DOG PLUS ME · THE FIX SERIES · NO. 01

The Potty Training Fix

The step-by-step system to stop accidents for good. For new puppies, rescues and grown dogs who never quite got it.

Reward-based | Schedules by age | 14 real-life situations | 10 printables



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START HERE · 2 MINUTES

You don't need to read this whole guide.

You need the parts that match your dog. Find yourself below and follow that path. Everything else is there when you need it.

IF THIS IS YOU…	READ THIS, IN THIS ORDER
New puppy (8–16 weeks), just got home	Start Tonight (Ch. 1) → The 3 Levers (Ch. 2) → Chapters 3–9. Follow the 14-Day Plan.
Puppy 4–12 months, still having accidents	The 3 Levers → Ch. 7 The Accident Audit → Ch. 5 schedule for their age → Situation 3 if they *used* to be good.
Adult dog or rescue	Start Tonight → Situation 4 (Adult or rescue) → Ch. 6 Freedom Ladder. Check "Is it medical?" first if accidents started suddenly.
Something specific is going wrong	Go straight to the Symptom Finder (Part 4). It sends you to the exact fix.
You're overwhelmed and just want to start	Do the Start Tonight checklist. That's it for today.

How this guide is different

- **It's a system, not a list of tips.** Every accident has one of three causes. You'll learn to spot which one in under a minute and fix that, instead of trying everything at once.
- **It gives you rules, not vibes.** Exact time windows, how long to wait outside, when to give more freedom, and what to change if something isn't working.
- **It covers real life.** Full-time jobs, apartments, rainy days, pet-store puppies, rescues, small breeds, partners who "forget" the rules.
- **It's kind.** No yelling, no nose-rubbing, no shock or spray collars. Not because we're soft, but because punishment makes potty training *slower* (Ch. 2 explains why).

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Every recommendation is based on published guidance from veterinary schools, board-certified veterinary behaviorists and peer-reviewed research, translated into plain steps. Sources are listed at the back. This guide is educational and doesn't replace your vet.

HONEST EXPECTATIONS

What "fixed" really looks like

You'll see guides promising a house-trained dog in 7 days. Here's the truth, so you can measure your progress against reality instead of a sales pitch.

YOUR DOG	FIRST BIG WIN	RELIABLE ON A SCHEDULE	FULLY TRAINED*
Puppy, 8–16 weeks	Fewer accidents within days of starting the schedule	Often 1–2 weeks	Typically 4–6 months of age
Puppy, 4–12 months	3–7 days	2–4 weeks	Usually 3 months or more
Adult or rescue	3–7 days	Most within 1 month	Most are reliable within 1–2 months; the 8 clean weeks come after that
Long history of indoor accidents (e.g. pet-store or puppy-mill dog)	1–2 weeks	Varies widely	Anywhere from weeks to a year. Most improve with patience.

*"Fully trained" = no indoor accidents for 8 weeks in a row. That's the standard veterinary behaviorists use. Until then, your dog is "in training", even if things look great.

Three things that will happen (and are normal)

1. **Day 2–4 feels harder than day 1.** You're noticing everything now. That's the system working.
2. **A great week, then an accident.** One accident isn't failure. It's data. Chapter 7 shows you how to use it.
3. **Your schedule will change.** As your dog grows, the gaps get longer. You'll know exactly when to stretch them (Ch. 6).

WHY A CLEAR PLAN MATTERS

Owners with a clear plan do better. In one study of adopted shelter dogs, a short coaching session (routine, rewards, enzyme cleaner, no punishment) raised house-training success at one month from about 86% to 98%. This guide covers that coaching and much more. The Potty Log (Printable 1) is where you'll see it working.

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