

Housebreaking an Adult Dog Using the Umbilical Cord Method

By Phil Guida

Introduction

Most puppies can be housebroken prior to 8 months of age using traditional methods. But for older dogs that are still having accidents in the house, the umbilical cord method should be used. This method has worked on the most difficult housebreaking cases and can be used with dogs of any age.

When the owner makes a commitment to success and is consistent with its application, the success rate using this method is very high.

Dogs do NOT eliminate in the house because of anger, spite, jealousy, boredom or mischief. With the exceptions of territorial urine marking, illness, or (rarely) separation distress syndrome, dogs go to the bathroom in the house for one reason: they have never been properly housetrained by the owner.

There are some common mistakes that owners make during early housebreaking attempts that can exacerbate the problem:

- The use of puppy pads inside the home
- Too much freedom too soon
- Punishment after the fact
- Using the wrong cleaners to clean up the mess
- Not using a dog crate

But even if the above mistakes have been made, ANY DOG CAN BE HOUSEBROKEN!

Procedure

1. Put a 6 foot leash on the dog and tie it to your belt. The dog is connected to you (umbilical cord). He goes where you go.
2. When it is not possible to keep the dog tethered to you on the leash, he should be placed in his crate. (Except for overnight, a dog should not be crated for more than 3 to 4 consecutive hours. Many working people find it necessary to hire a pet sitter to give the dog an afternoon “break.”)



3. Take the dog outside every hour using the verbal cue “want to go out?” in a happy high pitched tone when you get to the door. Do not wait for a “signal” from the dog - just take him out every hour, for about 5 minutes. Always USE THE SAME DOOR to exit.
4. Give the verbal cue “hurry up.” If he eliminates outside, praise him in a happy, high pitched voice at the moment that he finishes doing his business.
5. Whenever the dog is not in his crate, he should be on the leash, attached to you. If he begins to urinate or defecate in your presence, correct him in a loud, low tone of voice. Don’t scream and yell - you should startle, but not frighten, the dog. Immediately take him outside and give the verbal cue “hurry up.” If he eliminates outside, praise him in a happy, high pitched voice at the moment that he finishes doing his business.
6. After 10 consecutive days with no accidents, disconnect the leash and begin to allow limited freedom, using gates to confine the dog to one room of the house. BE SURE TO CONTINUE THE CONSTANT SUPERVISION at this stage! If you are not in the same room with the dog, put the dog in his crate. Be sure to keep an eye on the dog at all times. Continue this step for 30 days.
7. If there have been no accidents during the 30 day period in step 6, you can begin to allow a bit more freedom. Confine the dog to the initial room plus an adjoining room – do not give him freedom to roam throughout the entire house. You can begin to allow him to be alone in these 2 different rooms for very short periods of time. Be sure to crate him if you leave the house, even for a few minutes. Continue to take him out every hour, and continue to praise him when he goes to the bathroom outside. Continue this step for 30 days.
8. If there have been no accidents during the 30 day period in step 7, he can be now be given full run of the house, but he should still be crated when you leave the house.

If your dog has an accident during step 6, 7 or 8, go back one step. If he has another accident after you back one step, go back to step 1 and start over again. Some dogs will need to be “connected” to you on the leash for a long period of time in order to become housebroken, so be patient. The good news is that once a dog had been housebroken using this method, he will usually not regress.

Phil Guida

www.CanineDimensions.com

