



The Housebreaking Bible's 10 Commandments of Housebreaking

Commandment #1:

THOU SHALT MAKE SURE FIDO IS IN GOOD HEALTH

Before starting a housebreaking program, please be sure Fido has a clean bill of health. A veterinary exam including a fecal exam (stool sample) will allow you to be sure that none of Fido's housebreaking issues are caused by a medical problem. This is important for all dogs, but especially for new puppies, senior dogs, or dogs who have symptoms of digestive problems or other health issues.

If Fido has digestive issues caused by parasites, allergies or other medical problems, he may have a hard time controlling his bowels, which will make it hard for him to get to the right place every time he needs to go. Some symptoms to watch for:

- Excessive gas
- Bloating tummy
- Tender tummy
- Diarrhea
- Soft stools
- Straining to go
- Mucus in stools
- Blood in stools
- Worms in stool (may look like moving pieces of white rice or like long pieces of spaghetti)

NOTE: Fido may have worms even if they're not visible in his stools. Sometimes the only evidence that your dog has a parasite infestation is the presence of microscopic worm eggs in the stool, which can only be detected by having your vet test a stool sample.

Urinary problems caused by bladder or urinary tract issues can make housebreaking nearly impossible. Some symptoms to watch for:

- Frequent urination
- Sudden increase in urination
- Housebroken dog that suddenly starts having urine accidents
- Blood in urine
- Dog attempts to urinate but nothing comes out
- Dog attempts to urinate then jumps up in pain

Fido's housebreaking can also be adversely affected by other medical issues, including arthritis, hip dysplasia or any other kind of painful condition. If he appears to be in pain, resolve the issue with your vet's help so you can be sure your dog is healthy and comfortable enough to be successfully housebroken.

If Fido is on any kind of medication and is having housebreaking issues, check with your vet to see if your housebreaking problem might be a side effect of his medication. If it is, your vet may be able to switch him to a different medication, change the dosage, or offer other suggestions to lessen the impact of the side effects.

Once you're sure Fido has a clean bill of health, you can safely proceed with his housebreaking program.

Commandment #2:

THOU SHALT START FIDO'S HOUSEBREAKING WITH A CLEAN SLATE

Whether Fido's a new puppy who hasn't had a chance to make any mistakes or an older dog who's been driving you crazy with housebreaking mishaps for years, he deserves a fresh start.

It's hard not to be resentful and angry when Fido's peeing and pooping everywhere in spite of your attempts to teach him to do the right thing. Many owners begin to believe that their dogs are intentionally having accidents to be spiteful. Even more seem to believe that their dog knows better but has accidents anyway.

Remember, housebreaking doesn't just magically happen; just because your dog sometimes goes in the right place doesn't mean he knows he's always supposed to go there. Just as human babies aren't born potty-trained, puppies aren't born housebroken. It's our responsibility to teach them what to do using a patient, reasonable approach that encourages the proper behavior and discourages unwanted behaviors.

When housebreaking Fido, it's important to remember that no two dogs are alike. Just because your friend says her puppy was housebroken in 3 days doesn't mean that Fido's a bad dog for taking longer. And please don't be mad at poor Fido because you've easily housebroken all your other dogs and he's having a harder time catching on. It's completely normal for some dogs to take longer than others, even if you're doing everything right. Help Fido along as best you can and try not to compare him unfairly with other dogs; who knows if your friend's telling the truth about that 3-day housebreaking program, anyway?!?

Try to teach Fido using the same patience you'd use in potty-training a child. If you think of him as unsure and confused but trying to do the right thing, you'll tend to have more appropriate responses than if you're thinking of him as evil, spiteful and trying to drive you crazy.

All that being said, YOU get a clean slate at the beginning of your new housebreaking program, too. Don't waste time feeling bad about not doing it right the first time or feeling guilty that you were angry at Fido or may have corrected him unfairly. It's completely normal to get frustrated when you don't know what to do and when your best efforts don't yield good results. Making mistakes doesn't make you bad, it just makes you human – so don't be too hard on yourself.

