

LEARNING MADE EASY



2nd Edition

Housetraining

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Prepare your home
for housetraining

Utilize the most effective
techniques and equipment

Housetrain your dog at
any age or stage

Susan McCullough

Author of *Beagles For Dummies*
and *Senior Dogs For Dummies*



Housetraining

2nd Edition

by Susan McCullough

**for
dummies®**
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Housetraining For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2019944086

ISBN 978-1-119-61029-8 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-61032-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-61028-1 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

When you brought home that adorable little puppy or noble-looking adult dog, you undoubtedly were looking forward to a lifetime of love, devotion, and companionship. Maybe you wanted a dog to jog with in the morning, have curl up at your feet in the evening, or talk to during the day. Perhaps you were looking forward to heaping lots of unconditional love upon a hard-luck rescue dog who hadn't known such love before. Or maybe you remembered watching *Lassie* when you were a kid and were hoping that your new family member could be the same sort of friend-of-a-lifetime that the famous Collie was for little Timmy.

Every new relationship between a person and a dog starts out with at least a little bit of fantasizing on the part of the person. Soon thereafter, though, reality intrudes upon those fantasies. All too often, that intrusion takes the form of a puddle or pile deposited on the floor of your home. The puddle is gross. The pile stinks. Both leave stains. And you are totally grossed out.

Loving a pooch who turns your nicely decorated home into a canine outhouse is tough. But this problem doesn't have to happen. You just need to teach your dog proper potty manners. In other words, you need to housetrain him.

When your dog is housetrained, both of your lives become a whole lot easier and immeasurably more satisfying. Gone are the doggie accidents, stains, and smells that keep professional carpet cleaners in business but all too often ruin the precious bonds between dogs and their people. I've written this book to make sure that you and your dog maintain those bonds.

About This Book

Housetraining For Dummies, 2nd Edition, is a reference book designed to help you not only teach your dog the ins and outs of basic bathroom behavior but also prevent your pooch from developing potty problems — or solve any problems she already has.

Whether you have a brand-new puppy who's piddling on your equally new Oriental rug; an unruly adolescent male dog who's practicing leg-lifts (and subsequent anointings) right next to your antique loveseat; a matronly female dog who's wetting her bed while she sleeps; or simply a pooch who never seems to know what he's supposed to do when you take him out, this book can help you sort out your dog's bathroom issues and resolve them, no matter what they are.

You don't have to read this book from start to finish to teach your canine companion proper potty deportment. If you want to know everything and then some about housetraining, begin reading here and plow through to the end. But if you have a specific concern, such as wanting to teach your dog to tell you when she needs to go out, skip the preliminaries, look over the table of contents, and proceed to the chapter that tells you exactly what you want to know.

Finally, this book is meant to be a guide but not a substitute for the up-close-and-personal advice that other experts such as veterinarians, trainers, and behaviorists give. If the suggestions here don't work for you and your dog, or if you have a question that this book doesn't cover, don't hesitate to contact any of these professionals.

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you find your way through this book — as in all *For Dummies* books — I've used the following conventions:

- » *Italics* highlight new words and terms.
- » **Boldfaced** text indicates the actions in numbered steps and keywords in bulleted lists.
- » Monofont indicates a web address.

In addition, I've added some conventions of my own. For one thing, I'm not even going to try to sound genteel in this book — after all, you're dealing with bodily waste here. That's why I refer to canine bodily byproducts as *poop* and *pee* — although I occasionally substitute other terms just for the sake of variety.

At the same time, I refrain from using other terms commonly employed in discussions of pooch potty protocol. Specifically, I don't use the words *housebreak*, *housebreaking*, or *housebroken* anywhere in this book, except when I describe the history of canine toilet training. That's because when you teach your dogs to eliminate appropriately, you're not breaking anything. In fact, you're doing quite the opposite: By teaching the dog to poop and pee when and where you want him to, you're building bonds between you two. You're laying the foundation for a loving, long-lasting relationship.

Finally, there's the matter of gender. Many writers like to refer to canine companions in gender-neutral terms such as *it* unless discussing a specific dog, such as Daisy or Max. But I don't agree with them. Any dog, even if spayed or neutered, has a clear gender. More importantly, every dog is a living being who deserves the dignity of being referred to as such. For that reason, I use the word *who*, not *that*, along with *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, *his*, and *hers* to refer to canine companions. I tend to alternate the genders of the example dogs in a chapter, so any of those pronouns (or a name such as Fido or Lassie) applies to dogs of either gender unless I indicate otherwise.

What You're Not to Read

I'd be thrilled if you were to read every word of this book, but I know better. You're like me: way too busy, with far too little time to accomplish everything on your daily to-do list. Plus, you want to know as soon as possible how to keep your floors and furniture from becoming a doggie latrine. To help you differentiate between what you need to know and what you can do without, I've made the do-without stuff easy for you to spot. That stuff includes the following:

» **Sidebars:** These shaded boxes contain anecdotes or interesting bits of information that can make housetraining easier and more effective, but if you skip them and apply the suggestions in the main text, you'll still have a pooch who knows when and where he's supposed to potty.

