

Troubleshooting House Soiling



Having some issues with your dog learning how to potty in the right place and at the right time? No frets! Sometimes there are fairly easy and simple fixes that can really improve his or her success at learning house training skills. However, all the tips and tricks cannot help your dog if they are dealing with an underlying medical issue that makes urinating/defecating extra difficult. **Please make sure to seek the advice of a veterinarian first and foremost**, if you are having issues with your dog and house soiling!

- **Consistent Routine** – When house training a dog, routine is one of the most important contributors to success. Try to take out your dog every 2-4 hours. Some dogs will need more bathroom breaks, especially if this is their first time learning house training. Some dogs will need more potty breaks than others, just like some people go to the bathroom more than other people. Try to stick with the same potty routine every day, even on workdays versus non-workdays. It's always a good idea to have a potty break scheduled early in the morning, as well as right before bedtime. While your dog is learning house training, it's best not to free feed. Monitor times when feeding and drinking occurs to estimate when potty breaks need to occur.
- **Positive Reinforcement** – There have been many popular, but harmful techniques used to house train your new dog. Please do not ever punish your dog for going inside of the house by yelling, slapping, rubbing their face in the elimination, or putting them in 'time out' in their crate. Dogs rarely ever associate the action they did previously with punishment that is occurring in the present. Also, anxiety may be a contributing factor to house soiling, which may worsen if you add in yelling and punishing. Instead, redirect your dog outside, and reward your dog for good behaviors. Wait until your pup has eliminated his/her full bladder before rewarding with treats or praise. Though play time is important for your pup, ensure that potty breaks are utilizing for urinating/defecating before engaging in play!
- **Review Containment Strategies** – If your dog is consistently having issues, you may want to think about ways to contain your dog (for short periods of time) in places that they are less likely to house soil or that house soiling will be easier to catch/clean. For example, if your dog is less likely to house soil in his or her crate, then crating your dog briefly when you are not physically in the same room may help. Note that using crating to help house train is a temporary measure and not to be viewed as a permanent technique. Crating when you physically cannot watch the dog and putting them quickly outside when first out of the crate can help with building a routine. You can also contain your dog in a Pack 'n Play or in an area of the house that is a little easier to clean if your dog has crate anxiety. For example,

keeping a dog in an area of the house with baby gates and non-carpet flooring (like a bathroom or kitchen) may be less frustrating while the dog continues to learn house training. For more information on crate training, follow this [link](#).

- **Contact a Dog Trainer** – If you feel yourself get overwhelmed or feel that you still are in a spot of confusion for moving forward, you can gain more support with the help of a professional dog trainer. For more information on how to find a trustworthy trainer, follow this [link](#).
- **Get a Second Opinion** – If you are working with a dog trainer and house soiling is still an issue, then it may be appropriate to reach out and get a second opinion from a veterinarian. Sometimes underlying issues can be tricky, and just with human doctors- it is sometimes best to get a second opinion from another veterinarian as well.