Now that you're starting a program that *will* work, you'll understand better how to educate Fido without using harsh methods and without the frustration that comes along with not knowing what to do to fix his problems. Just the fact that you've made the effort to start this new housebreaking program with Fido is proof enough that you're a good, responsible dog owner who's trying to do the right thing, so give yourself a break!

Commandment #3: THOU SHALT KEEP IT CLEAN

When it comes to your housebreaking program, cleanliness is definitely next to godliness! One of the reasons dogs can be housebroken is that they have a natural tendency to avoid soiling their living areas. A big part of housebreaking is simply preserving Fido's natural cleanliness. If Fido is forced to be near his own waste, he can lose his natural tendency toward cleanliness, which will make his housebreaking much more difficult. This can often occur if he spent his puppyhood in a small cage at a pet store or in a dirty kennel. It can also happen later in life if he's left in his confinement area for too long and he's forced to relieve himself there, or if you aren't diligent about cleaning up after him with the proper cleaning products.

You'll need to buy an odor-neutralizing product specifically designed to eliminate pet odors. You can find these products at any pet store or online pet supply site. Avoid using regular household cleaners, especially those containing ammonia, when cleaning up accidents. These products will not sufficiently eliminate the odor, since Fido's sense of smell is much stronger than yours. Even if you can't smell it, he can! Products that contain ammonia can actually draw him back to the same spot, since one of the compounds excreted in urine is – guess what? – AMMONIA! So of course, if he smells ammonia there, he may just think it's the perfect place to potty!

Fido's confinement area and crate must be kept very clean. If Fido has any accidents, clean the area thoroughly with odor neutralizer according to the manufacturer's directions. The cleaner his living area is, the less likely he is to soil there – so even if Fido isn't having accidents, his crate or confinement-area floor should be cleaned at least once a week using odor neutralizer.

If you suspect Fido or another dog had accidents in your home recently or in the distant past, those areas must also be thoroughly cleaned to remove all odors so Fido won't be drawn to them. If you're not sure where the accidents occurred, you can find out the high-tech way or the low-tech way.

The high-tech solution is to buy a blacklight from the pet store and use it to examine your carpets, furniture, etc. at night with all the lights off. This can be quite a horrifying experience, so be prepared – especially if you watch crime dramas on TV that use similar technology to find blood at crime scenes. Your house might look like there's been a massacre! Don't worry, it's just a bit of pee (we hope!). Just clean, clean, clean once you find it.

The low-tech method is the good ol' sniff test: Get on your hands and knees and start sniffing around for suspiciously stinky areas. If you have a friend with a sensitive nose who owes you a favor, you might want to ask him or her to do it, since you may be desensitized to the smells in your house.

You'll also need to keep Fido himself clean. If he's stinky and surrounded by the smell of pee and poo, he's more likely to have accidents. If you keep him fresh and clean, he's more likely to try to stay that way. Whether he's having accidents or not, bathe and brush him regularly and, if necessary, trim any excess hair around his backside and genitals that may tend to hold urine or feces after he relieves himself. He must be bathed after any accidents that cause him to come into contact with his urine or feces. You'll need to do this EVERY TIME. If you find you're having to bathe him frequently, be sure to use a mild, conditioning shampoo.

Fido's potty area should also be kept clean. Although a trace of his scent is helpful to draw him back to the area, 30 piles of poo in his corner of the back yard or potty pads that are soaked through with urine aren't very appealing to Fido. If his potty area is

so icky that he doesn't want to go there, he may begin to seek greener pastures – like your nice, clean carpet. Scoop the poop and hose down the urine outside; for indoor dogs, change the potty pads, papers or litter tray regularly.

