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10 easy steps to housetrain your dog

You can easily teach your dog to eliminate in an acceptable location by keeping a close eye, recognizing his signals, understanding his instincts, and rewarding his appropriate behavior.

1. Prevent undesirable elimination by not allowing your dog to wander all over the house without supervision and by keeping your dog confined in a small area when you can't observe him constantly.
2. When your dog, sniffs the ground or circles around, quickly but calmly take him to the desired elimination area. Ideally, don't wait for these behaviors. Take your dog outside regularly as described below.
3. Feed your dog a measured amount of food at the same time every day. When your dog walks away, or after about 10 to 15 minutes, pick up the bowl.
4. Be aware that puppies instinctively desire to eliminate after eating, drinking, playing, resting, sleeping, or being confined. These rules apply to most adult dogs as well.
5. Five to 30 minutes after any of the above activities, take your dog to the selected place for elimination.
6. Use a specific verbal cue that you want your dog to associate with desirable elimination, such as "Go potty" or "Do your business."
7. When your dog begins to eliminate, *quietly* praise him.
8. When your dog is done, praise him enthusiastically, pet him, and reward him with food *immediately*. Don't wait until he heads for the house. If he doesn't eliminate, return him to his confinement area, and take him outside again in about 15 minutes.
9. Reward each time with praise, but as your dog learns, give food rewards intermittently.
10. Remember, it is your responsibility to prevent accidents! Prevention is the key to success, but if someone fails to prevent your dog from having an accident, *don't* scold the dog and quietly clean up and deodorize the soiled area. Preventing accidents requires that you become aware of how often your puppy needs to eliminate. Young puppies (8 to 10 weeks of age) may need to be taken outside every 30 to 60 minutes.