

Shouldn't an adult dog know where to go?

Ideally, yes. And dogs are naturally clean animals. Given a choice, they will go to the bathroom well away from where they sleep and eat. But it is not at all obvious to dogs that carpets and floors are inappropriate toilets—or that the bathroom rules in one place apply everywhere else.

Teach your new family member to distinguish between indoors and outdoors by getting her to go in a designated area and then rewarding her with treats and praise. With a little patience and supervision, your dog will soon be fully versed in toilet etiquette.

The 2 rules for house-training success.

Prevent Accidents. Supervise your dog in the house. Use a crate when you are not sure if your dog is empty.

Reward your dog for going outside. Praise at the right moment, i.e. the second she starts 'going.' Reward with a treat after she is finished.

How to house-train.

Step 1. Take your dog outside on leash. Take her to the same place every time.

Step 2. When she goes, praise. Offer her a treat when she is finished.

Step 3. If you are in a dog-safe place, let her off the leash for a little playtime.

If she doesn't go within 5 minutes, skip playtime and put her in her crate for 10-20 minutes, then try again. (This is to avoid an accident, not to punish.)

A house-training checklist.

- Take your dog to her potty place first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, shortly after meals, naps, or play sessions, when she comes out of her crate and, in the case of a puppy, every hour or so.
- Until your dog is perfectly house-trained, always go outside with her so you can cheer and reward at the right moment.
- Supervise whenever your dog is not crated, especially if she is full. If you must take your eyes off her, even for a minute, crate her or put her in her confinement area.
- If you see your dog sniffing and turning in circles in the house, take her out immediately.

How to handle house-training mistakes.

Interrupt mistakes as they are happening. Don't be too harsh or your dog will be afraid to go in front of you. After interrupting your dog, hustle her outside to the potty area. Praise if she finishes here. Clean up the indoor mess with an enzymatic cleaner to remove protein residue that might attract her to the same place again.

Never punish. If your dog made the mistake one hour or five seconds ago, you are too late. Don't rub her nose in her own mess or smack her, this will simply make her afraid of you, and she won't understand why you do it. You must catch her in the act for the interruption to work, and again, you can't do it too harshly or your dog will be afraid to go in front of you.

When do I give my dog free run of the house?

At first, confine her to one room at a time. Choose a tiled room, like the kitchen or the bathroom, so accidents can be easily cleaned. Add a room each week your dog is successful (accident-free), and supervise each time you introduce her to a new room. (accident-free), and supervise each time you introduce him to a new room.

Training Tip: Don't think that confinement and crating is too strict on your dog. You are doing her a big favor. Investing a few short weeks of effort nets you a lifetime of freedom for your dog—and you don't have to replace your carpet.

Troubleshooting: If a house-trained dog suddenly has accidents, call your veterinarian. Your dog could have a bladder infection or another medical problem.