

OTHER HOUSE SOILING SITUATIONS

While I have covered the majority of the potty accidents issues, there are a few others which I think are more aptly termed “house soiling” incidents. *Note: Medical issues such as vaginitis, bladder infections, urinary tract infections (UTI), and other medical conditions causing potty accidents were previously covered.*

INCONTINENCE

Incontinence is the inability to control the excretory functions of urination and/or defecation. There are numerous reasons for and varying degrees of incontinence. Urinary incontinence is far more common than defecation incontinence. The key point is to realize incontinence is an “involuntary” bodily function. Do not confuse incontinence with “increased frequency” of urination or a housetraining issue. If your dog involuntarily releases their urine, whether it is a small leak or a full release, your vet should be consulted.

Incontinence can occur for various reasons such as overly weak sphincter muscles, disease, injury, old age, tumor or growth, neurological condition, extreme physical exertion, heat stroke, and others too numerous to list. Your dog should be evaluated to determine the cause of the incontinence. Your dog’s incontinence may occur sporadically or may be relatively constant. If it is sporadic, you need to try and determine a pattern. For example, what occurs just prior to the incident? This may provide the answers you or your vet needs to accurately assess the condition. If the incontinence is repetitive and/or ongoing, this would signal a medical situation or age related condition. I discuss geriatric incontinence in the section on aging dogs.

Some bitches can exhibit varying degrees of incontinence following the spay procedure. This is a relatively uncommon situation, but can occur. If the incontinence is related to being spayed, it may exhibit itself fairly soon after the procedure or it can surface several months to a couple of years after the procedure. You should NOT AVOID spaying your bitch just because this *might possibly* happen. The overwhelmingly responsible and incumbent reasons for spaying a bitch are far too important health wise and over population wise. Medication is often helpful with this form of incontinence. In addition to phenylpropanolomine, some vets find estrogen supplementation helpful in some cases.

Any form of incontinence should be evaluated by your veterinarian. Incontinence can signal a medical condition. Proper diagnosis and treatment could resolve the incontinence and, more importantly, could help your dog get treatment for a condition which, if left untreated, could advance and become serious or life threatening. Certainly, you would want these situations treated sooner, rather than later. If it is disease related, the disease may be treatable. This is especially true if the disease is caught in the early stages. If it is a growth or tumor, removal may resolve the incontinence and possibly save your dog’s life. If it is hormonal, your dog could receive hormone therapy. Some dogs (male and female) are helped by receiving an injection of a female hormone. These are just a few examples of why you would want to seek a veterinary evaluation of your dog’s

incontinence.

Some forms of incontinence are effectively treated with various medications. The most common is phenylpropanolomine (PPA). You may be aware this medication is no longer available for people due to medical concerns for humans. Phenylpropanolomine is still available for veterinary use because these concerns do not apply to the canine species. There are homeopathic remedies available for incontinence. You would need to consult with a Homeopathic Vet or a Holistic Vet. Some people have noted success using chiropractic and/or acupuncture treatments for incontinence. I have only read about this approach. I have used a chiropractor and acupuncturist for Treasure to help with various dog sport injuries and there is no doubt both have helped. However, I cannot attest to the efficacy of these methods for the specific treatment of incontinence. If you consider one of these methods, be sure to research these treatments thoroughly in the area of canine incontinence.

Note: Many laypersons practice homeopathy and holistic medicine. I have no issue with using alternative forms of treatment for the dogs. However, I strongly urge you to seek out a D.V.M. (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) if you chose to pursue homeopathic or holistic treatment for your dog in any regard. Many regular veterinarians are acknowledging the importance and co-existence of Holistic Medicine in the treatment of dogs. Personally, I feel the best of all possible scenarios is a compatible and complementary melding of conventional veterinary medicine and holistic veterinary medicine. In our enlightened world, I do not feel there is room to wholly or arbitrarily eschew alternative forms of veterinary medical care. Nor, do I feel it is rational or reasonable to eschew conventional veterinary care and treatments in favor of a completely holistic or homeopathic approach to your dog's veterinary care. This is strictly a personal opinion and not intended to assail or offend anyone.

LIVING WITH INCONTINENCE

If you are unable to resolve your dog's incontinence, then you must find a way to make the situation work. Unfortunately, many people determine they cannot live with an incontinent dog. Their solution is to take the dog to an animal shelter or turn them into a rescue organization. Many will banish the dog to the yard, the garage, or the basement, only allow them to be in one room of the house, or keeping them crated almost constantly. I cannot imagine how the dog must feel when they have been abandoned or banished from their family and they do not have a clue as to why! Moreover, keeping a dog crated almost all the time constitutes animal cruelty.

Many owners will euthanize the dog and assuage their guilt by saying they are doing the best thing for the dog. Granted, there are times when the health or the age of the dog is such that they no longer have a reasonable "quality of life". In many of these cases, incontinence is also part of their physiological circumstances. However, incontinence is not and should not be a sole determining factor in assessing "quality of life". Many dogs, young and old, who are incontinent in one degree or another are otherwise very healthy and happy dogs. Unless there are other medical or physical considerations, incontinence

does not impair a dog's ability to run, jump, play, chase squirrels, chase their ball, scarf their food, bark at the unknown, get tummy rubs, run to greet you when you return home, snuggle with you at night, comfort you when you are sad or ill, and love you with all their heart.

I am sure you do not want your furniture or carpet ruined or to wake up in a wet bed. However, if you truly love your dog and if you accept that we are NOT a disposable society, it is incumbent on you to find a way to make it work. Many of us develop some form of incontinence in our latter years. All you have to do is look at all the products on the market to help with adult incontinence and all of the commercials geared to sell these products and diminish the embarrassment of adult incontinence. Hmmm, if you look at it that way, you may well know exactly how to handle the situation with your dog.

