

Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

00:00:00

Do you find yourself with a 6, 7, 8, 9 month or older puppy who still [isn't completely house trained?](#) Yikes. If this is you, don't worry, I've got you covered.

Because in today's episode of Shaped by Dog, I'm going to share with you not only how you can fix that problem, but the biggest mistake that people make when house training. And even if you think your puppy is already house trained, you might not have got this one right.

00:00:35

Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And if you've got an older puppy that you believe should be house trained, there could be a few reasons why they aren't yet. Number one, it could be that [your puppy](#) just isn't old enough to have complete control over their bladder or their bowels.

Now, if your puppy is older, highly unlikely why that's the reason you're having accidents in your house. It could also be your [expectations are super high](#) for the [age or stage of your puppy](#). Meaning that you just can't predict when the learning is actually going to happen.

00:01:07

And so, you have to be patient and just be more vigilant. Refer to Shaped by Dog [podcast episode number 48](#), where I share with you the three-step process I use to potty train my puppies.

The third reason could be, you actually have inadvertently taught your puppy that there are other optional places for them to go to relieve themselves other than just outside.

So, they might be peeing on any kind of clothing that's left on the floor, or maybe even a dog bed on the floor, or a carpet area of the house, or maybe on a mat near the front door.

00:01:41

Now, why would a puppy learn that? It could start if you have been told to start with pee pads. Not saying that all puppies trained to use pee pads are going to pee all over your house, but it could happen. Teaching a small dog to use a pee pad is definitely an option. You just have to be more vigilant at it.

But dogs might learn to pee in other areas of the house, possibly because they're hiding. Maybe they've been scolded for having an accident in the house and they don't want to be scolded. So, they'll do it in areas maybe you won't find it.

00:02:13

It could be the weather conditions or the yard conditions outside. So, let's say you live in a country like Canada that gets quite cold in the winter. Could be that your dog doesn't want to go outside when it's cold or it could be that it's raining, and your dog just doesn't want their feet getting wet.

If that's the case, you just have to make sure when it's raining, you go outside and have lots of fun or even go one step further than that. Start playing games on a soggy wet towel in your bathroom and then grow that to be outside games when it's wet so the dog just doesn't care about the conditions.



Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

00:02:44

Could also be that you have a small yard, and you haven't cleaned up enough. Some dogs are very, very clean and they don't like to go to the bathroom in an area that is a little smelly or dirty. So, those could be the reasons why they've decided to go to the bathroom in the house.

Of course, they also might have some sort of illness or infections. Make sure you want to get that checked out by your Veterinarian. It could also be that you just have a big living area.

I got to tell you, since I moved to this new home about 13 years ago, the puppies that I've brought into this house have been far more difficult for me to potty train than any of the puppies that I owned before.

00:03:22

Now you would think, "Well, that's silly because Susan, shouldn't you be getting better at this dog training stuff since you are a professional?" Well, in my previous houses, the rooms were small. I could close a door and I would be in a room with a puppy.

In this house, it's an open concept home and there aren't many gates to block off areas so it's easier for a puppy to go out of sight. So, previously, I would say my puppies rarely had an accident after they'd been with me no more than a week or two. And now it might take several months before my puppies are what I would consider completely potty trained.

00:03:57

And so, I'm here to tell you, it doesn't matter if you have an older puppy, we can still fix it. But I still haven't told you the number one reason I believe that older puppies are still going in your house when they should be going outside.

And that is because they've never been taught how to ask to go outside. And this happens when people are so good at managing the environment and getting the dog or the puppy on a brilliant timetable where they take them out every hour or every two hours, or maybe even every 10 minutes.

00:04:28

They get them on a schedule where they eat at a certain time, they get outside right away, they play at a certain time, they get outside right away, like good for you. But all of that management has never given the opportunity for the puppy to tell you that they need to go because they're probably never in a situation where they do need to go.

Or even if the puppy has tried to tell you they want to go outside, the puppy's communication might be too subtle for your abilities to be able to read that communication. So, what we've got to do starting today is give you the tools so that you can teach your puppy how to tell you, "I need to go outside."

00:05:07

And once they've got that ability, well then life changes for both of you. So, the first thing I'd ask is I want you to think about how you would like your dog to tell you that they would like to go outside.

Now they don't have a cell phone, so they can't give you a call. Think about long term for the rest of this dog's life, what does that look like? Now you can make it be intentional.