Most owners have good intentions, of course, and intend to keep Fido and his surroundings clean. However, many owners get frustrated and stop cleaning thoroughly after Fido's made a mess, figuring he's just going to have another accident and get everything dirty again. Please don't fall victim to this kind of thinking! It'll only make matters worse, creating more discomfort for Fido and for you. Remember, if you don't seem concerned about keeping your house clean, Fido certainly won't be!

One other important thing to remember: Don't let Fido watch you clean up his accidents. This comes as a surprise to most owners, who think they're teaching Fido a lesson when they make him watch them clean. Even if you give him a lecture the whole time you're cleaning, this method will not effectively minimize accidents. On the contrary, cleaning up in front of Fido can actually *encourage* him to have accidents. If he realizes a misplaced tinkle can get you down on the floor to talk to him, having an accident starts to seem like a good way to get your attention. The situation gets worse if Fido's one of those spunky characters who'll steal the paper towels while you're down there and lure you into a chase game. If he thinks accidents lead to all that fun, why would he ever stop? To prevent Fido from learning that accidents create action, just put Fido outside, in another room, or in his crate before cleaning up.

Commandment #4:

THOU SHALT PRAISE FIDO WHEN HE GETS IT RIGHT

In the early phases of housebreaking, don't just open the door, send Fido outside and hope he does something while he's out there. Go out with him so you know whether he's gone or not – and don't forget to make a fuss over him when he does the right thing in the right place. Verbal praise, petting and play are great rewards that will convince Fido that pottying outside is definitely the way to go.

Sometimes owners believe that Fido should just *know* that going outside is the right thing. It doesn't work that way, folks! It's your job to teach Fido where to go and not go, so you'll need to catch him doing the right thing as well as the wrong thing so you can teach him which is which.

Remember, one of our primary goals in housebreaking Fido is to teach him that it feels way better to potty in the right place than it does in the wrong place. If you don't tell him what a good dog he is, doing the right thing feels about the same as doing the wrong thing, and that makes it hard to get results. Worse yet, Fido might learn that he only gets attention from you when he goes in the wrong place, and he'll figure negative attention is better than no attention – which can make him even more inclined to go in the house.

Also, if you never praise Fido for pottying outside and you correct him when he potties inside, he may draw completely the wrong conclusion – he may think he isn't allowed to potty in front of you. This will make housebreaking more difficult and may create other problems later on when you need him to go potty while he's on a leash.

Reward your dog handsomely for doing his thing outside. Verbal praise, petting and play are your best bets. Although treats are a very valuable training tool, we generally don't recommend them for housebreaking. Some people do have success using treats as part of their housetraining programs, but it can be risky. In many cases, the dog will be so excited and anxious to get the treat, he'll squat, squeeze out a few drops and say GIMME! Then he'll go back into the house, realize he didn't finish, and have an accident. Use lots of rewards in your housebreaking program, but no treats!

So treat Fido like he's won the Nobel Prize when he goes potty in the right place; sweet talk him, pet him and play with him. He deserves it!

Commandment #5:

THOU SHALT CORRECT FIDO ONLY WHEN YOU CATCH HIM IN THE ACT

Oh, this is a tough one. Many of you probably grew up watching your parents drag Fido over to a puddle they found on the floor to rub his nose in it, telling him what a BAD DOG he was. It may be tempting to correct Fido because you feel like it's the only way he'll learn. Or you may correct him out of frustration caused by not knowing what else to do. Or just because you're MAD. It can be hard to keep your cool when you find another pile or puddle on the floor, but correcting Fido when you *find* his mistake instead of when he *made* the mistake isn't part of a good housebreaking program.

Properly timed correction is an important part of any good housebreaking program. (Visit www.TheHousebreakingBible.com for the full scoop on appropriate housebreaking corrections!) If you catch Fido as he's about to have an accident or as he's having an accident, a sharp, quick correction will "shut off the plumbing" and give you a chance to get him to the right place to potty.

