



Housebreaking

1. It is very difficult if not impossible to housebreak a dog with parasites or a urinary tract infection (more common in females). First, make an appointment with your veterinarian for a stool analysis and checkup. You must obtain a clean bill of health before you begin.
2. Maintain a nutritious diet for your dog – Taste of the Wild, Canidae, Innova, etc. If you choose a food that is high in protein and low bulk, your dog will eat less and digest more. As a result, he will produce a smaller volume of stool. Do not give treats to your dog when housebreaking.
3. Fresh water should be given to your dog at all times during the day. You might want to take away his water by 9 o'clock in the evening. Only with severe housebreaking problems, would you limit water to meal times.
4. Establish a feeding, walking and exercise schedule and follow it 7 days a week.
5. Do not paper-train your dog. Paper training gives your dog a mixed message, which usually prolongs the housebreaking process.
6. Hang small sleigh bells or small cowbells next to the door that you take your dog out. Each time you go out, ring the bell yourself and say “Do you want to go out?” In 2 or 3 weeks, most dogs will ring the bells to go out.
7. Look for behaviors that precede urination and defecation - *circling, sniffing; restlessness, pacing or going toward the door your dog normally goes out.* When in doubt, take them out.
8. There are four times when your dog may need to eliminate. **A.** After eating or drinking. **B.** After periods of play or excitement. **C.** After awakening. **D.** After chewing. Be aware of your dog's activities and take him out before he has an opportunity to have an accident. You should take your dog to the same location outside to eliminate. If you discover an accident, *ignore it* and be sure to watch your dog closer next time. Never let your dog see you clean up his mess - this brings undue attention to the area. Do not isolate or punish your dog - this only creates stress for him. You might want to hang a bell around your dog's neck. If he becomes sneaky, this will allow you to know where he is at all times.
9. You must either supervise or confine your dog when housebreaking. When you can't supervise, use a *proper size* dog crate or a small dog proofed area in your home. Dogs are den animals and prefer enclosed areas, which make them feel safe and secure. Confining works because they were taught by their mothers to keep their area clean. Within physical limitation, dogs will do their best not to soil where they sleep. When you take your dog out of the crate, take him outside immediately. When your dog goes to the bathroom, praise him during the act of going - stop all praise before your dog is done. He will then associate your praise with going to the bathroom outside. If you praise your dog for going outside and correct him if you catch him having an accident inside, it will not take long for your dog to understand what is expected of him.
10. Desensitize all areas where there was an accident with 1/2 club soda and 1/2 white vinegar.
11. Start an obedience program with your dog. Obedience will open communication, lower stress and establish owner leadership. You can read a book, watch a video or consult a professional trainer like myself. We start puppies as early as 3 months.

© Kenneth T. Picciuto 2012. All rights reserved.