’t confined, watch him or her. Tethering your dog to you will help you have a closer eye! If you see your dog begin to eliminate, immediately interrupt them and take them to the appropriate area to finish up. Praise them when they complete their business. Never punish a dog your dog if an accident occurs, instead, remind yourself to watch more closely in the future! Punishing an accident can just lead to your dog having more accidents inside… but usually out of sight of where you are because they are now afraid of you!

And for you!

- Use a good enzyme based cleaner, which neutralizes odor, to clean up any accidents that occur.

- Keep track of accidents that occur so you can know when to predict that your dog may need to eliminate.

If you are having issues with housetraining, please contact our trainer at JGibson@adltexas.org for more tips and information!

*Special thanks to the center for shelter dogs for this resource.