For female dogs with only urinary incontinence, you can use the doggie sanitary panties or something similar. A dog's urination requires a good deal more "absorbency" than the normal doggie "sanitary pads" provide. Consider using regular "incontinence pads" which have the needed absorbency and are designed to keep much of the moisture from direct contact with the skin. You can design your own panties or find a way to attach these "incontinence pads" to the commercial doggie sanitary panties. Also, there are some commercial doggie incontinence/piddle panty products.

For the male dogs with only urinary incontinence, you can use something called a "belly band". This is a band of fabric designed to fit your dog's girth and be snug enough to not slip off of the key area, but not so snug as to cause discomfort or skin irritation. You would need to find some way to "securely" attach an incontinence pad that will cover the needed area. Consider having several of these belly bands so you always have a fresh one when needed.

For either gender, you can use a regular infant diaper. Make sure the diaper fits snugly enough to stay in place, not allow leakage, or cause discomfort. This is no different than properly fitting an infant. You would cut a hole in the diaper for the "tail" to fit through. If dealing solely with urinary incontinence, be sure to remove the diaper so your dog can have normal bowel movements at appropriate times. To be honest, I think it is best to remove the diaper anytime you let your dog outside so they can still do all of their normal outside potty stuff. This would require more effort on your part to put on and take off the diaper every time you let them outside. For me, this would be the way I would want to do it. Granted, if your dog is physically impaired or you are physically limited in some way, it is probably best to leave the diaper on except for when they need to defecate. However, you would need to know when to give them ample opportunity to accomplish this and would need to ensure you did indeed allow this without them being encumbered by the diaper over their rump. If you do not remove the diaper for their defecation needs, they WILL defecate in the diaper and this will be far more of a clean up issue. [*Note: Dogs with defecation incontinence need their panties or diaper changed as soon after used as possible!*]

Speaking of clean up, this is crucial when using the doggie diapers or belly bands. Just as

with infants, the dogs will develop sores and rashes if the urine or feces remains in contact with their skin for extended periods. What I recommend is to get some of the baby wipes and keep them with the doggie diapers. When you change their diaper, clean them very good with the baby wipes. Many of the baby wipes have moisturizers in them and if your dog does not have a skin reaction, this may even be good for their skin. You will need to change your dog's diaper as soon after it is soiled as possible! If you work and your dog is at home all day, try to have a friend to come and change the diaper at least once during the day. Additionally, you will want to wash your dog's diapered area a minimum of twice a day. Once every morning and once in the evening would be good. You would want to use a doggie soap. The dog's skin (pH factor) is different than ours. There are products for dogs called "self rinse" shampoos. These may accommodate this process. If their skin gets a bit dry from the washing, use some sort of moisturizer or skin conditioner specifically for the dogs. Humilac is an excellent product and can be used as a "rinse" or as a spray.

If your dog develops a rash, sores, or skin irritations of any sort, you need to treat this properly. If you do not, the situation will only increase in severity. Keep in mind, if your dog is hurting, itching, stinging, or in discomfort they will not understand why. They will only know this is happening and they will deal with it as dogs do, by biting or chewing off or through the diaper and then licking, biting, or chewing the area that is itching, stinging, hurting, or causing them discomfort! If this occurs, you will have a more difficult situation to deal with.

Let's talk about furniture. If you have a dog who is leaking small amounts of urine or has only the occasional bladder release, you can use the diapers or belly bands OR you can cover your furniture. Even if using the diapers, you may want to consider covering your furniture in case of leakage. I came up with this when Ryan had his issues. For his crate mat, I put a garbage bag over the inside cushion then put the mat cover over that. For the couch he loved, I used a twin size mattress cover that repelled liquid. Then, I used a twin sized fitted sheet to cover the whole sitting area of the couch. You will be surprised how perfectly twin sized sheets fit over most couch cushions. The fitted sheet I used matched my decor, so to speak. Most visitors to my home during this time did not even notice the sheet until they sat on the couch and the plastic mattress cover made a crinkly sound. My visitors never sat in a soiled area. When there was an incident, I changed everything immediately. All of these precautions were just for the infrequent times when there was a bladder release and they protected my furniture. Also, I put a liquid repelling mattress cover on my bed. By the way, I have returned to using these protective measures with my old man who is not fully incontinent, but is having some minor leakage from time to time. In case you are wondering how he gets on the furniture in his old age, I had ramps built to fit my couch and my bed.

As you can see there are many ways you can live with your dog's incontinence. The ONLY limitation you have is your desire to make it work and your willingness to be creative and put in some personal effort. When you look at the bigger picture, if you love your dog you will be more than willing to put out whatever effort is needed to allow them to continue living with you and still be able preserve your home and furnishings.

MARKING

Let me explain some basics regarding the marking behavior of dogs. There are two manners of marking. One is the dog leaves their “mark” in a pristine (so to speak) environment. An example would be when visiting a friend’s house where no other dogs or animals have ever been. The other is the dogs “mark OVER” where another dog or animal had previously urinated or defecated or been. While most people think marking is a male behavior, both genders “mark”. Bitches usually squat, but they can also “hike”. Most males develop the hiking behavior for urination. They can begin to lift their leg at all different ages. I have seen male dogs attempt periodic leg lifting as early as eight weeks and have seen others not exhibit it until a year or two of age.

