



SACRAMENTO
SPCA

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*The Sacramento Society
for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Animals*

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Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog

[Dog Behavior and Training](#) >> Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog

Many adult dogs adopted from animal shelters were housetrained in their previous homes. While at the shelter, however, they may not have gotten enough opportunities to eliminate outside, and consequently, they may have soiled their kennel areas. This tends to weaken their housetraining habits. Additionally, scents and odors from other pets in the new home may stimulate some initial urine marking. Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. Even if he was housetrained in his previous home, if you don't recognize his "bathroom" signal, you might miss his request to go out, causing him to eliminate indoors.

Therefore, for the first few weeks after you bring him home, you should assume your new dog isn't housetrained and start from scratch. If he was housetrained in his previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind him where he's supposed to eliminate.

Establish A Routine

- Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning when he wakes up, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed.
- Praise your dog lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he's finished and not wait until after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know that's what you want him to do.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your dog, on leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he's eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, leave the soiled rags or paper towels in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your dog recognize the area as the place where he's supposed to eliminate.
- While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty," for example, that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he's supposed to be doing.
- Feeding your dog on a set schedule, once or twice a day, will help make his elimination more regular.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. He



More on Training Your Dog

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should be watched at all times when he's indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

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