- » **Text next to the Technical Stuff icon:** Information located next to this icon is interesting, but it may go into far more detail about housetraining than you need for teaching your dog her bathroom basics.
- » **Legal stuff:** Otherwise known as the material on the copyright page, the text here is of interest mainly to Wiley's legal eagles. Even if you're interested in copyright law, I guarantee that you can find more information on the subject elsewhere.

Foolish Assumptions

I've written this book assuming that one of the following scenarios applies to you and your dog:

- » You're about to get a new puppy — or have just gotten one — and want to teach her proper potty protocol as quickly and effectively as possible.
- » Your puppy or adult dog has never quite mastered that protocol, and you want to know how to transform him from bathroom bungler to housetraining ace.
- » Your once well-housetrained dog appears to have developed some bathroom issues, and you want to know how to solve those problems instead of just having to live with them.

If you and your canine companion fit into any of the preceding categories, this book is for you.

How This Book Is Organized

This book can give you the full scoop on making the housetraining process as hassle-free as possible. If you read any part of *Housetraining For Dummies*, you can gain valuable insights on how to teach your puppy or adult dog to do his business where and when you want him to. Here's how I've organized the book to help you do just that.

Part 1: Preparing to Potty Train Your Pooch

Before you can housetrain your hound, you need to get yourself ready to do so. Therefore, this part explains the basic principles of canine learning in general and of housetraining in particular. Here, too, is where you get the info you need to decide where you want your dog's bathroom to be: inside or outside your home. You also get the lowdown on what equipment you need to teach your dog proper potty protocol. Finally, you discover how not only to jump-start your dog's housetraining progress but also to give her a leg up on lifelong good health by feeding her the right kinds of foods.

Part 2: Putting a Plan in Place

Now that you've made some basic decisions, gotten a primer on housetraining theory, acquired the right housetraining gear, and stocked up on gourmet doggie fare, you're ready to start the housetraining process in earnest. Part 2 tells you all you need to know to turn your housetrainee into a housetraining graduate, whether you opt for indoor training or choose to have your pooch potty in the great outdoors. You also discover some techniques that can make managing your dog's bathroom maneuvers infinitely easier and determine when you can consider your hound a true housetraining ace.

Part 3: Solving Housetraining Problems

Alas, even the solidly housetrained dog can acquire potty problems. Some of those problems require remedial housetraining, others may actually be signs of illness, and still others may reflect human mistakes, not the dog's. Part 3 helps you determine what kind of problem your dog really has (and that problem, for some dogs, is simply that they're very small) and what you need to do to solve it.

Part 4: The Part of Tens

Part 4 is where I introduce some top-ten lists and have even more fun discussing housetraining than I do in the preceding three parts. In the process, I emphasize some important housetraining principles. And if, for some reason, you're wondering whether housetraining is worth the trouble, this part — specifically Chapter 13 — gives you the incentive you need to keep plugging away.

Appendix

If you're interested in getting more information about house-training and other aspects of dog care, I've included an appendix full of resources after Chapter 13.

Icons Used in This Book

To make this book simpler to use, I've included some icons to help you find and fathom key ideas and information.



TIP

This icon calls attention to time- and hassle-saving ideas or items that are especially helpful when housetraining your dog.



REMEMBER

This icon denotes information that's so critical to successful housetraining that you should read it more than once — just to ensure that you remember it as you potty-train your own pooch.



WARNING

This icon flags dangers to your dog's well-being. It also lets you know when an apparent housetraining problem is really a medical problem that demands a veterinarian's attention.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Perhaps you want the full scoop on why dens are such a big part of most dogs' lives or how dogs use their pee to communicate with each other. This icon flags such nonessential information for you. On the other hand, if you just want to understand the basic concepts of housetraining, sidestep this icon and move on.

Where to Go From Here

If you haven't acquired your dog yet, or if she's just arrived, reading from the very beginning of this book and working your way through to the end is best. But if your canine companion has been with you for a while, or if you're just trying to solve a particular pooch potty problem, don't fret. Head to the table of contents or to the index, where you can find the topic that can help solve your dog's specific housetraining problems.

A large, white, stylized number '1' with a subtle drop shadow, positioned vertically on the left side of the page.

Preparing to Potty Train Your Pooch

IN THIS PART . . .

Before you can housetrain your dog, you need to prepare yourself for the task. In this part, you find out how to do just that, starting with understanding exactly what housetraining is. From there, you discover the importance of working with your dog's instincts to teach him basic bathroom manners, and you get some help deciding where your dog's bathroom should be, whether indoors or outdoors. Finally, you get a shopping list of what you need to housetrain your hound effectively and of what to feed him so you not only make the housetraining process easier but also safeguard his overall health and well-being.