Additionally, I have seen some males who never lift their leg. Personally, I do not read anything of consequence into any of these variant time frames. If a male does not lift his leg by a year or so, I will watch for other physical signs. Meaning, I listen for clicking sounds when the dog lies down or stands up. I watch their gaiting (walking) and their running and jumping. I do not particularly worry about this, but do want to be observant and make sure there is not a physiological reason for the dog not lifting their leg. Consider that many geriatric dogs will begin to exhibit a combination of urination behaviors because of arthritis or other age related issues. It is normal to see an aging dog hike sometimes, squat sometimes, and just stand on all fours leaning forward slightly. This tells us some physical issues can inhibit, modify, or affect a dog’s normal leg lifting (hiking) behavior. Consequently, it makes sense to look closely at a young adult male who does not hike to see if there is an underlying or developing physiological factor. These could include one rear leg not strong enough to support the dog when lifting the other leg, limited coordination, or any of the leg, hip, or lower spinal issues some dogs can develop. Very seldom is this the case, but it can occur and it is always better to catch something of this nature sooner, rather than later. If there is no physiological variable, I would not be concerned.

When looking at the marking behavior, you need to understand what marking is all about in “dog speak”. Marking is one of the most important elements of a dog’s natural and instinctual “message system”. When the dogs urinate or defecate they simultaneously exude pheromones. The pheromones contain a tremendous amount of information which is read/interpreted by other dogs and/or animals. The most basic information provided includes gender, health, and age. However, this message system is much more refined than most of us realize. I will explain this in more detail as I discuss actual “marking” behaviors that can create some house soiling problems.

First, I need to explain the difference between marking (house soiling issue) and urinating (housetraining issue). When a dog urinates, there is large amount of urine indicating a full bladder release. If your dog releases their bladder, this is normal urination and indicates your dog is NOT housetrained or there is a medical issue. If there is a small amount of urine emitted, this is marking. The small amount I refer to can be anything from sprinkles to quarter size to half dollar size urine spots. Just because a dog “hikes” on your furniture

does not mean they are “marking”. They may well be engaging in normal urination. You would need to determine which behavior your dog is exhibiting and deal with it accordingly. (*Note: Some bitches lift their leg to urinate!*)

Now, I will explain why dogs mark. Marking is an intricate message system for the dogs to communicate with other dogs and animals. We need to look at this issue by thinking about the dogs living in the dog/dog world as opposed to the dog/human world. Their innate and instinctual message system allows them to communicate valuable information to other dogs and animals who may be in the same area or vicinity the dogs find themselves. Additionally, they read the messages left by other dogs and animals.

The dogs communicate their gender, age, and health. They can use marking to “claim territory”, telling other dogs or animals this is their turf and to tread lightly. The dogs are able to communicate that they are an animal to be reckoned with. When the dogs send this message in their own territory, this tells any visitors to be careful because an animal of consequence has claimed this turf. If the dog enters a previously claimed territory, they can communicate that they are a force to be reckoned with. This can be to warn the current inhabitants that the visitor may usurp their turf or that they are formidable and it would be wise to allow them to pass through this territory unimpeded.

These visitors can also communicate that they are NOT formidable. Most people think that marking behavior is related to dominance which is not always the case. The dog can communicate they intend no harm, no encroachment. They only want to pass through this area safely. Many owners on a walk with their dog can watch the body language and accompanying behaviors of their dog and if they know how to read their dog, the owner can discern much about the area as viewed by their dog. For example, you can get a good sense of whether there are numerous dogs and/or animals who freely roam the area.

If your dog becomes furtive or over reactive to sights, sounds, movement, you can bet they have read a message from a very formidable, possibly threatening presence. If your dog is a dominant dog, they may become more forceful and confident in the physical presentation of themselves. You may see them go on alert more readily than is normal for your dog. You may notice them kick their back legs more forcefully after urinating, marking, or defecating. You may see them walk through the area with more purpose. You may see them walk more slowly, stopping more frequently, staying closer to you, pressing themselves against you periodically in a protective manner. All of these actions are the dog’s reactions to the messages left by a previous dog or animal. They instinctually proceed through this area being prepared to react instantly to any threat to you or to them. When the dogs mark in these situations, they are saying, “Don’t mess with me or my owner (pack)!”

If your dog is of a meeker nature, they may also be more furtive but with insecurity and apprehension. They may proceed slower, but without the presence and confidence of a more dominant dog. When these dogs mark, they will leave the message that they are of no threat and they mean no harm. The message this dog leaves “asks” to be allowed to pass through this territory unimpeded.

Dogs are very smart and they do not want an encounter that may cause them harm or one they may lose. Granted, some dogs have more common sense than others, just as some people have more common sense than others. But, as a general rule, whether a dog is dominant or meek in nature, when they are on a walk with their owner, they will NOT go looking for trouble. The dog knows they are on someone else's turf. They have no way of knowing if "all" the animal smells are part of one pack or if they are loners. On any walk, your dog will encounter literally hundreds of messages from other dogs and animals. If they somehow sense danger or a threat from a message, they cannot be sure that all of the other messages are not part of the "pack". A dog will not want to cause a confrontation when they are uncertain of their ability to survive that confrontation. Consequently, they communicate as much as they can through their marking and also their body language and demeanor as they traverse through different territories.

However, be assured that if they are confronted or find themselves in a situation they perceive as a threat, they WILL respond accordingly. This will happen whether you have the dominant dog or the meeker dog. When they find themselves in a situation of this nature, dogs of different personality types react/respond similarly. While their basic persona is dramatically different, both personality types will be governed by the instinctual need to protect themselves, their pack, and to survive. Such is the nature of being a dog.