And a lot of my dogs, it just happened organically. But with Prophet, it definitely has become a very intentional thing. So, Swagger will bark, which I kind of think is a decent idea, except sometimes he barks so loud it's scary. So, he will go to the door, and he will just bark, "This is what I want now."



Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

00:05:48

Tater Salad, now remember, Tater Salad was a rescue dog. He didn't come here until he was 15 months old, but he learned to scratch at the window beside the front door. Not one I would recommend that you teach your dog, but you might have like a sliding glass door that your dog always goes out and hey, that wouldn't hurt anything.

But if you've got a beautiful wood door, you probably don't want your dogs to learn to scratch on it. Momentum's tell or her cue for me to let her out is she starts pacing back and forth from the door. And if you don't get it, she will get very insistent and put her paws on you and then run to the door. So, pacing back and forth is quite obvious.

00:06:28

And This! is very subtle. She will come up and lick your face or sometimes lick your pant if you're standing up and then walk back and forth from the door. So, it's a little bit more subtle.

And when somebody's taking care of my dogs, I will have to tell them if This! suddenly wants to be very cuddly with you, make sure she doesn't have to go outside because that is her tell.

Alright so, those are the ways my dogs tell me. Some of the other ways people use are they hang a set of bells and teach a dog to ring those bells. Very popular today are [buttons](#) that you can have on the floor that your dog will hit.

00:07:01

You can actually program to say whatever you want them to say. You know like, "I need to go out." might be the obvious thing, or "Hello, I got to go outside.", or something simple, just like the word "outside" that you program that your dog hits.

And you know, you hear yourself saying outside, the dog wants to go outside. Or you can take Tater Salad's tell of scratching at the door and you could teach your dog just to put their paw on you. Much the way similar to what Momentum does.

00:07:28

What I'm doing with Prophet is, I am teaching him the go back and forth from the door. Alright so, you have to decide what is the tell? And the first stage, what we're going to do is we're going to start using that tell before we take your puppy outside. So, you might want to teach your dog to bark.

Now there's probably a million videos online to teach your dog to bark, and most of them involve getting your dog excited about something. Knock on a door, the dog barks, you click and give them a cookie until you've clicked and cookied enough that you can add a cue, "speak." Or in this case, it could be "outside," but I would add an interim cue "speak." So, you might want to use it in other places.

00:08:04

Teaching your dog to hit a button. I've got a YouTube video on [Target Training](#). You could do that for bells or button. I think bells are pretty easy, but dogs quickly learn that they ring those bells anytime they just want to bask in the sunshine and that may be okay with you. Now, the more subtle one's going back and forth, this is what it currently looks like in my house.

I, on schedule, before I let Prophet out to go to the bathroom I will say, "Do you want to go outside?" So, first thing in the morning, I know he's going to the door. I will say, "Do you want to go outside?" He runs to the door. I wait until he comes back and finds me again.



Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

00:08:40

And then I'll say it again, "Do you want to go outside?" And then he goes to the door, and I run, and I let him out. Now, first thing in the morning, I'm kind of waiting in the bedroom for him to find me again. And that's not too far from the front door.

He's almost seven months old and he's got really good bladder control. I know he's not going to have an accident. So, I'm willing to take that risk of letting him find me one more time. But you might want to wait till later in the day and stand really close to the door.

00:09:07

Say, "Do you want to go outside?" And say it in an excited voice, "Do you want to go outside?" At first, the dog just turns towards the door. And then you go and open it for them. Now, your dog might not know what "do you want to go outside" means.

And so, in that case, you're going to start by just saying "outside" and then pause for one second, and then go run to the door and do whatever routine.

I still have my routine of putting the hand on the door, the puppy waits, and then I let him outside. So, "outside" means we're going to go run to the door and start our routine. You're going to start using that. You're going to, "Oh yeah, the puppy should go outside." Don't just walk to the door. Give your cue.

00:09:43

"Do you want to go outside?" And if the puppy starts looking excited, then you're going to praise them, "Yeah!" and go outside. I love it the moment when they start to turn and go without you, then you're going to run and be super excited about that. Your excitement is reinforcing the tell, it is reinforcing them turning and going to the door.

After a few days, you're going to have a dog who's going to turn and run to the door. That's when you can pause, wait for them to come back. Now, when they come back, [they might play bow](#), they might paw you. These are other things that could become your new tell.