Improperly timed correction, however, can make a bad situation even worse. Fido associates correction with whatever he's doing at the moment he's corrected. A common scenario: You come home and Fido runs happily to greet you at the door. You immediately see that Fido's used your favorite imported rug as a toilet again, so you grab him by his collar, drag him to the rug, push his face into the rug and yell at him. You're thinking that if you show him what you're correcting him for and scare the heck out of him, he'll never do it again.

WRONG. When you're correcting Fido, he's not thinking, "Man, I really shouldn't have peed on that rug 4 hours ago." He's thinking it's scary when you come home. Remember, going potty on the rug felt good, since he got relief when he emptied his bladder – that part worked out well for him. Things got ugly only when he happily greeted you at the door. So what happens then? He stops greeting you at the door, since he's worried you'll drag him across the room and yell at him for doing it.

Things get even worse from there. Now when you come home, there's a puddle on the floor and Fido's slinking around the house instead of running to greet you at the door, so you think, "AHA!! He looks guilty... that's proof he knows peeing on the floor is wrong!" Poor Fido isn't slinking because he feels guilty; he's doing it because he's worried about what's going to happen when you come in the door. But your belief that he knows he's done something wrong makes you even more convinced that he deserves a correction, and the cycle continues and worsens. Now you not only have a stained carpet, you have a dog that's a nervous wreck!

Fido may eventually figure out that you're only unhappy when you come home and there's a pile or puddle on the floor. But the vast majority of dogs simply aren't mentally sophisticated enough to learn that the act of putting the pee or poo there causes a problem 4 hours later.

Please don't assume Fido understands your corrections because you think he looks guilty; he may not know *why* you're mad, he just knows *that* you're mad. I know it's tempting to try to teach Fido a lesson when you find that he's had an accident, but remember, **you can only correct him if you catch him in the act**. As outlined in **Commandment #7**, you're supposed to supervise Fido's free time in the house – so if Fido has an accident and you find it later, it's YOUR mistake, not his!

Commandment #6:

THOU SHALT KEEP FIDO ON A SCHEDULE

Be sure to keep Fido on a reasonable feeding and potty schedule. Fido needs plenty of chances to go potty in the right place; taking him out twice a day won't do it. In the long run, his schedule will be based on your schedule – you'll take him out at times that are convenient to your work hours or your daily plans. However, in the early stages of housebreaking – especially if Fido's still a puppy with limited bladder and bowel control – the schedule must be based on his needs and the length of time he can reasonably be expected to wait between potty trips.

Puppies should always be taken for a potty trip immediately after waking up in the morning, after naps, after eating or chewing and after active play. You can get a general idea of how often Fido should have a potty trip using the chart below, but, keep in mind that if he's having accidents on that schedule, you'll need to take him out more frequently.

	6-12 weeks	12-16 weeks	4-5 months	6-7 months	8-11 months	12 months and older
daytime	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5-6 hours	8 hours
nighttime*	3-4 hours	4-8 hours	8 hours	8 hours	8 hours	8-10 hours

*nighttime hours assume that the puppy or dog was not fed or watered less than 3 hours before bed

A bit of good news: You don't have to take Fido out with the same frequency overnight as you do during the day. Since he's not active and not taking in food or water overnight, he'll be able to hold it for a longer period of time – and you can get some sleep! With very young puppies, you'll need to do potty trips in the middle of the night, but most puppies can sleep through the night within a few weeks. (Visit www.TheHousebreakingBible.com to learn more about overnight scheduling and surviving the night with your new puppy!)

Fido should be on a regular feeding schedule. Typically, puppies under 4 months of age have meals three times a day; those over 4 months of age eat twice daily. While housebreaking your dog, it's usually best to put the food bowl down for only 10 minutes at each meal. This prevents Fido from nibbling at his food all day, which can make his digestive system less predictable and slow the housebreaking process.