One thing I can tell you is when the dogs have reactions, there is a valid reason. Some of this validity can be created by their owner holding the leash. I will discuss this in the section dealing with walking and meeting dogs or people. When your dog shows you anything aberrant when on a walk, you need to respect what they are telling you. They know more from the smells (and sounds) they encounter than you could ever conceive. Consider the dogs who suddenly will not allow their owner to move forward. They will lean against their owner, refuse to move forward, pull them in a different direction, grab their clothes and try to pull them away from something. After the fact, the owner sees a snake or a menacing dog comes into view. The dogs can sense danger or a threat long before people can see or sense the same thing.

You may be wondering why I have gone into all of this in a discussion of marking. I wanted you to understand that the dogs "get" much information from the messages left by other dogs and animals. Consequently, this should help you to understand the depth of the information your own dog imparts when they mark, whether this is outside on a walk or in your house. If you have truly determined the behavior your dog exhibits is "marking" and not regular urination, you have to realize they are doing what dogs do. They are communicating something to someone.

The key at this point is to determine WHAT they are communicating and WHY. When you move to a new home, your dog will be drawn to MARK their territory. They are not doing this for your benefit, per se. They are merely letting any other dogs or animals who may enter their territory that this is THEIR turf. If this is a brand new home and no other dog or animal has ever lived in this home, your dog will still have the instinctual need to

mark their turf. Your reasoning is no dogs have been here and no other dogs will be, so why is my dog “marking”. The dogs only know they are in a new environment. They cannot reason that no other dog or animal will have access to this territory. Their instincts tell them they must let other dogs and animals KNOW they are there. If the home you move into is not brand new, the very same behavior will occur and possibly with more fervency. You will not know if another dog or animal has EVER been in that home. It is really immaterial whether another dog or animal has ever been IN this home, the fact remains your dog will need to define their turf. Let me throw one other thought into this equation. People (workers) have walked IN this home and they did not remove their shoes. They have walked in other places where their shoes have picked up molecules of other animals and dogs! They deposit these molecules and smells in the home. There is no pristine environment. Even a pristine environment would need to be “claimed” by the pack. For the dogs, this means leaving their mark.

You are probably asking what you should do when you move to another home with a dog who is truly houstrained. You can allow your dog to “mark” their turf ONCE. Or, you can ask them not to mark, but to claim it by their presence. You will want to be ever vigilant with your dog for the first few days because their instincts will be to “mark”. Keep a close eye on your dog and do not allow them access to areas you cannot watch them. This is just like you would do with a pup. When they sniff “with purpose” you can bet the next thing they will do is to mark. When your dog is walking around and sniffing with purpose, you need to follow them and the instant they pause, spend extra time at one place sniffing intently....get ready! In the next instant, the head will come up and they will start to lift that leg or squat!!! At that precise moment, you say EHHH!!! Then take them outside to potty. Or, you can use the shake can. (*Note: See the shake can section*).

The point is to startle/stop the behavior in the instant before it occurs. If you are successful at this for the first couple of days, your dog will become comfortable with the new environment and will realize they have claimed their territory by their presence. Understand your houstrained dog has learned not to potty IN their home. Also, recognize they are being driven by their instincts to do what dogs must do. These behaviors are no different than the ones they exhibit on your walks.

Let me share with you what I did when I moved into my home many years ago. I was fortunate enough to own the house and have work done for a month prior to moving in. I was at the house frequently to oversee the work being done, so my scent was all over the house. I took clothing (t-shirts I had slept in), used bath towels, and a set of sheets I had slept on. I placed these items all around the house. I took several of Beowulf's toys and some t-shirts and towels he had slept on and some I had rubbed over him. I placed these items around the house. Then, I took Beowulf on several trips to the house while the workmen were there and when they were not. I took every step with him and watched his every move. When I saw him becoming overly intrigued by a smell, nose to the ground with a purpose, I went on alert. The instant he stopped walking and sniffed one area a bit longer, I got ready and the second he stepped into position I said EHHH!! Then, I took him outside. We went through this process several times while all the work was being done. By the time I moved in, Beowulf had claimed the premises by his presence. Of

course, he had marked his front yard and his back yard. But, he knew the house was his and we did not have a single marking incident. You need to factor in that Beowulf is a very macho, very dominant male dog!

This is relatively amazing when you consider the previous owners had dogs who did use the house on occasion. While I was unable to detect the previous dogs' urination issues, there is no doubt Beowulf did. I did not replace the carpeting before I moved in because I was getting a pup within a couple of months. So, I decided to wait a year before replacing the carpet. When the carpet guys pulled up the old carpet, it became apparent how profusely the previous dogs had urinated. However, Beowulf had been able to handle all of this because of the way I approached it. Just a note, the pup I got had only ONE potty accident in the house and as always, it was MY accident!

I was prepared for Beowulf to have a marking incident because I understand this aspect of the dogs. The way I handled this and the success we had, proved to me that you CAN deal with a situation of this nature successfully, even with a very dominant and commanding dog like Beowulf. Believe me, Beowulf "wanted" to mark the house. I did my part and he did not end up doing any marking IN the house. The key here is I did my part. The other key element is I was prepared for what was basically inevitable, had I not been 110% on my part!

I want to cover a side note regarding marking in a home. When you get new carpeting or even a new area rug, be aware that the chemicals in new carpets and rugs simulate the urine enzymes of dogs. This will cause most dogs (male and female) to urinate and/or defecate on the new carpet or rug. You would handle this in the same manner as previously discussed.

Okay, let's move to another scenario. You take your dog to another environment like a hotel or the home of a friend or family member. When I initially take my dogs into one of these or similar situations, I am right with them constantly. Why? I am watching for the very same behaviors I described above. This is even more crucial if the people we visit have other animals. In hotels, it is a guarantee other dogs have been in and pottied in the room. I make sure my dogs are given plenty of freedom to investigate the new environment. I stay right with them watching their behaviors. I stay ready for the signs of an impending "leg lift or squat" and react instantly as described. After being in a new environment for a small amount of time, the dogs are comfortable and do not feel drawn to marking.

