

Housebreaking an Adult Dog

It's important for you to remember that your new companion finds these new experiences very stressful. You and your home are unfamiliar to him. He doesn't know where he is or even where the doors are that lead outside. The food and water are different. He doesn't know where he is going to sleep. He may or may not have been housetrained previously.

It would be wise to assume that he has not and start with him as you would with a young puppy.

One of the most important things you should do upon arriving home is introduce the dog to his yard or exercise area and let him eliminate before entering the house. He may or may not have been exercised on a leash. He will be curious and want to explore. Be patient and wait for him to eliminate. Be certain to praise him and let him know this was the right thing for him to do.

Changes in food and water, plus the stress of a new situation, can result in episodes of diarrhea. It would be a good thing to make certain he has frequent access to his outdoor elimination area the first few days. Don't expect him to tell you when he needs to go out. Go outside with him and praise him each and every time he eliminates.

Housetraining should be based on the prevention of accidents rather than discipline after the fact. If your dog makes a mistake because you didn't get him out when you should have - it's not his fault!

Since your dog is no longer a young puppy he will have better bowel and bladder control. Place the dog on a regular elimination schedule and take him outside at certain times, whether he needs to eliminate or not - first thing in the morning, after meals and play and the last thing at night. It is essential to accompany him to make certain he is, indeed, eliminating. Dogs are creatures of habit. The more quickly you turn a good behavior into a habit, the faster your training will go.

If you haven't already decided on a crate for your dog, you may want to investigate purchasing one for him. The most effective way to teach him to eliminate outdoors is to prevent him from using the house in the first place.

Dogs are den animals and have an instinct not to soil their den. The crate will become your dog's den.

Confinement to the crate overnight or for a three-to-four-hour period during the day when he is unsupervised will help speed the housetraining process.

Despite your best efforts and diligence an accident may occur. If it should happen, treat the incident in a matter-of-fact manner. It is critical that you not scare or confuse your dog by physical punishment or yelling. The dog won't understand why you're upset, and you are only creating more stress for your dog. Put the dog outdoors or in another room while you clean. If the accident should occur on carpeting use lots of paper towel and blot with fresh paper until you have lifted as much liquid as possible. Neutralize the odor with plain white vinegar and water or a commercial pet-odor eliminator. A diarrhea stain on carpeting or upholstery can be lifted with a solution of lukewarm water, dishwashing soap and white vinegar.

Housetraining your older dog requires patience, humor, understanding, compassion and time. He wants to please you by doing the right thing. Help him make the adjustment to his new home a successful one.