Sending Fido to bed with a full belly and bladder is a recipe for disaster, so his last access to food and water should be about 3 hours before bedtime (unless you want to take him out for a potty trip in the middle of the night!). Of course, check with your vet before setting up your dog's food and water schedule to be sure your dog doesn't have any special needs that require a specific schedule.

Fido's feeding schedule can also be adjusted based on your daily plans. If you normally feed him at 8am and there's a day that you'll have to leave him alone from 9am to 1pm, you can prevent accidents while you're away by giving Fido his food and water earlier than usual so he can empty out before you leave the house. You may also find it helpful to feed him a smaller meal than usual in the morning, then compensate by adding a little extra food to his evening meal.

Many people find that keeping a written daily schedule is very helpful when housebreaking Fido. It's especially useful when there's more than one person helping with the housebreaking program, since it helps to keep everyone informed about whether Fido's been fed or taken for a potty trip.

When you're housebreaking Fido, the right kind of schedule makes all the difference. It allows both you and Fido to know what to expect and makes his pees and poos easier to track and predict – which is half the battle!

Commandment #7:

THOU SHALT SUPERVISE FIDO'S FREE TIME IN THE HOUSE

If Fido isn't housebroken, he shouldn't have unsupervised time in your house. It takes only seconds for him to have an accident, so in the early stages of your housebreaking program, he must be directly supervised the entire time he is in the house.

Direct supervision guarantees that if Fido's about to make a mistake, you'll be able to catch him, correct him, and guide him into doing the right thing. If he attempts to have an accident in the house, don't panic; as long as you catch him, it's a learning opportunity. You can teach him at that moment that going potty in the house doesn't feel as good as going outside.

It's always discouraging when Fido has an accident in the house, but there's a big difference between the accidents you catch and the accidents you don't. If Fido has an accident and there's nobody there to let him know it's wrong, it actually works out pretty well for him – he's uncomfortable because his bowels or bladder feel full and he gets relief when he lets loose on your nice, expensive rug. If he gets the same relief from potty'ing inside as he does from potty'ing outside, why should he wait? The accidents you don't catch Fido having prevent him from becoming housebroken, so the immediate goal of your housebreaking program is to catch and correct all of Fido's attempts to go potty in the house – starting NOW.

So what do I mean when I say direct supervision? It's more than just keeping Fido in the same room with you; he can be pretty slick and very quick, so you might find a puddle on the floor if he wanders away unnoticed for a few moments. Direct supervision requires you to have your eyes on Fido or have physical contact with him *at all times*. You can carry him, have him in your lap, have him with you on a leash, or just watch him like a hawk; just remember you need to know what he's up to at all times when he's in the house.

Sometimes when there's more than one person helping to care for Fido, being sure he's supervised at all times can be even trickier; when there's more than one person in the room, everyone thinks that someone else is watching the dog. This problem can be solved by assigning supervision responsibility to one person in the room and not allowing that person to just wander away from the dog, assuming someone else will keep an eye on him. When the person in charge is no longer able to give his full attention to Fido's supervision, he must assign responsibility to someone else or put Fido in his kennel or out in the yard.

If there are children helping with Fido's training and supervision, you may need to take things a step further – kids have a tendency to get distracted and wander away, forgetting that they were supposed to be watching Fido. With kids (or easily distracted adults!), the best method is for the person supervising the dog to have the dog on leash and hold the leash *the entire time* he's supervising Fido. When the person holding the leash needs to stop supervising the dog, he has to either hand the leash to another person or put Fido in his kennel or out in the yard.

Getting used to watching Fido at all times can be especially difficult if you've had him for a while and are used to the freedom of having him run around the house on his own. It's hard to get in the habit of being vigilant, but if Fido's still having accidents, he's proven that he's just not ready for that level of responsibility yet. If you get into the new habit of supervising Fido, he'll get into the habit of not going potty in the house and your housebreaking program will be back on track.

