



Canine Elimination Training - The Basics

Lack of proper housetraining, and subsequent housesoiling, is a common cause for dogs to be surrendered, and eventually euthanized. The procedure is quite simple, once you have the knowledge on how to do it correctly. Acceptance of confinement is an excellent gift to give any dog, and is especially useful during elimination training. Review how to kennel train or use a tether as part of elimination training.

Steps to Canine Elimination Training

1. Confirm good health with a physical exam by a veterinarian, and lab tests if needed.
2. Give a high quality "Premium" food on a fixed schedule. Controlled in = controlled out.
3. Give 3 meals per day until 3 months of age, then 2/day. Pick up *food and water* two hours before your bedtime until trained. Give the puppy an opportunity to eliminate as the last thing before bedtime.
4. **Use confinement and supervision to prevent indoor elimination.** Use a crate, 4 ft. tether or "umbilical cording" (leash the dog to you while indoors when not crated or tied).
5. Know when the previous elimination occurred. Anticipate elimination shortly after waking, play, excitement, sniffing, and meals. In general puppies can hold their urine when awake approximately 1 hour more than their age in months; e.g., a 3-month pup can hold urine 4 hours, a 5-month pup can hold urine 6 hours, etc. Pups over 12 weeks can hold it all night during sleep.
6. Define, for all family, a proper "Doggy Toilet Area" on your property. Usually 8 X 8 feet.
7. Take the puppy outside hourly the first day when you're home, then increase the interval based on your experience with this dog, and how often s/he actually eliminates.
8. Go out *with* your dog to backyard toilet area. Use a leash at first to keep him in the toilet area.
9. Stand with the dog on a leash, don't stare and wait up to 2 minutes. OK to walk a little to get things moving. Say, "*Get busy!*" when actually in the act of elimination. Praise and treat *afterward*.
10. After successful elimination, allow freedom for gradually-increasing periods of time. The dog should begin to think the way to get freedom and treats is to deposit *there*.
11. Take plastic bags to parks, and on walks. Give the "*Get busy!*" instruction when any elimination posture begins. Be responsible for fecal clean-up.
12. Don't physically punish accidents, since you will want the dog to eliminate in your presence in the future. Verbal interruption saying, "At!" is OK. Accidents mean increased confinement and that the owner needs to pay more attention to this process.
13. Use an odor neutralizer product on accidents (available at any pet store).
14. Give a BIG reward for proper elimination; Food treat; praise; petting; play session; walk.

If you must leave the dog along for longer periods, use a small room, or partition off an area no more than 8 feet square. Move the kennel and bed, chewtoy and water on one end, and put thicknesses of newspaper or a "Pee Pad" on the floor on the far other end. Don't praise the dog for using the paper unless you intend to "paper train" long term. Just take the dog out to the toilet area before any greeting.

Some say if the pet sees you paying attention to their waste, they may want to do it for you again. Do let your dog see you cleaning up the defined toilet area, since this increases the likelihood of eliminating there. Some dogs just take longer than others, since they are all individuals. If not fully housetrained within 30 days, seek a behavioral consultation.