



Potty Training Instructions

Establish a Consistent Feeding Schedule

Feed your dog once in the morning and once at night at consistent times each day (unless you have been instructed otherwise by your veterinarian). Give your dog only 5 minutes to eat per feeding. If there's food left in the bowl, remove it and wait until the next feeding. This helps your dog develop a regular potty schedule. Remember, you're not starving your dog—this is a normal feeding routine. Dogs have a digestive system that prompts them to eliminate shortly after eating. By limiting mealtime, you're preventing multiple potty breaks throughout the day. Stick to the recommended portion for your dog's age and weight, as higher-quality foods with real meats often require smaller portions, leading to fewer bathroom breaks.

Establish a Regular Potty Schedule

Rather than waiting for your dog to signal their need to go, it's best to establish a potty schedule. Take your dog outside and carry high-value treats with you. Immediately reward your dog with a treat as soon as they go potty outside, whether it's mid-pee or mid-poop. This helps them associate going potty outside with a positive outcome. Don't wait to give the treat indoors; otherwise, your dog might associate treats with coming inside, not going potty outside. You have a short window of 2-4 seconds after they eliminate to give the treat for them to make the connection.

Ensure Sufficient Potty Opportunities

Adult dogs should have a minimum of 5 potty opportunities per day. These should include:

1. Before breakfast.
2. After breakfast, within a reasonable time frame (1-5 minutes).
3. When they wake up from a late morning/afternoon nap.
4. Before dinner.
5. After dinner. (6) One more before bedtime is usually a good idea.



By providing regular potty breaks, you're giving your dog ample opportunities to eliminate outside and reinforcing the desired behavior.

Guidelines for Puppies

Puppies have smaller bladders and may require more frequent potty breaks. A general rule of thumb is that the number of months old a puppy is, approximately corresponds to the number of hours they can be expected to hold their bladder.

For example:

- A 2-month-old puppy can typically hold it for around 2 hours.
- A 3-month-old puppy can hold it for approximately 3 hours, and so on.

Keep in mind that these are rough estimates and individual puppies may have varying capacities. Be observant of your puppy's signals and adjust the frequency of potty breaks accordingly. Gradually increase the time between potty breaks as your puppy matures and gains better bladder control.

Additionally, it's important to be mindful of key opportunities when your dog is likely to need to go to the bathroom. Here are some examples to keep in mind:

- **After Naps:** When your dog wakes up from a nap, they may need to relieve themselves. Pay attention to their behavior and be prepared to take them outside.
- **After Meals and Drinking:** After your dog has eaten a meal or had a drink of water, it's common for them to need to go potty. Allow some time for digestion, and then take them out to their designated potty area.
- **During Playtime:** Intense play sessions can stimulate your dog's need to eliminate. Take regular breaks during playtime to give your dog an opportunity to go outside and take care of their business.



- **Environmental Changes:** Certain events, such as a knock at the door, a delivery, or the return of a loved one, can trigger your dog's need to go to the bathroom. Pay attention to their behavior during these times and provide them with an opportunity to relieve themselves.
- **Sniffing the Floor:** If you notice your dog sniffing the floor or circling in a particular area, it may be a sign that they need to go potty. Take them outside promptly when you observe these behaviors.
- **Drifting Off Out of Sight:** If your dog starts to wander off or hide from view, they may be seeking a spot to eliminate. Keep an eye on them and redirect them to the appropriate potty area if necessary.
- **Drawn to Absorbent Surfaces:** Dogs are naturally drawn to absorbent surfaces like carpets or rugs when they need to go potty. If you notice your dog showing interest in these areas, it's essential to intervene and take them outside.
- **After Training Exercises:** Training sessions can be mentally and physically stimulating for your dog. After a training session, take them outside to see if they need to relieve themselves.

By being aware of these key opportunities, you can proactively meet your dog's needs and reinforce appropriate bathroom habits. Remember to reward them with praise and treats when they successfully eliminate outside.

Implement Crate Training (or confined baby gated area) if Necessary

If your dog is not going to the bathroom outside despite being taken out, it's time to introduce crate training (or confining them to a baby gated area).

After spending several minutes outside without results, bring your dog back inside and give them no more than a 2-minute break in the crate.

Remember, the crate is not a punishment. Use treats and positive reinforcement to encourage your dog to enter the crate—never force them.



You can create a trail of treats leading to the crate if needed. Practice this a few times before putting it into action. There are detailed exercises and follow-along tutorials in our Encyclopawdia.

The purpose of the crate (or confined baby gated area) is to prevent your dog from sneaking off and eliminating in your house, as dogs generally dislike soiling their crates.

During the 2-minute crate break, withhold attention from your dog to communicate that they didn't do what you expected outside. Avoid eye contact or talking to them. It's crucial not to exceed the 2-minute time limit.

Once the two minutes are up, put the leash back on and take your dog outside again (don't forget the treats!). You may need to repeat this process 1 or 2 times if your dog still doesn't go potty outside. Consistency will set them up for success. When implemented correctly, this exercise will be temporary.

Use an Enzymatic Pet Cleaner

Have an enzymatic pet cleaner (such as Simple Solution, Nature's Miracle, Bissel, etc.) on hand in case accidents happen.

Enzymatic cleaners break down the pheromones in urine and feces, preventing your dog from revisiting the same areas. Household cleaners may remove the odor and stain for you, but not for your dog.

If your dog has an accident, remember that it's your responsibility, not theirs. Avoid yelling, punishing, or rubbing their nose in it. Simply ignore the accident and clean it with the enzymatic cleaner. Yelling or scolding your dog teaches them that going potty inside gets them attention. Even if your intention is to provide negative attention, your dog only sees your eye contact and hears your voice, which can be rewarding to them.



If you catch your dog in the act of peeing or pooping inside, make a quick and sharp noise like clapping your hands or saying "EH!" to get their attention and interrupt the process. Then, promptly take them outside to finish their business (don't forget the treats!). Don't worry about the mess; it will be there when you return, and the enzymatic cleaner will eliminate the smell and stain.

If you're unsure where previous accidents occurred, a black light can help you identify areas where pheromones remain. Wait until nighttime, turn off all the lights in your house, and use a handheld black light (available at most pet supply stores) to find glowing spots. Spray these areas with the enzymatic cleaner to remove any lingering pheromones.

Remember, it's essential not to make a big deal out of catching your dog. If you yell, run, cry, or overwhelm them, they may become hesitant to go potty in front of you outside, making it challenging for them to feel comfortable eliminating in your presence.

It's important to note that if your dog is excessively eliminating or showing unusual changes in their bathroom habits, it's advisable to consult your veterinarian.

Excessive urination or defecation can be potential signs of underlying health concerns, such as urinary tract infections, gastrointestinal issues, or other medical conditions. Your veterinarian will be able to evaluate your dog's health, conduct any necessary tests, and provide appropriate guidance and treatment if needed.

Monitoring your dog's bathroom habits and seeking veterinary attention if you notice any significant changes is crucial for their overall health and well-being. Don't hesitate to reach out to your veterinarian if you have any concerns about your dog's elimination patterns.