

Training Plan: House Training

End behavior: Your dog will signal when they have to eliminate and will choose appropriate spaces (outside or potty pads) to urinate and defecate.

Step 1: Set A Schedule

- Take your dog out to potty first thing in the morning.
- Take your dog out 10 minutes after every meal.
- Take your dog out after they wake up from a nap.
- Take your dog out right before bed.
- If you notice that they consistently have accidents during a specific time of day, set a timer for yourself and take your dog out during that time of day.
- Keeping a “potty log” is a great way to keep track of when your dog typically eliminates so that you can set a more accurate schedule.

Step 2: Reward the Pottying

- When you take your dog outside to potty, completely ignore your dog. Do not look at your dog, talk to your dog, or pet your dog.
- When they start to go, just wait. Be still. Let your dog finish.
- As soon as they have finished, give your dog lots of praise and a treat.

Step 3: Avoid Punishing Accidents

- This can teach your dog not to go potty in front of you (which is problematic if he has to be leash walked). This can also damage the relationship you have with your dog.

Step 4: Management

- Limit his access to much of the house when he’s not being supervised

Optional:

Potty on Cue

If you want to teach your dog to potty on cue, simply say your cue word or phrase one time as soon as they start to potty. Have a different cue for urination and defecation. Do that for at least two weeks, every time they potty. After two weeks, try to use your cues before they potty to see if they know it. If not, repeat for one more week and try again.

Bell Training

- Step 1: Rub a tasty treat on the bell so that it smells.
- Step 2: Your dog should start sniffing the bell. They will likely touch the bell while they sniff. When they touch the bell, say “yes!” or mark with a clicker and treat.
- Step 3: Repeat. As they get it, they will likely start pushing because they are excited about the behavior! Remember, your dog is doing the behavior themselves instead of it being modeled for them. If we model (touch the bell to

them or physically move them to push it) we get the behavior, but they probably have no idea how they got there and can't repeat it. It's like using Google Maps when driving- you get to your destination but probably couldn't do it again on your own. When they are readily pushing the bells, you can move to the next step. Take the bell away while they are learning and not actively training so they don't push them and nothing happens.

- Step 4: Get yourself and your dog ready to go outside first. This way you can immediately open the door when the bell rings.
- Step 5: Show your dog the bells and they will likely ring them. As soon as they do, open the door and toss a treat through it so they follow. Bring them back in and repeat.

This video lays out bell training well and breaks it down a bit further if you need smaller steps. It uses a clicker, but you can replace that with the marker "yes."

[WATCH: Bell Training](#)

From then on:

- If they nudge the bell when it's a time that they would normally go potty, immediately get up and take your dog outside.
- If they nudge the bell when you don't think they need to go potty, ignore your dog. That way they will only learn to ring the bell when they have to potty, not whenever they are bored and want to go outside.

Clean Up

Often, I see dogs having accidents in parts of the house that are not frequently used. The current school of thought is that dogs don't see "inside" and "outside" the way we do. They see it as "we live here" and "we don't live here" based on smell, how often they are there, and what they are doing there. Thus, one of our goals should be to make sure they see every room as a living space by spending time with them in each location and even playing or feeding them there.

Urine and feces contain pheromones which act like little flags saying, "here's the potty spot!" Unfortunately, most pet cleaners do not break down pheromones. They only break down smell to the human level but not the canine level. This is why dogs typically have accidents in the same spot in your house. I recommend these two cleaners to break down those pheromones: [Nature's Miracle](#) or [Get Serious!](#)