All unhousebroken dogs, regardless of age, must be supervised at all times. No exceptions, so don't even ask!

Commandment #8:

THOU SHALT WATCH FOR SIGNS THAT FIDO NEEDS TO GO POTTY

If you observe Fido closely, you'll probably notice he gives you some signs when he needs to relieve himself. Sometimes the signs are obvious; sometimes they're a bit more subtle - but if you stay vigilant, you'll be able to prevent Fido from having accidents by noticing the signals that he needs to go.

The most common signs that your dog needs to go potty are sniffing and circling. If you see Fido suddenly start to sniff the floor or you see him spinning or walking in little circles, jump right up and take him outside. No time to finish what you're doing, since these signs mean he probably has to go RIGHT NOW!

Some dogs will start to whine, bark or pace if they need to go outside. If Fido is leashed or tethered in the house, you may notice that he starts to cry or pull on the leash. If you see these behaviors, take your dog out for a quick potty trip to see if he needs to go. Don't allow him to stay outside and play, since we don't want him to learn that fussing inside the house will earn him playtime outside. This should be a quick in and out – just long enough to see if he needs to go. For most dogs, a minute or two is plenty, although some dogs need to move around a bit to get their bowels moving. If that seems to be the case with your dog, walk him back and forth on-leash in a small area. Don't walk him for a long distance or in a large area, since that offers too much new stimulation to distract him and he may forget why he's out there or even learn to hold it so that he can walk longer.

If Fido starts to walk away from something interesting, that's another possible sign he needs to go potty. If you're playing with Fido, giving him treats or doing something else fun with him and he walks away – or if he walks away from his food bowl while eating – that's often a sign that he needs to go. Dogs and puppies generally like to be where the action is, so if you see him trying to wander off, take him to his potty area right away.

Another thing to watch for: Your dog is on the move and stops suddenly or stands with an unusual posture or sits in an unusual position. This usually means the accident is actually starting to happen, so move fast!

One of the less charming ways that Fido might indicate that he needs a potty trip is by getting a little stinky. If you notice that he has gas, there's a good chance the boy needs to poo.

Another equally charming thing you'll need to watch for is a change in the appearance of your dog's butt. If you notice that his tail is in an unusual position, his rectal area suddenly looks puffy or pink, or you see that the opening is obvious (normally it should be closed!) this is a sign that he needs to go poo RIGHT THIS SECOND! Get him outside as quickly as humanly possible. You'll be glad you did!

Commandment #9: THOU SHALT CONFINE FIDO WHEN YOU CAN'T SUPERVISE HIM

Since you can't supervise him 24 hours a day, you'll need to have a place for Fido to relax and hang out when you're not around to prevent him from having accidents. He'll need a confinement area small enough that he'll find it distasteful to go potty there. Most dogs avoid going potty in their own living areas, which in the end is what causes them to become housebroken. In the beginning, though, it can be hard for Fido to recognize the whole house as a living area that he wants to keep clean, so we have to start him out with a small area he'll think of as his home turf.

The amount of space varies depending on the dog, and you may be surprised by how small an area is appropriate in the early stages of housebreaking. If Fido is new to your home or totally unhousebroken, you'll most likely use a crate (the type of kennel used for airline transport) as his confinement area. The correct size for an unhousebroken dog gives him just enough room to stand up, turn around and lay down. If the crate is too large, Fido may use one half of it as a bedroom and the other half as a bathroom – so it's important to have the correct size to prevent him from soiling his crate.

If Fido's older or further along in his housebreaking program, his confinement area can be any space you're sure he won't have accidents in. This might be an exercise pen, a gated laundry room, a kitchen or bathroom, or another room in your house you know he'll stay in without any mistakes. Just remember that if your dog has even occasional accidents in the area, it isn't an appropriate confinement area for his unsupervised time in the house and you should choose a smaller area. As your dog earns your trust by not having accidents in his confinement area, gradually increase the amount of space you give him by adding on a little more space or a room at a time.