Note: When going to any new environment, especially hotel rooms, please check the surroundings for things that may be unhealthy or an issue for your dog. In hotel rooms, check all around and under the beds, furniture, and counters for items or food left by previous guests. I have found many things that I cannot begin to describe. At one hotel, I found a box of "rat poison" under the bed. Checking around the hotel room should be done prior to bringing your dog into the room. I assure you, if there is something there they will find it before you do and this could be too late. You would also do this when visiting a friend or family member, especially if they do not have dogs. There can be

things your friends or relatives do not think of as being possibly harmful or inviting to a visiting dog.

When you have a dog who is housetrained and you bring in another pup/dog or other animal (even a hamster), you may need to be vigilant for possible marking incidents with your resident dog. They may feel they need to send a message to this dog or animal. This will be especially true if the new dog is an adult dog versus a pup. Also, realize if the pup or dog has a potty accident in the house, your resident dog may feel they need to answer back in the canine message system. There is also the aspect of a dog being “drawn” to potty where another dog has pottied. You will want to factor in the possibility of your resident dog “acting out” because a new pup/dog has been added to the mix. The manner you handle this situation can either resolve or exacerbate their reactions. Are they just sending normal dog messages to the new dog OR are they acting out because you are indicating the new dog has a more favored status, changing the pack pecking order? Is the resident dog feeling displaced, are they feeling threatened by the new dog, are they reading certain messages from the new dog?

There is another situation which can cause a dog to begin urinating OR marking. This is when a new “person” is added to the pack. The resident dog can feel they need to send the same messages to this new human pack member exactly as they would to a new canine pack member. They can also be exhibiting stress. Your dog can be distressed because their schedule is different. It can be because the new person interacts with the resident dog in a manner they are unaccustomed to handling. The person may not be favorably inclined to your dog. While the person may seem fine in your presence, they can interact differently with your dog when you are not present.

A situation encountered frequently is bringing in a new adult dog and there appears to be a “pissing contest” that ensues. If you have adopted or brought in a new adult dog, they have to determine their place. This can affect the resident dog and/or the new dog. If the new dog is dominant, they may well be sending the signs that they are here to take over. Or, they can send the message that they mean no harm, they are no threat, that they are willing to be of a lesser status. This is crucial information to be imparted. The resident dog may be answering back with their own messages or feel the need to send a message to the new dog. As the pack leader, you have the most important role. How you introduce and integrate the new adult dog into your pack will make the transition easy or can create problems.

When a dog “marks”, this is not always a sign of dominance. It can be sending a signal of submission. Witness the circumstances of “submissive urination”. Witness the dogs who are scared to death of their owner or are very submissive to their owner. Occasionally, when in close proximity with that owner the dog may actually urinate on their owner’s leg or shoe. This is most commonly seen as a sign of dominance and many times that is true. However, it can also mean the reverse! The dogs can urinate to show submission. *(Note: See the submissive urination section.)*

The fact remains that the dogs are real and true in their emotions. They are governed by

their instincts. When they show anything aberrant from what you have come to expect from them, there is a very specific and valid reason. It is up to you to determine WHAT they are saying, whether to you, another dog, or another person. Listen to what your dog is telling you, communicating to you. They are reacting as a dog does. They are being a dog, which is the only way they can be. This would be no different than you trying to communicate in a foreign culture. It would be easier for you because it is still a human culture. The dogs are communicating within their species, the canine culture.

SUBMISSIVE URINATION AND EXCITEMENT URINATION

Submissive urination and excitement urination have basically the same physical presentation. However, they occur as the result of different emotional reactions as the respective terms indicate. Pups/dogs can exhibit submissive or excitement urination in varying degrees. Both of these are more common in pups, but can occur in adult dogs.

Submissive urination occurs when dogs instinctually need to show submission. In the dog/dog world, this behavior can mean the difference between surviving or not. The reason this is more common in pups is because the nature of being a pup pretty much dictates they should be submissive to older dogs and because their sphincter muscles tend to be weaker. Remember, the dogs interact with us and communicate with us in dog speak using the same language they would use with another dog. The pups do not know all the appropriate ways to show submission in all situations. Their life experiences have not taught them this, yet. They have not learned all of their “puppy manners”. What they have is an instinctual mechanism that allows them to respond to older dogs with the most basic form of submission. One reason a pups’ sphincter muscles initially tend to be weaker than an adult dog’s, may be to physically accommodate this submissive/self protection reflex.

In most cases, a dog will submissively urinate without the conscious action/squatting posture of normal urination and without a conscious thought process. Rather, this form of urination is more of an instinctual reflex/response and can vary from sprinkles to a puddle. The amount of urination can be affected by the strength of the sphincter muscles, how full their bladder is, and/or the extent of the “submissiveness” they are showing. For example, when pups encounter a very forceful dog or person or when they are being reprimanded harshly or physically they can have a full bladder release.

Although some breeds seem to be more prone to excessive submissive urination, it is not truly breed specific nor gender specific. I think the reason some breeds have a higher propensity for submissive urination and excitement urination is that these are the breeds which seem to have the weakest sphincter muscles when they are very young. This is merely an assumption on my part.

Note: There are some instances when the dog feels they must display extreme submission and they will actually squat or stand and have a full release. This is still submissive urination. You have to evaluate the situation and circumstances. For example, I have seen some people overtly reprimand a dog. The dog will show all signs of submission, but

the reprimand continues or increases because the person thinks they are making their point with the dog. The dog does not know anything else to do except to be even more submissive! There are people who take pride in their dog showing this level of submission. Think about someone who says, "I beat the dog until they pissed all over themselves!" In some of the most extreme situations, the dog will even release their bowels. All I can say to this is how very sad for the dog. Anyone who can do this or anything even remotely related to this, does not deserve to have a dog in their life. And, there is no doubt the dog does not deserve to have to endure this type of treatment!

