

Dog: House-Training Your Adult Dog



Even the smartest, best-trained dog can have accidents, especially when getting used to a new home. It is important to give your dog the benefit of the doubt and treat your new dog like a puppy for the first weeks, at least where house-training is concerned. The key to success is to use a dog-proofed area and/or a crate. For more information see *Crate Training Your Dog*.

House-Training Schedule

Take your dog out:

- Very first thing in the morning
- After he eats
- After play
- After he wakes up after a longer nap
- Every two to three hours
- Right before bed time

Four Golden Rules for House-Training

1. Until your dog is perfectly house-trained, don't leave him alone unless he's in a dog-proofed area or crate. Supervise your dog at all times in the house.
2. Take your dog out on leash often. Start by walking him at two-hour intervals.
3. If you see your dog sniffing and circling in the house, take him out immediately.
4. Praise and reward with a treat when he goes outdoors.

Keep in mind that your dog's size affects how long he can hold it. The smaller the dog, the less time you can expect him to go without a bathroom break.

If Your Dog Has an Accident

If you catch your dog making a mistake. Interrupt him without being too harsh ("Ah! Ah! Let's go outside!"), then hustle him outside to finish. If he finishes there, praise and reward him. The important thing is to interrupt, not punish. Punishing your dog for accidents can make him afraid to go in front of you, so he hides his mistakes by going behind couches or beds or in closets. He would also become less likely to go in front of you outside, making it impossible to praise him and to make him understand what you want him to do.

If your dog makes a mistake while you are not there. Don't scold or punish him. He won't make the connection with his accident—smacking him or rubbing his face in his own mess will just make him afraid of you. Only if you catch him in the act should you respond, otherwise you are too late.

Tip: Clean all accidents thoroughly with an enzymatic cleanser (e.g. Nature's Miracle®, Anti-Lcky-Poo®, Petastic®).

Going Forward

After two or three weeks with no accidents, give your dog access to one extra room of the house and supervise closely. If your dog is still accident-free, add another room every two or three weeks. If you are having trouble, call us (415.552.3500) or visit www.sfspca.org for our dog trainer referral list.