

# ASK THE TRAINER

## WINTER WEATHER CAUSES HOUSETRAINING HEADACHES

Dear 4Paws,

*My dog has been reliably housetrained for the last few months. Recently, with the onset of the rainy cold weather she has started having accidents in the house again! What do I do?*

*-Tired of the Stinky Mess.*

Dear Tired:

It is not uncommon for dogs and puppies to backslide on their housetraining during the winter season.

First, is your dog being fed on a schedule or are you just leaving food down all day for her (free feeding)? If she is being free fed, the first thing to do is put her on a feeding schedule. Being on a schedule will help you regulate when she has to relieve herself.

Second, make sure you are using a good enzymatic cleaner to clean up the mess, so it doesn't continue to smell like an appropriate place for her to go to the bathroom.

Third, if your dog has been reliably housetrained before, you might want to take her to the vet to make sure there is nothing going on physically. When there's this kind of change in a dog that has previously been good with housetraining, there is frequently an underlying medical issue.

Fourth, if none of the above solves the problem, you may need to reinstitute a housetraining policy.



Temporarily restrict her access in the house. Either use a crate or baby gates to keep her out of certain areas of the house or when you are home, use a leash to keep her near you.

Start taking her outside at fairly regular intervals and stay outside with her until she goes. As she is going, you can use a command such as "Do your business," "Go potty," etc.

When she does go to the bathroom outside, give her lots of enthusiastic praise. If she doesn't, go back inside and again, keep her access to the

house restricted, either in a crate or with a leash. After 30 minutes or so, go back outside and try again.

In a few weeks, your dog will associate the command with eliminating and you'll be able to prompt her to go when you want her to.

One word of caution on picking the command you want to use - Make sure you use a phrase you'll be comfortable saying in public in the presence of others, and preferably choose a word or phrase you won't accidentally say in the house!

Also, pay attention for the signals she gives when she has to go. Maybe she sniffs around, paces, or circles around and looks at you. When you start to see signals that she may have to go take her immediately outside and give the command you are using. Again, stay out there with her until she goes and then praise her profusely for going outside.

If you keep up this sort of routine, pretty soon she'll be back on track again in no time.

### HOUSETRAINING FACTS

Adult dogs can be housebroken in the same way as puppies.

Puppies have limited bladder control.

Dogs & puppies like to be clean and sleep in a clean area.

All dogs do best when kept to a routine schedule.

Dogs have to go when:

They wake up

Within 1/2 hour after eating

Before they go to sleep