- » Defining housetraining
- » Understanding why housetraining is important
- » Discovering two ways to housetrain
- » Dealing with the unexpected
- » Clarifying the housetrainer's role

Chapter 1

No, Virginia, It's Not That Hard: Understanding Housetraining Basics

Max, a 10-week-old Beagle, is delighting his new owner with his puppy antics but is dismaying her with his penchant for peeing all over her recently installed carpet. No matter how recently he tinkled outside, he always seems to have something left over with which to tinkle on the floor covering.

Allie, a 6-year-old Golden Retriever, would never pee on anyone's carpet. Her people can count on her to do her business three or four times a day: first thing in the morning, early in the afternoon, in the late afternoon (sometimes), and in the evening before she retires for the night. On the rare occasions that she needs an extra bathroom break, she lets her people know by heading to the back door and scratching it — or if her tummy is giving her trouble, by waking up one of her people to get her outside in time to avoid an accident.

Cody, a 3-year-old Chihuahua, can hold his water pretty well — sometimes. Other times, though, he seems to suffer from bathroom-manners amnesia or a sudden preference for taking a whiz any place except where he's supposed to.

Which of these dogs is housetrained? Which ones aren't? In this chapter, you not only find the answer to those two questions but also discover why housetraining plays such an important role in whether you and your dog can live happily ever after.

What Housetraining Is — and Why It Matters

To know whether your dog is really housetrained, you need to understand exactly what housetraining is. Unfortunately, most dictionaries aren't all that helpful here. For example, the *Random House Dictionary* offers a two-word definition: "to housebreak." That doesn't tell you much — after all, you're not teaching your dog to break anything! The *American Heritage Dictionary* offers the same terse definition, although it does add that the term is primarily British.



REMEMBER

No matter where the term *housetraining* originates, defining it still requires precision and directness. Simply put, *housetraining* is the process in which you teach your dog to eliminate when you want him to and where you want him to — and to refrain from eliminating at any other time or place.

That definition doesn't allow much room for errors or lapses. And clearly, when measured against those criteria, a dog who consistently does his duty outdoors or in a designated indoor area is fully housetrained. That's not the case, though, with a dog who usually tinkles outdoors, never tinkles outdoors, or only occasionally tinkles outdoors (or performs with similar levels of consistency in a predetermined indoor Bowser bathroom). Housetraining is one of those all-or-nothing cases. That being the case, Allie is the only dog in the chapter intro whom you can consider truly housetrained.

Why does such precision matter? Simple: An otherwise well-behaved, healthy dog who doesn't know proper pooch potty protocol is much more likely to lose her home than a similar dog who knows her bathroom basics. No human being likes to have his home turned into a multiroom canine toilet — and if such a human can't teach his dog to take her bathroom business elsewhere, that dog is likely to find herself going elsewhere.

Why Your Dog Can't Be "a Little Bit Housetrained"

Housetraining is an either-or proposition: Either a dog is house-trained, or she isn't. To say that a dog is "partially trained" or "a little bit housetrained" is like saying that a woman is "partially pregnant" or "a little bit pregnant." None of those terms compute.



REMEMBER

If you consider your dog to be "a little bit housetrained," you're really saying that he hasn't completely learned proper bathroom manners yet. That means you can't really rely on him to go to the bathroom only where and when you want him to.

Until your dog is totally housetrained, you always face the chance that Lassie will decide to use your brand new area rug as her toilet or that Laddie will choose to anoint your mother-in-law's prized Chippendale chair. And of course, for some dogs, especially puppies, those chances are way better than even. That's certainly the case with Max, the young Beagle from the chapter intro who's been using that new carpet as his own personal potty.

But owners of adult dogs like Cody, the Chihuahua who's occasionally leaving unwelcome puddles throughout his owner's abode, also cope with unreliable canines. Cody appears to have forgotten the lessons in bathroom manners his owner taught him years ago — or perhaps he never quite understood those lessons in the first place. Chapter 9 describes typical cases of pooches who appear to have forgotten the fine art of proper canine bathroom behavior. Or maybe Cody doesn't feel well. Chapter 10 focuses on why a pooch may pee or poop inappropriately — and what owners can do to solve such problems.

But for now, it's fair to say that although housetraining is an either-or proposition, there's definitely more than one way to teach a dog proper potty behavior. Before you start, though, you need to get yourself and your household ready for the task. Chapter 2 helps you prepare by giving you a primer on canine instincts and on how to capitalize on those instincts to help your dog become a happy housetrainee. Chapter 3 focuses on equipping you, your home, and your dog to ensure housetraining success. And Chapter 4 hones in on a crucial component of the housetraining process: food. After all, what goes in your dog must eventually come out, in one form or another!