

# Housetraining Your Dog

Whether you're housetraining a puppy or an adult dog, these simple guidelines will help you get started.

## **Schedule regular potty breaks**

Take your dog outside on leash once an hour. Stay outside until your dog uses the bathroom. This could take 5-10 minutes, so give yourself time. When he goes to the bathroom, praise him and give him a treat.

## **Supervise or confine**

An unattended dog will have accidents and won't understand why it's a problem, so supervise or confine your dog while housetraining. A hands-free leash is a great option for keeping an eye on your dog. When you can't supervise your dog, [crate him in a kennel](#).

Young puppies can only be crated for short periods of time. Use your puppy's age in months plus one to determine the number of hours he can be crated. If your puppy must be left alone for longer than he can hold it, create a dog-safe environment like a small bathroom, kitchen, gated-off area of a room or an ex-pen (a small, freestanding pen) containing the dog's crate (with door removed), water, toys, and potty area. The potty area can consist of newspaper, pee pads or even a square of sod in a cat litter box.

Note that even though his messes will be contained to one area, he's still being allowed to use the bathroom inside, so teaching him to use the bathroom outside may take longer.

Slowly give your dog more freedom as they become more reliable. Don't go too fast. Each time you expand their freedom, take extra care to watch them and give them extra opportunities to go outside.

## **Interrupt, don't punish**

Punishing mistakes (including yelling "No!") will only teach him to use the bathroom inside when you're not present. He won't know that it's wrong to eliminate inside, only that it's dangerous.

If you catch your dog having an accident inside, interrupt him and take him outside right away. You can gently clap your hands and say "Outside!" The goal is to distract him from using the bathroom without scaring him.

If you find the mess after the fact, simply clean it up and make a point to confine him when unattended.

## **Reward appropriate behavior**

When you take them out to go potty, always bring treats. Keep them on leash so they're close to you when they go — that way you can instantly reward them with praise and a treat. As they're going potty you can verbally praise them, and give them the treat immediately afterward.

Timing is everything! You want them to know it's the eliminating that is being rewarded. If you wait until they get back inside, they'll think they're being rewarded for coming into the house.

## **Cleaning up a mess**

Clean up any messes using an enzyme-based cleaner like Nature's Miracle so your dog can't smell it anymore.