



# House Training

Being a guardian to a fearful dog requires extra patience in all respects, and house training is no exception. House training a dog requires rewarding the dog generously with high value treats when he/she poops or pees outside. The dog needs to be comfortable enough with his/her new guardian, house and yard to take treats in the first place, and house training can then start.

Therefore, you can certainly expect accidents indoors with all dogs, and this will be for a longer time with fearful dogs. Manage the dog accordingly by keeping them confined to an area where clean-ups will be easier: on a sealed floor instead of carpet, with potty pads. More on this below. When there are accidents: calmly get the dog outside. Clean up the accident with an enzymatic cleaner specialized for pet odors (Nature's Miracle is one effective brand, but there are others out there). Never scold or punish a dog for accidents inside. Especially with fearful dogs, this can lead to much more difficult problems.

## A) Management

- Confinement - crate if dog is comfortable in it (see next bullet point). If not, use an exercise pen. You can also use potty pads; belly bands are not intended for house training management, but they can be used in a pinch; they are not a permanent solution and must be changed frequently to avoid rashes and burns. You can also keep him/her close to you with ex pens or tether, if the dog is comfortable with it, so that you can closely observe him/her.
- If the dog is comfortable in a crate, keep him/her in it whenever you're away or can't actively supervise, i.e. when you're busy around the house, sleeping etc. This will make him/her hold on so that you can have success outside later. If you find the dog is soiling his/her crate, the crate is probably too large: the dog can use one end as a bed and the other as toilet.

## B) Schedule

Provide the dog with a set schedule for eating and for going outside. If you are away for longer than 4 hours, have someone come to the house to take him/her out. Optimally, there is always someone at home during the houstraining period. A typical dog outing schedule looks like this:

- First thing in the morning and whenever the dog wakes from a nap.
- After each meal. This is often when dogs will have a bowel movement. You will discover your own dog's rhythm.
- Depending on the dog's age, every 30 to 90 minutes. Take the dog outside to the same spot each time so he begins to associate the area with its purpose. Don't interact with the dog. If nothing happens after 5-10 minutes, bring him/her back into the house and confine him/her for thirty minutes, then try again.
- A very young puppy (8 weeks) may need to go out once during the night.

## C) Rewards

Go outside with the dog every time. Every time the dog eliminates outside as soon as he is finished (on the spot - do not wait to go back inside., lavish him with praise and a very special, high-value treat. You may need to experiment to see what kind of food your dog responds best to: try cooked chicken or beef, cheese etc., Remember that for some fearful dogs, enthusiastic praise can be scary, so use a soft, soothing tone of voice with them.



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## **D) Good Observing Skills**

Many dogs give signals prior to eliminating. It's essential that you learn what these are so you can prevent mistakes. Common behaviors include circling, restlessness and sniffing. Whenever you see these, take the dog out! Have treats ready near the door.

## **E) Patience**

Don't lose your cool. Most dogs will have accidents, especially in the beginning of training. Supervise closely so you can take him/her out if you see him showing signs of having to go. If you see him/her starting to eliminate, say "outside" and then get the dog there as quickly as possible. Remember that abrupt motion can scare fearful dogs, so you won't be able to move very quickly with them (another way in which extra patience is needed in house training them). Stay outside for the 5-10 minute period and praise and treat if he finishes eliminating. If not, bring him/her back inside and either supervise or crate him for another try later. Never punish for indoor accidents, as this may inhibit the dog from eliminating in your presence. If the dog has an accident in the house or in the crate, it is futile and detrimental to punish him after the fact. Simply clean up the spot and then apply the enzymatic odor neutralizer. Resolve to supervise more closely in future and/or add another outing to your schedule..