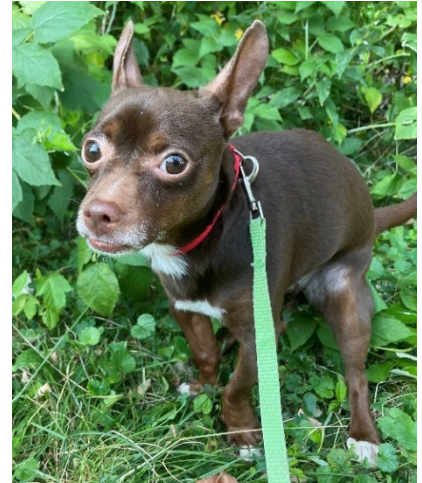


# Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog

Many adult dogs adopted from animal shelters are housetrained. However, while at the shelter, they may not have had enough opportunities to go outside and may have soiled in their kennel. Lack of opportunity can weaken housetraining habits. Other pets in the new home may also lead to urine marking. Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines, even if your dog was already housetrained.

If you know your dog was housetrained in a previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind your dog where they are supposed to eliminate.



## Establish a routine

- **Take your dog out at the same times every day.** For example, first thing in the morning when you wake up, when you get home from work, after they eat, and before bed.
- **Praise your dog** every time they go to the bathroom outside, but don't be too loud and disrupt them. You need to praise and treat immediately while still outside. Rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way they will know what you expect.
- **Choose a location to be the bathroom spot.** Always take your dog, on leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take them for a walk or play with them only after they have gone to the bathroom.
- **When your dog is going to the bathroom, use a word or phrase like "go potty"** that you can eventually use to determine if your dog needs to go outside.
- **Feeding your dog on a set schedule** once or twice a day will help make them more regular.
- **Keep a log** and take your dog out as much as possible during the first few days.

## Supervise, supervise, supervise

Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. Your dog should be supervised while indoors. You can tether them to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates to keep them in the room where you are. Watch for signs that they need to go to the bathroom, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take them to the bathroom spot and praise them when they go.

## Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog closely, they should be confined to an area small enough that they won't want to go to the bathroom there. It should be just big enough for them to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around. This could be a portion of a room sectioned off with a baby gate or a dog crate. If your dog has spent several hours in confinement, when you let them out, take them outside when you can.

## Oops!

Most dogs will have an accident in the house. You should expect this, as it is a normal part of your dog's adjustment to a new home.

- If you catch your dog in the act of going to the bathroom in the house, do something to interrupt but not scare them. Immediately take them outside to the bathroom spot and praise them when they go.
- Do not punish your dog for going to the bathroom in the house. If you find an accident, it is too late. Do nothing, but clean it up. Rubbing your dog's nose in it, taking them to the spot and scolding them, or any other type of punishment will only make them afraid of you and afraid to go to the bathroom in your presence. Animals do not understand punishment after the fact, even if it is only seconds later. **Punishment will do more harm than good.**
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. It is best to use an enzymatic cleaner for this (search for pet odor eliminator spray).

## Other types of houstraining problems

If you have consistently followed the houstraining procedures and your dog continues to go to the bathroom in the house, there may be another reason for this behavior.

- **Medical Problems:** Accidents can often be caused by physical problems such as urinary tract infections, eating foods that are not part of their normal diet, or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- **Fearful/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young dogs, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play, or when they are about to be punished.
- **Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark. Both male and female dogs can do this, and it most often occurs when there is instability in their relationships. This is often more common in unaltered dogs.
- **Separation Anxiety:** Dogs that become anxious when they are left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization.
- **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your dog is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, they may have an accident when they are exposed to those sounds.
- **Surface Preferences:** When a dog has been trained to eliminate on only one type of surface, such as newspapers, or has not been offered a variety of surfaces, such as being confined to a run with a concrete floor, a surface preference may develop. This can be difficult to change but is often managed by ensuring that their preferred substrate is unavailable indoors, but is available in an outdoor location.