



House Training & Marking

Any time you have a dog that is having accidents in the home, especially an adult dog, it's important to rule out any medical concerns such as a urinary tract infection, urinary incontinence, constipation, etc. Once you have ruled that out, it's important to try to determine the cause: Are they lifting their leg and marking? Are they afraid to go in the backyard because they're spooked by the wind and noises? Are they distracted by all the fun smells outside and forget to go? Were they never fully house trained to begin with? Were they always outdoor dogs until they were re-homed? Did they come from a hoarding case or a puppy mill? Are you not taking them out frequently enough? All of these things can make house training more difficult, but with consistency, patience, and supervision, all dogs can be house trained.

House Training Tips for Both Adults & Puppies:

Any time you have a male or female adult dog having accidents in the home you want to approach the problem as though you are re-house training your dog as if your dog were a puppy. Typically smaller dogs have smaller bladders and can't hold them for as long as bigger dogs. The same goes for younger dogs; younger dogs do not have full bladder control until about 6 months or older. Also take note regarding whether your dog is just defecating or just urinating in the house. When house training a dog or puppy, it's ideal if you have a job or schedule where you or another family member can come home over lunch to let your dog out because the more frequently you can get your dog out, the easier house training will be.

- **Total supervision** is the key to good house training. During the day, one way you can keep tabs on your dog so you know she is not running off and having an accident in another room is to keep her baby gated in the same room as you or keep her on a leash and tie it to your belt. Also keep the doors shut to extra rooms like bedrooms and bathrooms.
- **Crate training** can help you with house training a lot. You will want a crate that is large enough that your dog can stand up and turn around comfortably in but not so large that your dog can go to the bathroom at one end and then sleep on the other end. You want to start crate training your dog gradually and try to make it as pleasant an experience as possible. Crate training comes in handy when you are not completely supervising her or when you are not home. You can also use the crate at night, preferably in your bedroom where your dog can see you so that they don't bark or whine and know that everyone else is also sleeping. Please see our handout on crate training.
- If your dog is a male and is hiking his leg to mark on corners of a room or seems to be **marking** items in the house to claim them, such as toys or clothing that may be lying out that smells like you, then your dog is a marker. The instant your dog goes to lift his leg on something in the house, say "eh-eh" to interrupt the behavior, then say "outside," and take him right out. Reward him with a treat if he goes to the bathroom outside. You may want to consider trying belly bands. A belly band is like a male diaper for your dog and can help discourage your dog from marking in the house because they will dislike the feeling of peeing in a diaper. You should only have to use a belly band for a couple of weeks to start seeing a decrease in the amount of marking in your home. You will

also need to change the diaper pad frequently so that the urine does not cause any scalding or skin irritation. Female dogs can mark too, but it's much less common.

- Keep an **accident log** so you know about what times your dog needs to go outside and where your dog is having accidents.
- Feed your dog in **set meals** per day instead of letting her graze so you can get your dog's bowel movements and bladder on a more routine schedule.
- During the day, **set a timer** on your stove to go off every hour for the first few days until your dog is not having accidents in the house; then go to every two hours, and then every three hours, and so on. Your dog will always need to go out first thing in the morning and right before everyone goes to bed. You should also let your dog out right before leaving the house for an hour or longer and right after you get home.
- Always **take treats outside** with you when you take your dog outside to go potty and give her one the second she finishes going. Also verbally praise your dog a lot while she is going potty and afterwards.
- **Never scold** your dog or rub her face in her mess if you find an accident inside. Since it probably happened a few minutes to a few hours ago, your dog will not be able to connect the event of going potty inside with delay of you scolding her after the fact, so the punishment will not help house train your dog and will simply teach your dog to fear you more. If you do catch your dog in the middle of having an accident inside, make sure you interrupt your dog by picking her up, say "outside," and carry her outside to finish going.
- Also if your dog has an accident make sure you use an **enzymatic cleaner** that breaks down the smell and protein of the accident so that your dog will not be encouraged to have an accident in the same location again. We sell Nature's Miracle at Wayside's retail store.
- Consider buying potty **bells** and hang them by the door to go outside so that you can teach them to alert you when they need to go outside by ringing the bells.

If, after trying these suggestions, you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your dog, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: www.waysidewaifs.org.

Written by the Wayside Waifs Animal Behavior Team
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Here is some additional information on marking, house training, and crate training:

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/house-training-your-adult-dog>

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-house-trained-dog-ask-go-out>

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/urine-marking-dogs>

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/weekend-crate-training>