When the pups/dogs show submission, they usually make themselves "smaller" by cowering, lowering their body to the ground, or curling their body in either a sit or down position. Often they will roll over on their back which is the most overt form of submission. When submissive urination accompanies these submissive postures, there can be the sprinkles or the puddle and if they roll onto their back, they sprinkle or wet themselves. Submissive urination is a pup/dog doing all they can do to show submission, to acknowledge their lower position in the pack pecking order. It is very important not to scold or reprimand the pup for this behavior. If you do, this will only increase their sense of submission and they will be instinctually triggered to show even more submission. It is up to you to help your pup learn they can be appropriate in the pack pecking order without the need for and reflexive action of submissive urination. This requires you to fully understand what is occurring with the pup/dog. Realize that when they have submissive urination it is truly a physical function caused by an emotional reaction. Submissive urination is NOT a potty accident or a housetraining issue.

With submissive urination, there are certain situations which will automatically elicit this reaction and often exacerbates the response. These include greeting the pup/dog too excitedly, high pitched tone of voice, loud voice, large or expansive arm or hand movements, sudden or quick movements which can startle the pup/dog or cause them to cringe/cower. One major catalyst to causing this urination response is "leaning over" a pup/dog because this is the most dominant or threatening position in dog speak. If they are prone to submissiveness, this posture will elicit an instinctual display of submission from the pup/dog. You should kneel down so your presence/posture is not overbearing, imposing, dominate, or threatening.

So, how do you handle submissive urination? When you come home, have little or no interaction with the pup/dog UNTIL they go outside and empty their bladder. Say little, if anything, and minimize any physical interaction with the pup/dog until they have been outside to potty. After they have pottied, you will still want to keep your initial greeting and interaction relatively low key. You would do this EVERY time you come home, even if you have only been gone 30 minutes! When it is physically (bladder wise) safe to interact with the pup/dog, you do so only WHEN they are "upright", all four paws on the ground. This forces them to maintain a physical posture which can diminish the instinctual reflex of submissively urinating because standing is the least submissive posture. When interacting with your pup/dog at any point, keep in mind the physical, auditory, and visual catalysts which tend to trigger submissive urination.

When you have an overly submissive pup/dog, you may have a “stop/start” interaction process. This means you do not interact when they roll over or fold down (crouch) into a lower/submissive posture because they will almost certainly urinate. The second they roll over, fold down, or any other behavior you recognize as overt submission which could likely facilitate submissive urination, CEASE interacting. When they upright themselves, you can pet or play again. This means the only time the dog “gets your attention” is when they are in a “non-submissive” posture. *(Note: Do not worry about this affecting their view of you as their pack leader. This will not compromise your pack leader status or position. You are helping them to develop a bit more self confidence within their pack and allowing them to become the dog they can truly be.)*

Give them a treat when they are upright to provide added reinforcement for the desired behavior which will also act as a diversion from the submissive reflexes. This helps to prevent continued patterning of the submissive urination responses until your pup grows out of this phase and their sphincter muscles strengthen. Also, remember if you get upset, scold, or reprimand the pup/dog for submissive urination this will ONLY exacerbate the situation. You will be reinforcing and validating that they need to continue to display extreme submission. You will be reinforcing the very behavior you want to prevent. If you get upset, the pup/dog will reason that they were NOT submissive enough. This will cause increased submissive responses from your dog.

Some pups/dogs exhibit what I call **excitement urination**. The physical presentation is similar to submissive urination. However, the emotional catalyst is excitement, rather than submission. Many of the aspects I discussed regarding submissive urination apply to excitement urination and most likely occur with the pups who have weaker sphincter muscles. This is similar to young children who can have a potty accident when they get overly excited.

While my Golden did not have a submissive urination problem, he would on occasion exhibit excitement urination. When Ryan would greet people he was super excited to see, he would jump and hop around, wag his tail so hard I was sure it would fall off, and make those really adorable Golden pup sounds. On occasion, he would sprinkle during all this physical and emotional excitement. Excitement urination does not seem to occur as consistently or as frequently as submissive urination.

The pups will almost always grow out of this issue when their sphincter muscles are stronger. You would follow many of the submissive urination recommendations when interacting with your pup if they have a tendency for excitement urination. You will not have to be as concerned about their submissive postures. However, you will have to be aware of over exciting the pup/dog before they have released their bladder or had a scheduled potty break. When playing with your pup, if they start to get overly excited and it has been awhile since they were outside, take them outside immediately. When anyone greets your pup/dog make sure the greeting is kept low key until the pup/dog overcomes their initial excitement. Again, you should not get upset, scold, or reprimand your pup for this behavior. If you do, they will not have a clue what they are getting in trouble for because they are not even aware they have urinated. In fact, if you watch closely when a

pup exhibits excitement urination and then notice the urine droplets or puddle, they will sniff it like they would urine left by another dog. This form of urination is not something they are doing consciously. It is a physical situation created by weak sphincter muscles coupled with over-excitement.

I have to share an interesting story about Ryan's excitement urination. At two years of age, he had outgrown his problem and had gone a year without an incident of excitement urination. I took Ryan to visit a friend he had not seen in over a year. Ryan had learned to sit to greet people. He had a special affinity for this person, but he still sat as he had learned to do. My friend began to pet Ryan and started talking to him in a high pitched, excited voice. Ryan stayed sitting and his Golden tail was swishing the ground. Within a few seconds there was a puddle coming out from under Ryan. This was the last time he ever had an incident of excitement urination. However, my friend did have another similar incident with another pup. This was a four month old pup who had never exhibited submissive or excitement urination. As my friend held the pup in her arms, she began talking to the pup in her high pitched, excited voice. The pup released all over her. To my knowledge, this was the last time my friend used that particular tone of voice to greet and interact with any puppies.