Keeping Fido in his confinement area teaches him to "hold it" for extended periods of time. The amount of time he can reasonably spend in confinement depends on his age and how familiar he is with being left alone. For very young dogs or dogs who aren't yet used to being alone, it's a good idea to start off with very brief confinement sessions and gradually increase the time until you're at the appropriate length of time for Fido's age (shown on the chart below).

	6-12 weeks	12-16 weeks	4-5 months	6-7 months	8-11 months	12 months and older
daytime	1-3 hours	3-5 hours	5-8 hours	6-8 hours	6-8 hours	8 hours
nighttime*	3-4 hours	4-8 hours	8 hours	8 hours	8 hours	8-10 hours

*nighttime hours assume that the puppy or dog was not fed or watered less than 3 hours before bed

Commandment #10: THOU SHALT TEACH FIDO TO GO POTTY PROMPTLY ON COMMAND

Nothing's more frustrating than standing outside in the rain waiting endlessly for Fido to do his business or having him stare blankly at you when you try to get him to go potty in a new location. If you don't want to spend half your life waiting out in the cold, you'll need to teach Fido to go potty in a hurry!

It's helpful to teach Fido a command that tells him he should go potty here and now. This way, you're able to get him to go quickly and you can tell him when a new area is an OK place for him to do his thing. You can use any phrase like "hurry up" (or "go potty," "do your business," "get busy," etc.); just make sure that you won't be embarrassed to say it in public. In the beginning, Fido won't know what that phrase means, so don't just go out there and start saying it. You'll teach him to associate the words "hurry up" with the act of going potty by repeating the command in a calm, happy voice WHILE he's going potty. The whole time he's squatting down or lifting his leg peeing or poeing, you'll repeat, "hurry up, hurry up, hurry up...", then when he's finished, praise him and tell him what a good boy he is.

After doing this for 2-3 weeks, you'll start to be able to say "hurry up" when you take him to his potty area to prompt him to go. He'll start to associate those words with going potty in the right area and you'll have him going on command!

If your dog has a serious habit of taking forever to go potty when you take him outside, you may have to work a bit harder to solve the problem. Do you stand in the yard endlessly while Fido sniffs the grass and chases squirrels, then take him inside immediately after he goes potty? Or maybe take him for a fun walk around the neighborhood that ends promptly when he finally gets around to doing his business? This is one of the most common mistakes that owners make, and it can cause big

problems. Think about it – Fido's having a fun time in the great outdoors, and you're teaching him that his good times end as soon as he goes potty. So he learns to hold it as long as possible so he'll get a nice, long walk or get to chase a few more squirrels.

To motivate Fido to go potty promptly when you take him out, you'll need to do the opposite: Teach him that the fun begins only after he's gone potty in the right place. In Fido's mind, something negative used to happen when he went potty then had to go right inside. Now the walk or playtime becomes the reward for going potty.

The trick to making this new plan work is starting it on a day when you can dedicate a few hours in the morning to hanging around the house supervising Fido. You'll get up in the morning and take him outside to the area where you want him to potty, preferably an out-of-the-way corner of the yard, or the grassy area closest to your front door if you're going to be taking him out for a walk. Stand there with Fido on his leash and wait for him to go potty. Don't walk around much, since we want him to get bored enough with the sights, smells and sounds that he puts his mind to pottying instead of checking out the scenery.

We're going to give Fido 2 minutes in his potty area. If he goes, praise him like crazy and take him for a walk or take him off the leash and let him play in the yard. If he doesn't go, take him back in the house, supervise him closely for 20 minutes, then try the same thing again. Give him outdoor playtime or a walk only after he successfully goes potty within the first 2 minutes he's outside. Once he recognizes the pattern of having fun only after he goes potty, he'll be anxious to get out there and get the job done so he can get out there and see the world!

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