

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue

Golden Rule Training

Potty Training

Accidents WILL happen, guaranteed! Expect it and prepare for it!

Golden Rule Number One: This is The Most Important Rule, **if you don't catch your puppy in the act, and then don't punish him** for it! In fact, as puppies are learning, there is no reason for punishment. Like children, they need to be taught what we want them to do. You have to be consistent with potty training.

Golden Rule Number Two: Praise your puppy when he does the right thing! Don't let this be a situation where your only action is saying "No" when they are caught in the midst of using the wrong area. Do this by saying "good potty". Or "good boy" in an up-beat voice, so he knows what he did was a good thing! You can even go as far as giving him a treat when he goes outside and in the right potty place! This speeds up the learning process.

Methods of House Training

1. Method

Potty Pads: When the puppies are very small (up to 4 months old) you can put down papers or pretreated pads, encouraging them to use these areas for going to the bathroom. The pads are scented with a chemical that attracts the puppy to use them. Whenever you see them starting into their "pre-potty pattern," such as walking around and sniffing the floor, you gently pick them up without talking and carry them over to the papers/pad and then praise them when they go to the bathroom.

When all goes well and they are using the papers consistently, the papers are either moved closer to the door and/or another set is placed outside. The transition is made from concentrating the toilet habits to one spot inside the home to one spot outside the home. Finally, the papers inside are eliminated.

Note: The only problem with this method is that for a period of time it encourages the animal to eliminate inside the home. In our experience, house training may take longer when this method is used.

2. Method

Crate Training: This is the method we recommend for older puppies and adult dogs. . The reason this works well is that the dog placed in a cage that is just large enough to

be a bed and no extra room to potty. Dogs do not like to soil their beds because they would be forced to lay in the mess. It works, and while in these confines, most pups will control their bladder and bowels for a longer time than we would expect.

A crate has to be large enough for the dog to stand up, stretch and turn around. So you are not buying several crates, simply purchase a cage that will be big enough for him as an adult, but choose a model that comes with or has a divider panel as an accessory. With these, you can adjust the position of the panel so that the space inside the cage available to the pet can grow as he does.

Note: Using too large of a crate can often cause long term problems. The puppy will go to one corner of the cage and urinate or defecate. After a while, he will then run through it tracking it all over the cage. If this is allowed to continue, the instincts about not soiling his bed or lying in the mess will be forgotten and the puppy will soon be doing it every day when placed in the crate. Now a house training method has turned into a behavioral problem as the puppy's newly-formed hygienic habits becomes his way of life.

The correct sized crate is important.

When should the dog be Crated?

- During housebreaking, whenever the puppy is inside the home but cannot be watched, he is placed in the crate. This might be while you are cooking, reading to the children, or even away from the home.
- The last thing you do before you put the puppy in the crate is take him outside to his favorite spot.
- The first thing you do when you take the animal out of the crate is another trip outside.
- No food or water goes in the crate, just a blanket and maybe a chew toy to occupy his time. Overnight is definitely crate time.
- As your faith in the puppy grows, leave him out for longer and longer periods of time.

During the day, a dog should not be crated all day! ONLY 4 hours at the most! Please make sure he gets a break and gets to stretch his legs at least every four hours.

The advantage to using the crate to house training is it stops the animal from messing in the house and it also teaches the puppy something very important; The puppy learns that when the urge to urinate or defecate occurs, he can hold it. Just because the pup feels like he needs to relieve himself, the pup learns that he does not have to immediately. This is thought to be the main reason why puppies that have gone through crate training have fewer mistakes later on as adults.

For more information see the article on [Crate Training in the Golden Rule Training Library](#).

3. Method The last method involves no papers, pads, or crates. However, you would spend 100% of your time watching the puppy. This can work for people who live and

work in their homes, retired, or in situations where the owners are always with the animal.

The basic rule is: if the puppy is 2 months old, you take him out every 2 hours; if he is 3 months old you take him out every 3 hours, etc. Take him the place you want him to potty, when he goes, "good potty!" You can also give him a treat when you go back in the house. Reinforcing the correct behavior is important and helps the puppy remember what to do.

Eventually there will be a "tell" when your puppy is telling you he has to go outside. He may turn in circles, squats, makes a noise, bark at you, etc. whatever the signal is you have to identify it then hurry and get him outside to his potty area. It is important that the dog is watched at all times and that no mistakes are allowed to occur.

Do not start playing with the puppy, or the reason for going outside may not be clear. Praise the puppy for going in the right place. For those with the time, this is a good method. We still recommend having a crate available as a backup when the owners have to be away for a time...

Adding a Verbal Cue

Decide what cue you want to use to communicate when and where to potty, in other words, what is the cue you will use consistently? It could be "Potty"? "Go outside"? "Go out"? It is important that the whole family use the same cue to ask the dog to do something, so decide together what cues you will use.

When an Accident Happens

Never punish your puppy! We do not care what someone else may tell you or what you read, if you find a mess that was left when you were not there, clean it up and forget it.

Discipline will not help because unless you catch the puppy in the act, he will have no idea what the scolding is for. Your puppy has urinated and defecated hundreds of times before he met you. His mom always cleaned it up. Nobody made a fuss before and the pup will not put the punishment together with something he has done without incident numerous times before. Punishing can cause other behavior problems such as eating their own feces out of fear of being reprimanded!

If you want house training to go quickly, regardless of the method you use, spend as much time as possible with your puppy. Sometimes the solution may be to stay home for a week or so and work with the puppy. Most times that is what it takes to make sure the puppy knows what he needs to do.

Make sure to take him outside to potty right before bedtime, or if there is a change in activity, such as after waking, playing, or eating, puppy MUST be taken outside!

1. Feeding and House Training

The feeding schedule you use can help or hinder housebreaking. You will soon notice that puppies will need to go outside soon after they wake and also within 30 to 40 minutes after eating. Be consistent when you feed the animal so you can predict when they need to relieve themselves. Plan your trips outside around these patterns. All of this may seem simple, and it really is. The keys are that it will take time and you must be consistent. And, of course, you must never lose your temper or even get excited.

Spontaneous or Submissive Urination

Puppies may spontaneously urinate when excited. This may be when they first see you, at meeting a new dog, or when they are scared. It is often referred to as **submissive or excitement urination**. Do not discipline the puppy for this, as it is something they cannot control. Simply ignore it and clean up the mess. If you do not overreact, they will usually outgrow this between 4 and 7 months of age.

Summary

Your new puppy is home and you have started the house training process. This is just as much a part of training as any basic obedience commands. However, mistakes that occur with house training can cause more problems between you and your pet than those encountered with any other form of training. Be patient and stay calm and he will learn the rules.

Sources:

Pet education.com
The Dog Forum
Dog Behavior Blog