

BASICS OF HOUSETRAINING

Your goal from the moment you bring home your rescued beagle is NOT to allow him to soil in the house. You need to ensure that you take your beagle out often and regularly and you reward him enthusiastically each time he "goes" outside.

Housebreaking is quite simple but not always easy to implement. It requires commitment and follow-through.

Things you will need:

1. A crate of a size to fit your dog. It should ONLY be large enough for the dog to stand up comfortably and turn around.
2. A designated "potty area" in your yard. This will need to remain the same until the dog is fully trained.
3. A designated "potty word", such as Go Potty. This word cannot be changed after you begin training and all family members must use the same word.
4. Your dog's favorite treats. I find small pieces of hot dog work great and the dogs love them!
5. A non-ammonia based cleaner for any accident spots; One formulated for pets works the best ("such as Nature's Miracle" available from most pet supply stores or catalogs).
6. A schedule designed to meet your dog's needs.
7. Time and patience!

The Crate: This will become the dog's "den" and - believe it or not - he will grow to love it. The dog will remain in his crate at ALL times when you are not giving him your full attention until he is fully housebroken.

This is very important. The crate must not be too large. The dog should have enough room to stand up and turn around. If it is too large, you will defeat the purpose because the dog will relieve himself in one end and lie in the other.

NEVER - under any circumstances (not even for "just a minute") - put your dog into a crate with ANY type of collar on. NO EXCEPTIONS! Be sure that anything you leave in the crate cannot be chewed up and choked on.

The Schedule: The next most important thing is the dog's schedule. A YOUNG dog (less than 1 year) will need to go out every three to four hours - after each meal, after he drinks a lot of water, after he wakes up, and after playtime. It is helpful to keep a diary of what the dog "does" and when. You will see a pattern after about a week and this can be helpful in establishing a schedule.

An Adult Dog Schedule: The process for older dogs is very much the same. Remember - even dogs that are supposedly perfectly housebroken may have several "accidents" as they get accustomed to their new surroundings. Often too, dogs of both sexes will "mark" their territory so that any possible predators are alerted that this is now their "turf".

On the other hand, an older dog seldom needs to go out every three hours. A more realistic schedule for an adult dog is upon awaking. Most dogs (like people!) will urinate within several seconds of waking up. Many will have a bowel movement within minutes of waking up.

Allow the older dog an hour or so free in the house. Then out again at lunch and another hour or so of free time. Back in the crate, out again around dinner time which is usually when the dog will both urinate and defecate again. If so, your dog can hang out with the family and watch TV or lounge with you until bedtime. Take him out to his potty spot and then back in his crate to sleep. Otherwise, use the same methods and schedule using the same spot, the same potty word, the same cookies, etc.

The Designated Area: When the crate door is opened, TAKE your dog to the designated area of your yard that will be the "potty area". You must always take him to this same area for potty time. Take a favorite treat of his with you. STAY with your dog and have him on lead if possible. Do NOT play with him. The dog should learn from the beginning that this is not playtime or walk time, it is "potty time."

The Designated Command: The instant the dog begins to go, say the word that you have chosen for your potty word. As the dog is eliminating, repeat your chosen word in a pleasant and praising tone of voice.

Positive Reinforcement: When he finishes, give him a "cookie" and praise him profusely! Take the dog back inside for food, playtime, etc. Remember to take him back outside after food or playtime.

After Dark: I personally withhold food and water after 10:00 pm and the last time out for the night is 11pm. This seems to help the dog stay clean throughout the night. At bedtime, move the crate to your bedside. Make sure the dog is in a draft-free area and has plenty of warm bedding. Most dogs will settle in fairly well if they are near your bed. When the dog wakes up in the morning, he will kick up a fuss to go out. Remember your spot and cookies!

KEEP TO YOUR SCHEDULE!

Finally Housebroken: When the time comes that there have been no accidents in the house for two weeks straight and when you can tell that your dog is learning what "Go potty" means, you may begin extending his "free time" out of sight in the house. If there is an accident during this period, you may have gone too fast and will need to go back to your schedule. Depending on your beagle, he cannot progress any faster than his maturity level will let him.

Having a Hard Time

Help! My Pup Doesn't Get The Concept! If you should catch your dog in the process of eliminating in the house, clap your hands and say, "NO!" Pick him up (that's right pick him up) and take him to his spot outside. If he finishes there, praise him. When you go back inside, put the dog somewhere so he cannot see you cleaning up his accident or have someone else in the family clean it up while you are outside. **DO NOT USE** any cleaner that contains ammonia.

Unseen Accidents: If you discover an accident that has already happened, put the dog in another area and clean up the spot. Do not scold or reprimand your dog in any way. If he goes in the house, you fell down on the job. It is your responsibility to see that he is in the right place at the right time. If you scold or strike your dog, it will not help your dog get housetrained. It will, however, teach your dog to be afraid and to mistrust you.

This Dog Is Hopeless! Correctly and consistently using this method of training will result in success. When your dog does the "right" thing, remember to stay on your schedule & use plenty of praise and rewards (cookies). And, if your pup "forgets", be sure that you don't let him see you clean up after him. If you do not see ANY results after 4 - 5 weeks, you may need to seek the advice of a veterinarian or a professional dog trainer.