00:10:14

After about a week of this, once your dog is really getting excited, going back and forth from the door when you say "outside," you now have given him a way to communicate with you. And we're going to do this with healthy puppies we know can hold their bladder. So, what we're going to do now is we're going to wait until they get desperate.

What that looks like is you're going to go into the smallest room you have in your house. And this would be after you, maybe taking your dog for a walk and they've just had a big drink of water, or maybe after they've eaten at a time where you can predict that puppy is going to need to go out within the hour.

00:10:48

And you're going to just get comfortable in that room. And you could be kind of put on a movie on your tablet while you're just hanging out with that puppy. You're waiting till the puppy gives you their tell. And it might look like they get up and they kind of look at you with this anxious look on their face. You do nothing.

You wait until they go to the door and come back to you and increase the tell. Now, the very first time you're insisting on this, like you know this poor puppy has to go to the bathroom. The very first time you insist on some sort of tell, make it a subtle one and then say, "Do you have to go outside?"



Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

00:11:25

The puppy will get really excited and then you can let them out. And maybe a few days later, you're going to try this routine again. What happens if when you're waiting for the tell, the puppy just says, "Oh man, I'm just going to pee right here."

The moment you see the squat about to start, you give your positive interrupter, "ding, ding, ding, ding, ding", and run to the door, right?

00:11:48

"Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding" lets them know, 'stop what you're doing and come with me.' Now, if you haven't trained your positive interrupter, you might want to do that first. So, now we have a [positive interrupter](#) to stop the flow without scolding them.

They're not being bad if they have an accident in your house. They are just learning, right? Think of a toddler learning to not pee their pants. Parents don't scold them for peeing their pants, they don't shame them for peeing their pants.

00:12:14

Otherwise, you're going to create a lot of anxiety and a lot more problems. Same is true when potty training a puppy. So, if they go to make, have an accident, use your positive interrupter, get them to the door, and then go back another full week of helping them to learn how to cue you to take them outside.

The ability for a dog to have communication with their owners that they can say, "I got to go now." is so important. It doesn't matter if you're committed to taking that puppy out on a timetable for the rest of your life, there will come a day in the middle of the night when they've got like diarrhea.

00:12:49

It's not on a schedule. It's just a thing. And without them having the ability to communicate that they have a problem, you're just going to have a mess to clean up the next day. But once they know how to make that communication, problem gets a lot easier for them to explain to you.

So, even Momentum, who is the one who goes back and forth, if it's the middle of the night, she will always come right to my face and pant or push on the mattress as she goes back and forth from the door.

00:13:17

There's always a way for them to tell me they need to go outside. The biggest mistake people make when they're potty training is they do too much to help as the puppy continues to get old and they never establish a way for that puppy to communicate with them.

Makes sense, right? Now, I would love to know what is your unique tell. How do your dog's let you know that they would like to go outside?

00:13:41

Jump over to YouTube, leave me a comment and let me know. It'd be fun to read everybody's unique way their dogs tell them, "Uh, I got to go. I got to go and it's now."

And while you're over there, hey, please like this video and subscribe to the channel so you won't miss another video. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.





Episode: #254

Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

Resources:

[Podcast Episode 140: Stop Your Puppy's Excited Peeing Or Submissive Urination](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Puppy Essentials with Susan Garrett Dog Training](#)

[Podcast Episode 250: Expectations Vs Reality: Navigating The Path To Dog Training Success](#)

[Podcast Episode 218: Puppy Development Stages And Your Dog's Behavior](#)

[Podcast Episode 48: Potty Train Your Puppy in a Week \(Easy 3 Step Process\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 170: 5 Popular Ways To Train Your Dog With Food](#)

[YouTube Playlist: Target Training for Dogs with Susan Garrett](#)

[Podcast Episode 157: Dog Body Language: Understanding Canine Communication Signals And Emotions](#)

[Podcast Episode 158: Stop Your Dog's Unwanted Behaviors With This Positive Interrupter](#)



Why Your Older Puppy Or Dog Is Not House Trained And What To Do About It

About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



Meet Us Online

Website	https://dogsthat.com
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/SusanGarrettDogAgility/
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/SusanGarrettDogsThat/
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@dogsthat
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/dogsthat
Pinterest	https://pinterest.ca/dogsthatcom/
Twitter	https://twitter.com/susangarrett
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/user/ClickerDogs