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF HOUS TRAINING

Alternative forms of houstraining include paper training, piddle pads, and many other methods. Basically, it means "alternative" to the yard or outside potty. I have heard every reason for why people use these alternative methods. Usually, it is a matter of convenience and/or not knowing any better and not understanding the ramifications of doing so. As I discussed previously, houstraining is a purely "human" concept. It is a very complex thought process and is actually contradictory to the basic nature of a dog which means that the dogs potty whenever and wherever the urge hits. The houstraining concept is difficult enough for the pups/dogs when they are only being trained to potty outside. However, when you throw in an alternative method (option), you further confuse the issue and make it far more difficult for the pup/dog to lock in on a specific and patterned behavior.

Most people who think they have successfully paper trained (newspaper or piddle pads) their dog, say that their dog is very good and only has an occasional accident. The reality is the dog is not houstrained IF they still have the occasional accident. The exceptions to this are when there is another variable involved like a medical issue, a change in routine, or any of the many circumstances discussed in the previous sections of the book. When the dog is houstrained and barring any unusual circumstances or situations, there should be no accidents. If the dog has an occasional accident and none of the exceptions apply, then the dog is not fully houstrained.

What actually occurs is the dog's potty "needs" and their outside potty "access" just happen to be in sync most of the time. This means the dog is provided outside potty access coincidental with their potty needs. The "accidents" occur when those two elements are not in sync; do not coincide. Also, as pups mature, their bladders gradually

increase in size which means they do not have to urinate as frequently. Consequently, owners often develop the false sense that their dog is housetrained. The dog does not truly understand they should not potty IN the house. Bottom line, when they need to go and if the outside potty access is not given at that time, there will be an accident. These same aspects apply to defecation accidents, but these are less common.

When you allow your pup/dog to urinate or defecate IN the house, you are reinforcing the instinctual nature of the dog to potty whenever and wherever they need to go. It is difficult enough for them to grasp the concept of one place is acceptable and one place is not. So, when you “allow” them the acceptable OPTION/reinforcement of pottying IN the house in any regard, you are making it nearly impossible for them to truly and completely grasp this very complex thought process. I know there are many methods proffered and some people have had success with them. These cases are the exceptions to the rule. To be honest, most of these cases are not 100% successful if the owners are honest about the occasional accident.

I firmly believe when we “allow” the dogs to potty in the house, actually provide them an “acceptable” place indoors, all we do is make it nearly impossible for the dog to ever connect fully that they should not (by our rules) potty in the house. In fact, you are reinforcing pottying IN the house. The most important reason my recommended “yard potty pen” facilitates housetraining is because it creates a concrete and tangible distinction between inside and outside potty for the pup/dog. Consequently, the reverse is also true. Providing an acceptable indoor potty place is giving permission for your dog to potty IN the house. In this scenario, how can the dog ever make the concrete distinction between inside and outside potty? Let’s be honest, the people who use the papers and piddle pads place the pup/dog on the paper or piddle pads and will even keep “used” portions to draw the dog to this area. Moreover, they praise the dog for using the paper or piddle pads. Think about that for a moment, praising the dog for pottying IN the house! This process reinforces and actually encourages the dog to potty IN the house. The dogs are praised and treated for pottying IN the house. You are reinforcing the very behavior you ultimately do not want the dog to somehow, someday not engage in.

One of the most common alternative methods is to paper the entire area the dog is given access to whether it is the kitchen, utility room, bathroom, or even a large crate. The idea is to gradually reduce the papered/covered area. This may appear on the surface to work, albeit the people will say the pup/dog “almost” always hits the paper. The key here is “almost”. The reality is the dog does not want their potty to be where they eat and sleep and they really do not want to get in it if they can avoid it. But, they will still go off the paper IF the urge hits. The dogs trained this way only succeed in their housetraining when the paper is completely removed. The reason is because this is when the “real” housetraining begins “anew”. At this point, the pup will have a larger bladder, but you are basically at square one of pattern training your dog that one place is acceptable and one place is not.

I don’t think the paper or the piddle pads, unto themselves, has anything to do with the pups/dogs understanding one place is acceptable and one place is not. If they are being

drawn to using the paper or pads, it has more to do with keeping their living quarters clean or because they have been patterned to a specific “bathroom” area and the paper just happens to be there. Remember, even a dog’s natural potty behaviors are somewhat patterned which is why they usually end up creating sort of a doggie bathroom in their yard. This is the area where the dog will “almost” always potty. If you want to prove me out on this, move the papers to a different area in the house. Your dog will still use the same area/place with or without the papers. The dog may use the papers in the new location, but they will also use the previous area that now has NO papers because this area/place is ostensibly their designated/patterned potty area.

Some people have successfully housetrained a pup/dog when they started with the papers or piddle pads and graduated to outside potty. When this approach works it has nothing to do with starting by using the papers or piddle pads. The truth is at whatever point they succeeded, this only occurred when the alternative option had been removed. It was at this juncture that the real housetraining occurred. It may appear easier on the surface, but what really happens is the dog has a larger bladder and I can assure you these people will have many potty accidents UNLESS they are very consistent and rigid in their dog’s potty schedule and outside potty access. Basically, what they are doing is “housetraining from scratch” an older pup/dog with a larger bladder.

Some people use a larger crate than is needed for their pup/dog so they can use paper or piddle pads in the back of the crate. When this is done, the dog is being patterned to potty in their crate.

