



House Training, Marking, and Submissive Urination

House Training

Whether you have a puppy or have recently added an adult dog to your home, it is important to understand that they will not automatically understand the routine of your house or know where the door is. **It is not instinctual to relieve themselves outside. It is just instinctual to not relieve themselves where they sleep.** You must be patient and realize there will be mistakes. It is up to you to train your dog and grow your relationship with positive experiences.

The Basics:

- Decide on a special treat that your dog **ONLY** gets after eliminating outside. Keep these treats handy and reward your dog **EVERY** time they eliminate outside.
- When your dog is not being **CLOSELY** supervised, they should be in their crate, or at the very least, in a gated off small space. If they have the ability to roam around they will find a spot to call their potty spot. If you notice a mess after it has happened, you are not supervising closely enough.
- Always feed on a schedule, rather than leaving food out all the time. Eating all day = pooping all day. Remove any uneaten food after 20 minutes, and take your dog outside immediately.
- Keeping your dog on leash, even in a fenced in yard can be helpful to encourage them to eliminate first and then play. Some dogs will become so distracted if allowed to explore, they will not eliminate and then come back inside and have an accident. Taking them to the same spot each time will also help establish good potty habits.
- Watch your dog's body language. Look for sniffing, squatting, circling, or possibly whining. Take your dog out immediately.
- Take your dog out at regular intervals based on age, and always after they have eaten. Young puppies and senior dogs will need to go out more often.
- When your dog is having consistent accident-free days, you may slowly start giving them more freedom in the home when you are home.

Troubleshooting:

- If your dog suddenly begins having accidents after being trained or if you have made every attempt to train and are unsuccessful, it is time to call your veterinarian to rule out any medical concerns.
- Clean up messes thoroughly. Pet urine is difficult to remove completely and standard household cleaners will not cut it. You need an enzymatic cleaner such as Nature's Miracle or Simple Solution to effectively remove the odor. Dogs are inclined to return to any spot they can still detect and "refresh" the spot.

- If you are crate training and your dog is having accidents in the crate, make sure that the size of the crate is not too large for the dog allowing them to potty on one side and sleep on the other side. Ensure that you are not expecting your dog to spend unrealistic amounts of time in their crate based on their age and house-training progress. It may be necessary to arrange for someone to let your dog out until they adjust to your schedule. If your dog is consistently having accidents in their crate, it is time to call your veterinarian to rule out a medical condition.

Never rub a dog's nose in an accident. Not only does this compromise your relationship with your dog, it will also encourage your dog to get better at hiding their accident.

Marking

Marking is not relieving. It is leaving SMALL amounts of urine on items, and many times in several places. Dogs can mark for several reasons, but the two most common are to leave their scent on territory or items, and anxiety.

The Basics:

- Spay or neuter your dog as soon as possible. Spaying or neutering should reduce urine marking and may stop it altogether as the hormone levels decrease.
- Dogs can be more likely to mark a new item, especially if it has come from a place where there was another dog. Be mindful to place new items out of reach for your dog. If returning from visiting another dog household ensure any removed items of clothing are not within marking distance.
- If your dog is overly sensitive to other animals, it may be necessary to block the view out the windows and doors where they can view animals outside.
- If you are adding a new dog to a household with other pets, read our handouts on successful introductions with resident cats/dogs. It is normal for the new and resident pets to have a transition period which could include marking behaviors.
- If your dog is marking and you are not able to closely supervise your dog, they should be in a dog safe area or crate. If you notice signs that your dog may be getting ready to mark, interrupt them with an excited “let’s go!” and get them outside.
- Clean up messes thoroughly. Pet urine is difficult to remove completely and standard household cleaners will not cut it. You need an enzymatic cleaner such as Nature’s Miracle or Simple Solution to effectively remove the odor.

With some consistency and environment changes, marking behaviors usually subside as a new dog adjusts to the environment. If you have tried the above suggestions and your dog is still marking frequently, it is time to call your veterinarian to rule out a medical issue.

Submissive Urination

Submissive or excitable urination is common in very young puppies as they gain control of their bladders, and normally does not require any intervention beyond normal socialization and positive training experiences. If you have an adult dog who is urinating when being touched, approached, scolded, or exposed to loud noises you are likely experiencing submissive urination.

The Basics:

- By building their confidence in general you should be able to greatly decrease any submissive urination. ALWAYS use positive reinforcement training methods. Ignore unwanted behaviors and reward wanted behaviors. Teaching basic commands is a great tool to build your dog's confidence. Puzzle type toys also build a dog's problem-solving skills and boost their confidence.
- Keep your dog's routine as calm and predictable as possible while they adjust. Avoid surprises.
- Keep greetings low-key. Calm, steady tones and gentle pets will encourage your dog to mimic this type of greeting.
- Gradually expose them to new people, situations and sounds and ensure that these are positive, happy experiences. Avoids large crowds and lots of handling. Children should be closely supervised with a submissive dog.
- Always reward confident postures in new situations. Sitting or standing with head held high instead of rolling over, lying flat or head down.
- For more fearful dogs avoid leaning over them, looking them directly in the eye, or petting them on the top of the head. Instead, opt for getting at their level, moving slowly and pet them under the chin. NEVER force interaction if a dog moves away.

Above all, be patient. As your dog gains confidence, and builds trust in you and his environment, the submissive urination should resolve.

If your dog has gained confidence and you are still experiencing submissive urination, it is time to call your veterinarian to rule out a medical condition.

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.

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