

Boroughbred Behavior Resources



Issue: House Soiling

Your new dog may have been incompletely trained in their previous home, or may have regressed due to the kennel environment. It is a good idea to get your new pet on a consistent schedule and be ready to be patient while they re-learn the appropriate potty spots with your help.

Frequent, consistent walks outside are the best way to get your pup on track with training, along with valuable rewards (treats, praise, play time) after they have gone to the bathroom outside. Don't interrupt the peeing or pooping, but make sure to reward afterward. And make sure your pup has some time outside after they go, so they don't learn that going to the bathroom leads immediately to going back inside and the end of fun time – if that happens, they may learn to hold it in order to extend time outside, and may end up going back inside without eliminating.

Accidents should never be punished as punishment will likely make the problem worse.

If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating, immediately pick them up or put on a leash and take them to a designated potty spot. Then reward, reward, reward when they finish. If you find pee or poop inside after your dog has gone, you should clean it with an enzymatic cleaner and move on with positive reinforcement potty training. Your dog will NOT understand what he or she has done wrong if you try to punish an accident after the fact.

Houstraining has two components: 1) teaching your dog to eliminate outside, and 2) preventing your dog from having accidents in the house while training.

Our training recommendations:

- Have a confinement area set up for your dog where they are unlikely to pee or poop. A crate with enough space for your dog to stand up and turn around in, but not much more space than this, usually works best.
- Have your dog in the crate overnight. First thing in the morning, immediately take them out of the crate and leash walk, or carry if they are a small dog or puppy, outside.
 - o Hint: If you walk them out on leash, feed your pup treats the entire time you are walking them out so that they are focused on the treats and are unlikely to have an accident on the way out.
- Once outside, give your dog about 10 minutes to sniff around in the same area. If they pee or poop, give them a high value treat (chicken, hot dogs, cheese, etc.) and praise them. Together, you both can then have a nice walk.
- If your pup does not go after 10 minutes, take them back inside and put them back in the confinement area. They can have some food and water in the confinement area, and stay in it for about 20 minutes. Then take them out and try again using the same process.

- Repeat this until your dog successfully pees and/or poops.
- After your dog has done everything outside and you are home, they can have some supervised time out of the confinement area. Leave a leash attached to your dog's harness or collar and watch them to make sure they do not wonder off and have an accident.
- Pay attention to when your dog drinks water. After they drink, they should be kept on leash close to you or in the confinement area. Elimination tends to follow closely after eating or drinking.
- Take your dog out about every 2 hours when you are home to start with. As a general rule, a dog will have to pee about every hour for the dog's months of age. So a 2 month old puppy will need to go out every 2 hours, a 3 month old puppy every 3 hours, etc. This general rule goes until the puppy is about 8 months, as the maximum a dog can generally hold his urine and/or bowels is 8 hours. When you are first starting house training, though, begin at every 2 hours.
 - o Note: we recommend this 2-hour frequency for adult dogs as well, at least for their first few days in a new home, in order to set up good habits from day 1. Remember, even house trained adult dogs need to learn where the appropriate elimination spots are and may have needed to go to the bathroom in their kennels in a shelter, so even previously house trained dogs sometimes need a reminder and a few days to adjust.
- When you are not home, place your dog in the confinement area for up to about 5 hours if they are over 5 months. If you will be gone longer than this or if your dog is younger than this, arrange to have someone take the dog for a walk.
- Take away your dog's water about 45 minutes before their last walk so that they do not have to pee overnight.
- Once your dog has gone a week without an accident in the house, they can begin to slowly have more freedom in the home with less supervision. If this is a puppy or a dog who previously had accidents in their home, make sure to increase space and decrease supervision slowly so that you all succeed with the housetraining. Too much too quickly may overwhelm your pup and they may forget some of what they've learned.

Recommended companion flyer: Crate Training

If you need more help:

Seek out a consultation with a professional, certified behaviorist or a certified dog trainer.

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers: <http://www.ccpdt.org>

Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists: <http://corecaab.org>