The overriding majority of people who opt for the paper or piddle pads will experience their pup/dog shredding the papers or the piddle pads. The reason is because these items do not really have any meaning to them regarding pottying. Rather, the papers or piddle pads are merely another item in their environment they can play with. When pups play with anything, they use their mouths and their paws and this leads to the shredding or tearing up of the papers or piddle pads. The pups/dogs may use the paper or piddle pads to soak up or cover the urine or poop because they do not want to get in it and will do whatever they can to avoid doing so. Think about when you have seen a dog hop over a spot in the yard or on a walk. You can bet that it is where a dog or animal recently urinated or pooped.

Many people say they HAVE TO use the paper or piddle pads because they live in an area of the country where there is excessive snowfall or extremely cold temperatures. My first thought is what the heck are you doing getting a pup at the time you know your environmental factors will be this extreme. My second thought is that it is the owners who do not want to be in the extreme cold or do not want to regularly clear snow to provide a potty area. Granted, there are times when the weather can be over the top. There are times when it IS too cold for a pup whose body thermostat is not fully set. Ideally, I would hope prospective dog owners would factor these elements into the time frame they bring a pup home.

However, we do not live in a perfect world and even the most conscientious prospective

dog owner can have their pup conceived, born, and ready to come home at the most inopportune time of the year. When this is the case and the owners ultimately want to train their pup/dog to the outside (when the weather permits), what I recommend is for the owners to still try to make the most “concrete and tangible” distinction between an acceptable potty area and an unacceptable potty area. What I mean is setting up an area in your home, garage, or basement that simulates the yard potty pen. Ideally, you would use grass sod and replace it frequently. Use some sort of liner underneath that can easily be cleaned. The reason for the grass sod is so when the weather improves, the pup/dog is used to pottying on grass. Moreover, they will have gotten the idea of a “separate and distinct” place to potty and it will be fairly easy to make the change to the yard, especially if you will use the yard potty pen during the transition. Other options to the sod are cedar shavings, sand, or even paper. Again, always have some sort of liner under whatever you choose.

If you use this approach, you will need a dog exercise pen which should be placed in an area that is as “removed/separated” from the family’s living quarters as possible. This is to simulate and create a very specific place for the dog to potty that is different/separate from yours and their living quarters. The concept is to facilitate the pup/dog NOT being allowed to potty IN the house. Set up a place to “take” your pup/dog that is just as “separate and specific” as housetraining your dog to potty outside. Follow all of the same housetraining time frames and recommendations that you would if you were training your pup/dog for the yard.

Another scenario I encounter frequently is people who live in high-rises where they have to take an elevator to potty their pup/dog. If this is the case, the people need to think long and hard about what they are willing to endure to housetrain their pup/dog. Keep in mind that when the pups have to potty there is often not a lot of time to get them outside, much less long enough to ride an elevator downstairs. If these people want to ultimately housetrain their dog to only potty when taken downstairs/outside, they need to truly consider the demands this will make on them when their pup has a puppy sized bladder, no bladder control, and will need to potty frequently! If they are going to try to use a combination of the paper/piddle pads and outside, they need to carefully read the information I presented on this subject. All of this must be factored into the decision of whether you are willing, able, and prepared for the demands of housetraining a pup/dog in a high rise or apartment environment.

If you are prepared for your pup/dog to use the indoors on a regular basis, save the occasions you do get them outside, you still need to create a distinct, specific, tangible, and separate indoor potty area. You will need to have an area that is like a yard potty pen, except it is in a remote area of your home. The potty area has to be a place you “take” the pup/dog for their potty access and it should be as separated from your general living area as possible. This should be an area the pup/dog only has access to when you take them to the area in the initial stages of housetraining. Your designated “indoor potty pen” correlates to the “yard potty pen” by creating a significant difference between this designated potty area and the rest of your living quarters. For this approach to be successful, you need to follow all the same steps you would if training a pup to the

outdoors. If you don't, you may be somewhat successful. But, I guarantee you will have continued accidents throughout the life of your dog. Bottom line, there is NO easy out when houstraining a pup/dog regardless of your situation.

In the last couple of years there have been a few commercial products which seem to offer a valid option for people in unusual circumstances. There is a doggie litter. This is similar to cat litter. The major difference is the dogs are not instinctually drawn to a place to potty and cover it up as in a litter box situation and the dogs have to be trained to use a dog litter box. If you go this route, you must use the dog litter. Cat litter is not good on the paws of the dogs and if they eat it or lick it off their paws, it can cause intestinal upsets. Additionally, cat litter is not formulated to handle the chemical make up of the dogs' output. Another commercial option available is a Doggie Park. This is relatively attractive, but would have to be cleaned regularly. This product has a picket fence, fire hydrant, and simulated grass. Do not look to these products as an easy out for your houstraining. If you have no other options, then these products appear viable. However, if you ultimately want your dog to be trained to the outdoors, think twice about going this route. I would only recommend this for people who do not have the ability to houstraining their dog using the conventional methods. If this is what you end up using, be sure you approach the training the same way you would regular houstraining for the reasons I have discussed.

When the dogs are allowed indoor potty access for whatever the reason, you are making your job and their ability to comply with your desires more difficult. Keep this in mind. Take extra steps to facilitate the process. Be extra patient and understanding knowing the complexity and difficulty of the situation you are imposing on your pup/dog! You are asking them to live by YOUR rules and you are imposing demands on them that are often beyond their ability to comply. This means the responsibility is YOURS. You have to know and accept what you are getting into and you must be willing to go the extra mile to make it work. Your pup/dog can only accommodate what you are capable of effectively communicating and training.

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