



11.18.2018

Potty-Training a Dog

General Information

Potty training requires time, patience, management, and commitment. House soiling appears consistently in studies as one of the main reasons for pet owners to relinquish pets. It is important to note that house soiling can have several causes and can be addressed in a few ways.

Causes

Some causes of elimination problems for dogs are: lack of training, poor communication of bathroom needs, medical problems, fear or excitement urination, urine marking, separation anxiety, and phobias. The great news is that typically all elimination problems are managed and resolved with the same techniques for managing and teaching proper potty training.

Addressing the Problem

Following the procedures below should help you minimize house soiling. The more consistent you are, the faster the dog will learn acceptable bathroom manners. It often takes 2 to 3 weeks to house-train a new adoptee or a new puppy. A dog can be considered reliably house-trained when there have been no accidents for at least 3 or more months. If you are having issues with accidents or improper elimination, you may need to consult your veterinarian; having accidents and improper elimination may be due to an underlying medical issue. Once medical issues have been ruled out it is important to establish a routine!

Feed and walk your dog on a schedule. Dogs do best when taken to the proper elimination area on a consistent and frequent schedule. Offer elimination opportunities outdoors when a dog wakes up from a nap, after playing, and after eating. Dogs often need to eliminate within thirty minutes of eating. Be sure to allow an opportunity to eliminate in that time span.

Teach your dog where to eliminate. Choose a location or surface, such as grass, that is easy to access. During potty training, always take your dog on a leash to the potty area. Use a walk or playtime as a reward directly after eliminating in the proper spot. Always heavily praise your dog for proper bathroom manners, such as communicating the need to go outside and eliminating in the proper area. When teaching where to eliminate, try using "cue" words such as "Potty" or "Go Potty" so your dog associates a word with a behavior.

Teach your dog to signal bathroom needs. Watch for signs like sniffing the ground or looking around. Many dogs are taught to whine, bark, scratch, or jingle a bell with his nose at a door to signal the need to go outdoors for elimination. It is important to teach your dog to cue or signal right before walking to the elimination area. Always reward the dog for proper elimination.

Stick to a schedule for potty breaks to decrease the chance for accidents. During potty training, supervise your dog when he is not confined or crated. It is important to note that your dog should never be punished for having an accident in the house. If you catch your dog or puppy in the act, rush them outside to their proper spot to finish eliminating. Be patient and stick to a consistent and frequent schedule to set your dog up for success!