

Puppy Training Tips

There are two rules for housebreaking. Just two, but you have to get them both right. And I mean 100% right, not 50% right. Otherwise you're going to end up with a dog who is 50% housebroken, and who wants that?"

Here they are....my two rules for housebreaking

Rule #1. Confinement – so your dog can't go to the bathroom in the wrong place.

Confinement means that until your dog is housebroken, he is never allowed to walk freely around the house.

You can confine your dog in a crate, a pen, or by using baby gates to section off a small space (mud room, laundry room, kitchen). He needs to stay in this space every minute of every hour of every day – unless you're sitting with him, playing with him or watching him play, walking him, feeding him, grooming him, teaching him, or otherwise interacting with him.

This is a tough one for most people, I know. It is so tempting to just let the puppy loose to run and play while you chat on the phone or answer email or watch the basketball game on TV. But if you let a non-housebroken puppy (or adult dog) loose in the house when you're doing something else, even if you think you're "watching" him, he can go to the bathroom on your floor – and the bad habit is begun. It's far better to prevent the accident than to catch him and correct him after the act.

Rule #2. Regular or constant access to the RIGHT place to go.

dog asking to go out You must take your dog outside on a regular basis – every few hours – or else install a doggy door for your dog to take himself outside at will, into a potty yard. Your third option is to provide an indoor bathroom – newspapers or (for very small dogs) a litter box.

Your dog must have SOMEWHERE to "go" when he needs to go. Otherwise he will "go" wherever he happens to be at the time....and this won't be his fault.

Housebreaking success or failure is up to you

Some dogs are faster or slower than others to catch on to housebreaking, but ultimately it is the owner who is responsible for housebreaking success or failure.

If you arrange things so that the only place your dog has a chance to "go" is where you want him to go, that's the habit he will develop.

But if you give him too much freedom in the house, or if you don't give him quick access to a bathroom when he needs to go, that's the habit he will develop.