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## House Training

**“Dog owners spend a great deal of time looking down. That is because the production, cleanup and analysis of stools is a very important component of maintaining a healthy dog.”**

**- Connie Vanacore**

A dog is generally house trained in about 2 to 3 weeks, but they may not be completely reliable until they are at least 10 months old. During adolescence (beginning at 5 to 6 months of age) some dogs may temporarily "forget" that they are house trained. Puppies under 4 months of age don't have much bowel or bladder control. A consistent schedule, combined with keeping the pup supervised or confined, are the key elements in successful house training.

Before you begin a house training program, make sure that your puppy is healthy. Bladder infections, and other health problems, can make it difficult for your pup to control his bladder/bowels. Begin by designating a corner of your yard as your dog's toilet area. Accompany your dog to this area (on leash) and wait for him to eliminate. Do not give eye contact, and do not move or follow her around. You cannot simply put your dog out the back door. You will have no way of knowing if your dog eliminates unless you are with her when it happens. Be sure to take your dog out the same door every time until they are fully trained.

Right after your dog eliminates give them lots of praise and a treat. The consistency of being taken to the toilet area on a regular basis teaches your dog where you want them to eliminate.

Your dog should have a regular schedule of eating, drinking, playing and sleeping. They will need to eliminate:

- Right after waking
- About 20 minutes after they finish eating
- After playing
- After petting, grooming, or bathing
- After chewing on a toy for a while

If your dog has an accident in the house, it's **your** fault for not watching closely, or not maintaining a schedule. Do not hit your dog or rub their nose in the accident, neither of these teaches the dog anything. If you catch your dog in the act, the best thing you can do is to scoop them up and then immediately take them outside to their toilet area. You want to get the dog's attention, not scare them to death! If you are too intimidating, your dog may roll over and urinate to show their submission. Never correct submissive urination as this will only makes things worse.

### Tips To Remember:

- Be sure to clean any accident areas thoroughly with a cleaner designed to neutralize pet odors (such as "Simple Solution"). A lingering scent may encourage your dog to eliminate in that spot again.
- Confine the dog when they can't be watched. Don't give free run of the house while you work on other things (such as watching TV, cooking). Confinement can be using a leash to tether the dog to your waist, or placing the



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dog in a doggie pen or crate (in the same room, not isolated somewhere else). Be sure the dog has had an opportunity to eliminate before they are confined.

- Feed your dog on a schedule rather than leaving food out at all times. This makes it easier to predict when your puppy will need to go out (usually, within 30 minutes).
- Take up the water dish after the evening meal to help the dog make it through the night without waking.
- If possible, avoid paper training. Paper training teaches the dog it's okay to eliminate in the house, and makes it take that much longer and more difficult to teach the dog to go "outside."

Once your dog is consistently eliminating outside, you can teach them a word for "potty." This can come in handy when you are in a hurry, or in a strange place and your dog isn't sure if this is a "good" place to go or not. All that you need to do is say your word of choice **while your dog is eliminating**, and then reward when they are done. The dog will associate the word with the process, but it may take a couple of weeks of consistent practice.

### Teaching Your Dog to Ring to Go Out

First off, you need to decide what you want to use. You can buy specially made "doggy doorbells," but all that you really need is a bell (like a cowbell on a rope, or a string of jingle bells) or windchimes hung near your door (not **on** the door).

**Every** time that you go outside, hold a treat behind your bell. Your dog will hit the bell with her nose to get the treat. Say "Good Dog", and out you go. In order for your dog to understand that this bell means "potty" and not "playtime," keep them on leash until they finish (use the same procedure as above for house training; stand in the spot, don't move, and wait for them to finish). Once they are done, you can take off the leash and let them play if you want, or you can bring the dog back inside and play at a different time (don't have her ring the bell when you go out for playtime). If your dog doesn't eliminate within a couple minutes (try using your signal word, if you have taught it), bring them back in, no play time (period).

Eventually, your dog will associate ringing the bell with going outside to eliminate, and will ring it on their own. You don't need to make a big fuss over this, just tell them "good dog" and take them out. If your dog backslides, and starts to ring it every 15 minutes wanting to go out, take them out on leash again until they quit.