



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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## *House Training*

Almost any dog can learn to hold stool and urine for 8-10 hours per day. Crate training is the way to go. The crate should be no larger than the dog needs to lie down comfortably. If it is larger, the dog will defecate and urinate inside the crate. During the day while crated they can have toys inside the crate but no food or water. Crate training uses the natural denning instinct to housetrain—dogs have an innate instinct not to soil their den, and you want your dog to eventually regard your whole home as his den. For now, he can't do that, so he only knows his crate as his den and you want to give him as many opportunities to be successful as possible. Next, the dog should have 100% of your attention while out of the crate or else be in the crate. If you are cooking, eating, watching TV—whatever—he should be in the crate or on a leash that is attached to your belt. This is temporary, just until you can get him housetrained. If your dog is out of the crate, he must always go from the crate to the outdoors to back inside. Go outside with him and give him extremely great (small) food rewards every single time he urinates or defecates outdoors (do this while he is urinating or defecating or immediately afterwards – no delay so he knows exactly what he is being rewarded for). If he is outside the crate, he should be taken outside every 20 minutes and accompanied by someone who will feed him treats when he urinates or defecates.

He also should be taken out:

- Right after he eats
- Right after he drinks
- Right after he wakes up
- Right after vigorous play

If this sounds like a lot of in and out trips, it is. What you are doing is building opportunities for your dog to succeed and be rewarded. The more rewards, the better. You are also minimizing the opportunities for failure by having accidents in the house.

Never punish him for urinating or defecating in the house. If you catch him “in the act”, scold him with a sharp “No” or “At”, pick him up and take him outside. If he finishes outside praise him and give him a treat. If he doesn't do anything, take him back into the house. Don't let him wander around or start to play outside. The only reward is if he does his business. If you want playtime, take him back into the house, wait a few minutes then go back outside to play. If more than 2 seconds (YES – just 2 seconds) have elapsed since he's had an accident – don't say anything but quietly clean up the mess. He will not understand why you are upset – he does not make the connection that it's because he put the mess there (sounds odd to our sense of logic, but that's how dogs think).

Offer food and water only 2-3 times a day. Put food and water down, leave it for 20 minutes then pick it up. This will allow you to take him outside shortly afterwards when he will be more likely to do something and increase his chances of success.

In summary, be patient. Don't punish. Walk the dog outside as much as you can, and give food rewards when he performs outside. If you can't supervise him, he needs to be in the crate. This won't last forever and it's not cruel. One “accident” in the house cancels out ten successful bathroom breaks outside. Above all else, be patient and keep your sense of humor!