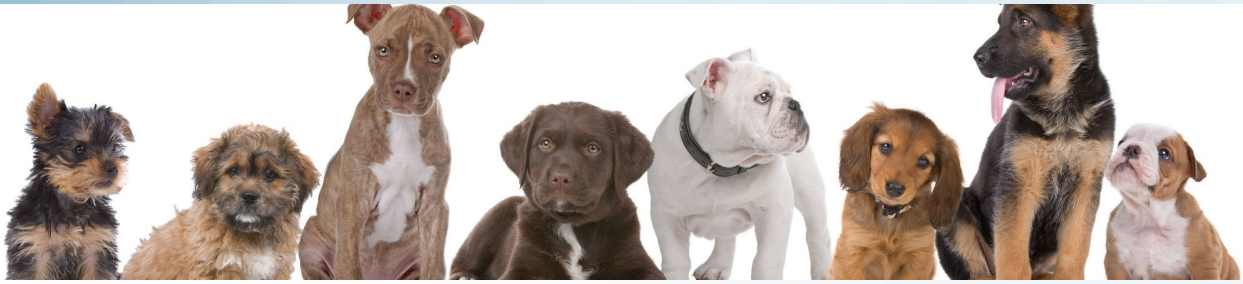


House Training 101

Fulcrum Dog Training



~~from the Fulcrum Files – where science and art unite for humane and effective dog training~~

The first thing you want to realize is that puppies (and adult dogs) have no sense of right or wrong. Nor do they understand the concept of eliminating indoors vs. eliminating outdoors. Both are human concepts. It is quite likely however, that dogs will develop a surface preference when learning where to empty. Haven't many of us had a dog who will only potty on grass? This is a result of them not having the experience of eliminating on various surfaces. Here are some guidelines which will really help you in house training your new puppy.

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- Take your puppy out immediately after waking in the morning and any naps. Also, if your puppy is very active, running and playing, indoors, for longer than 20 minutes, calmly and gently interrupt her to take her out.
 - Take your puppy out the same door, each time, to the same place. It is **really** important that your pup should be on a leash when emptying. If you skip this step and simply take your pup outside to eliminate off leash, you might easily end up with a dog who refuses to empty while on leash. This can be a huge problem if you travel with your dog or board your dog or expect them to eliminate in new environments. So, stand in one spot, giving your pup the length of the leash to choose an area. If you wish to take a walk with your pup, wait until she has eliminated before proceeding on your walk. Often, we make the mistake of walking with our dogs to empty and as soon as they do, we head home. The dogs figure out that the fun ends when they eliminate and will begin holding it longer and longer. Walks should come **after** your pup has emptied in the designated spot.
 - Praise your pup gently when emptying and to reinforce it further, you may give a tiny treat, as soon as she is finished. You must give the treat outdoors. **DO NOT** give your pup a treat after coming back inside. Your dog may be more excited to get indoors where she knows a cookie is waiting and not empty fully or even at all, and then head off to the back bedroom to finish up!
 - If your dog does have an accident, it is not her fault. It is likely, you weren't paying attention to either her signs or the clock. **NEVER** reprimand your pup for accidents. Doing so, will only make your puppy afraid to eliminate while you are present. If, even after giving your puppy the opportunity to empty outdoors, she doesn't, either put her in the crate or tether her to you for another 15 minutes, then try again.
 - Use management tools such as baby gates and closed doors to restrict access to areas in your house to which your pup may venture off, to eliminate. Pups often will choose to potty in little used rooms or areas of the house, such as guest room, ends of long hallways, etc..

It is helpful to keep a written log of when your pup does go. You will begin to see a pattern and be better able to anticipate when she needs to go out. Feed your puppy on a schedule. Puppies under 6 months are often fed two or three times per day at the same time. Do not restrict water except after 8PM at night.

Pups and adolescent dogs often tend to squat and empty when greeting people. It occurs more often when a person leans over them or talks and acts very excitedly when greeting the puppy. This is known as "submissive urination" and is something a puppy outgrows as he matures. The worst thing you can do if your pup is having this problem, is to reprimand them. Instead, make greetings low key and even have initial introductions with visitors, occur out of doors.

Additionally, dogs will develop their own signals to alert you to they need to go out. Some stand at the door (not very effective unless you happen to always be watching them) or some come to you and let out a bark or two (not the best idea, unless you to train attention barking) and some just sniff around and circle (again, easily missed if you aren't paying attention). Instead, it is a great idea to train your dog to ring a bell to signal when she needs to go out. The audible signal is discernable and heard even if you are in another room and not paying attention to your dog!

A word on using pads indoors. If your goal is to eventually get your dog to empty reliably outside ONLY, then do yourself a favor and skip training on the pads. You are giving yourself double the work, since at some point you will need to wean the pup off them and if they develop a surface preference for emptying on paper, you will have a hard time getting them to go on grass or gravel outside.

Also, please be aware that moving to a new home, often results in house training regressions. Be vigilant and give your dog extra opportunities to eliminate in your designated spot and your dog will easily adjust. The same applies to newly adopted, rescue dogs.

Finally, please be patient. Some dogs are easier than others to house train and it isn't uncommon to a dog to be 6 months or older and still have the occasional accident. Kindness and consistency are the tools you need to use to be successful.

Happy Training

Meg