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HOUSE-TRAINING & MARKING (ADULT DOGS)

Shouldn't an adult dog know where to go?

Ideally, yes. And dogs are naturally clean animals. Given a choice, they will go to the bathroom well away from where they sleep and eat. But it is not at all obvious to dogs that carpets and floors are inappropriate toilets—or that the bathroom rules in one place apply everywhere else.

Weeks 1-3:

Prevent Accidents.

- **Crate or leash your dog** to you or a piece of furniture next to you for 1-2 hours, between potty-times, and double the time each day, if no accidents occur until you reach the max crate time (4 hours).
 - Keep the crate scrupulously clean
 - Make sure it is ONLY big enough for him to stand up, turn around, and lay down.
 - Take all blankets out until he's house trained (if he's peeing on them or in the crate).
- **If he is peeing in the crate or you're still working on getting him to like it**, then your only option is tethering him near you with a 4-6 foot leash. You can still use the crate for short periods if you'd bet \$500 that he won't go in it and he's comfortable.
- **If he's marking**, there should be no free time inside the house *until after 3 weeks without accidents*. We need to teach him what it means to "hold it," so we can't give him free time until then.

Reward Your Dog for Going Outside.

- Start praising and offer a treat just as he finishes.
- **After he goes**, give your dog lots of exercise! This will help him relax in the house and make sure that he's had a chance to empty himself completely.

No Punishment!

- Between weeks 1-3 your dog doesn't know what to do correctly (not to go in the house), so don't punish or scold for any mistakes.
 - If you do punish your dog during this time, he will stop going in front of you.

Going Outside.

Step 1. *Take your dog outside on leash.* Don't let him slip in an accident while leaving the house! Take him to the same place every time. Wait at least 5 minutes for him to potty in that area.

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Step 2. *When he goes, praise.* Offer him a treat when he is finished. If he doesn't go, crate or tether him for 10-20 minutes ONLY, then try again.

Step 3.

- *If he goes potty, and you are in a dog-safe place, let him off the leash for a little playtime OR go for a walk.*
- *If he's EMPTY and doesn't mark, and you go back inside, he can have 15-30 minutes of playtime with supervision in an area with no carpeting, before going back to being crated or tethered until the next potty time.*

Free Time Inside!

If your dog is not marking inside, you can give him 15 minutes – 30 minutes of free time ONLY IF he's EMPTY.

- EMPTY = he has just gone both poo AND pee
- FULL = He has done neither OR just one

If He Has An Accident.

Set alarms to mark the ends of free time and crate time. If he has an accident, note how much time went by before he did it, and back up to just under the time when he had the accident. Keep a log! *See our crate/free time log.*

- *Clean all soiled areas thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner, such as Nature's Miracle, Zero Odor, or Anti-Icky Poo. Avoid ammonia-based cleaners. Urine also has ammonia, and so that cleaner could attract your dog back to the area.*

Leaving For Longer Than Your Dog Can Hold It.

- Never, ever crate your dog for longer than 4 hours. It is inhumane.
- If you're leaving your dog for longer than he can hold it in the crate, put him in a small area with the crate door open and some water and chews/toys, and puppy pads, turf, or fake grass pad on the other.
- If your dog is marking other parts of the confinement area, other than where the pads are, decrease the size of it with exercise pens or baby gates.
- Consider adding a mid-day dog walker (after 4 hours), if you're crating your dog the whole day. After they're housetrained you can have the walker come later, and phase them out over time.

Tougher Challenges.

For dogs that are both soiling the crate and marking in the long-term confinement area, progress will be much slower. It doesn't mean that it is not possible, but potty training will be a longer process and require more work than the average situation. Just stick to the plan, and you'll make progress!



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- For those dogs, you have three options to minimize inside urination when you must leave them longer than they can hold it:
 - Wear a belly band in the long-term confinement area.
 - If you are comfortable leaving the dog outside and the dog is okay with it and the area is safe and secure with water and appropriate shelter for the weather, you can leave him outside while you are gone.
 - Sacrifice the area (allow him to continue marking in the small confinement area while you are gone), but never allow him to lift his leg in other parts of the house. Take the crate out of the area if he urinates inside of it. Work to keep the confinement area scrupulously clean.

After 3 Weeks with NO Accidents...

Relax Management (Don't get rid of it).

- Work your way up to longer periods of confinement. If your dog has been accident-free for 3 weeks, he has now developed the muscles to hold it for as long as he needs to.
- You can start to keep him in a room without carpeting (with the crate door open) during confinement times. You can open up one additional room each week he has no accidents, until he has full access to the house during those times. Start with the non-carpeted areas first.
 - If you see your dog sniffing and turning in circles, take him out immediately.
 - Take your dog to his potty place first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, shortly after meals, naps, or play sessions, and when he comes out of confinement.
- Remember that accidents mean you must go back to the previous management strategies.

Interrupt Mistakes

- **After three weeks** of no mistakes, if your dog has one, it's okay to interrupt him with some clapping or by saying, "oh no!" and then pick him up or run him outside.
 - Never yell at your dog or rub his nose in an accident or confront your dog after the fact. You will just make him scared to potty in front of you.

Training Tip: Don't think that confinement and crating are too strict on your dog. You are doing her a big favor. Investing a few weeks of effort nets you a lifetime of freedom for your dog—and you don't have to replace your carpet.

Troubleshooting: If a house-trained dog suddenly has accidents, call your veterinarian. Your dog could have a bladder infection or another medical problem.

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