

## Umbilical Cord Housebreaking Method



Umbilical Cord Training is a housebreaking method that's pretty much what it sounds like... your dog is attached to you with a cord (his leash) throughout the day. It is a supervision-based program that requires vigilance but yields excellent results with just about every dog or puppy. This method works well in conjunction with other methods, such as crate training or indoor potty training. It is also an excellent alternative for those who spend a lot of time at home and prefer not to use a confinement method like crate training.

This method is an excellent choice for preventing accidents, since your dog never has the opportunity to wander off to have an accident in the house. You'll also be right there to correct him if he tries to have an accident, which is a great opportunity to teach him where you don't want him to go and to get him promptly to the right spot to finish up.

Most people prefer to use a 6 foot leash for umbilical cord training. This gives Fido a bit of room to move around, but he can't get so far away from you that you lose track of what he's doing. You will have Fido on his leash with you at all times when you're in the house with him. You can hold it, put the loop around your wrist, sit on the end of it or tie it to your belt loop. You can also tether Fido to a nearby object, like the leg of your chair or coffee table or a door handle. Make sure that whatever you tie him to is not likely to follow him when he pulls. If you choose to do this, be sure you don't walk away from him, leaving him unsupervised. Remember, the whole point of umbilical cord training is to have Fido right there with you at all times.

Some dogs, especially those who haven't had a lot of leash experience, will fight and try to pull away when they have the leash on. If this happens, just wait calmly while Fido jumps around, fusses or fights the leash and call him over to you and praise him calmly when he settles down. Giving him a bone or chew toy to keep him busy and distract him from the leash may also help. It might take a little time for him to acclimate to being on the leash, but most dogs give in and relax within a short period of time. If Fido doesn't seem to be improving, you may want to consider doing some obedience training with him to teach him to respond nicely to you when his leash is on.



When you start your umbilical cord training program, your dog may just hang out with you and choose to wait patiently to relieve himself when you take him to his potty area, since his instincts will likely make him feel uncomfortable going potty right next to you (so polite!). If Fido's this mellow kind of character, you'll need to pay attention and keep him on a reasonable schedule for his age and level of experience with housebreaking, as outlined in **Commandment #6**.

If Fido's a more active dog, you'll likely know when you need to take him out because he'll begin to fuss and show signs of agitation, like pulling to get away from you, whining, or suddenly becoming active. If you notice these signs or any other **signs that he may need to do his thing**, get him to his designated potty area as soon as possible. Remember, though, that you don't always need to wait for Fido to look like he needs to go out. You should also be taking him out when you think it might be time for him to go because a period of time has passed since he last relieved himself or because he's just engaged in activities (napping, eating, drinking, chewing, playing) that typically get his bladder and bowels moving.



When you take Fido to his potty area, remember not to stay there endlessly, waiting for something to happen. You'll be more successful in your housebreaking if you get Fido into the habit of going potty promptly when he gets to the right spot. The way to do this is to stay in his potty area for only a minute or two to see if he has to go. If he does go within that period of time, praise him and play with him or take him for a walk as a reward for doing the right thing. If he doesn't go within that period, take him back inside or away from his indoor potty area and supervise him carefully to prevent accidents, then give it another try. The length of time to wait before trying again depends on Fido's age and how long it's been since he last emptied out. For young puppies or dogs who haven't emptied out for a suspiciously long time, you might wait only 5-10 minutes before trying again, for older dogs or dogs who have had a recent successful potty trip, you might wait an hour or more.



The critical thing here is that you must supervise Fido closely so he doesn't have an accident in between potty trips. If Fido is allowed any unsupervised free time and he has an accident in the house in the early phases of umbilical cord training, you are teaching him a very bad lesson. He'll learn to hold it until you get distracted and stop watching him, then he'll go potty in the house, since that's how he got relief the last time he had to go. When you're hanging out with Fido, don't let him out of your sight!

If you need to leave the house or are unable to supervise Fido for a period of time, he must either be left in an area where he won't have accidents, such as a crate or indoor confinement area, or he must be left in an area where it's okay for him to potty, like your fenced yard or outdoor dog run. Under no circumstances should he be left in the house alone and unsupervised, since this will allow him to have accidents without negative consequences and teach him that the inside of your house is a perfectly comfortable place to pee and poo.

Once Fido is going potty regularly when you take him to his potty area, you can start to allow him a bit of freedom, assuming he hasn't made any attempt to have an accident for at least two weeks. The best way to start to introduce free time in the house is to do it when Fido is least likely to make a mistake, which is after he's emptied his bladder and bowels and at a time that he hasn't recently had anything to eat or drink. After he has made a pee and a poo, give him a short period of supervised free time in the house. Supervised free time means you're not holding the



leash and Fido isn't tethered to anything, but you still need to keep him in the same room with you and keep your eyes on him so you know what he's doing and you can catch him if he starts to make a mistake. Start with 5 minutes for puppies under 6 months and 10 minutes for dogs over 6 months, then gradually increase the length of time as he proves himself to be a responsible guy by not having accidents when he has free time.

If Fido is more than 6 months of age, you can start to allow him brief periods of unsupervised free time when he's empty, but only after he's able to reliably handle supervised periods of 30-60 minutes on a regular basis without any accidents or attempts to go potty in the wrong spot. Allow him more freedom gradually as he earns your trust, but don't forget about him when he's out of your sight... always remember to be sure he has adequate opportunities to get to his potty area on a reasonable schedule.

Puppies under 6 months of age shouldn't be unsupervised in the house, no matter how well they seem to be doing. You'll need to wait until Fido proves himself to be responsible AND he's past his 6 month birthday before you advance his training to this level.

If Fido starts having accidents at any point after you start to allow him more freedom, you may be trying to progress at a faster rate than he can handle. Don't panic. Just immediately go back to having him under your direct supervision so he doesn't get into the habit of having accidents. Once he's back on track you can gradually start again to increase his freedom as he becomes more reliable.

**SAFETY NOTE:** Do not leave Fido tied to any object if you are not there to supervise him, don't let him wander unsupervised with his leash dragging behind him and don't tie him to an object that can fall over on top of him if he tries to pull away. Any of these things can lead to injury or even death. You must supervise Fido at all times when he is wearing a leash.

### Notes:



You must go with your dog when taken outside. When your dog has had a pee and poo outside, tell him what a grad dog he is. Give him 3 treats in a poo (Benny Bullies are ideal for this), and then let him off leash in your fenced backyard for some playtime. Bathroom first, play second. The mistake some people make is putting their dog outside by themselves, and as soon as the dog goes to the bathroom they bring the dog back inside. This teaches the dog to "hold it" so they can stay out longer.

If your dog has an accident in front of you in the house, you must ignore it. If you scold him, you will teach him not to go in front of you. The goal is for him to feel comfortable relieving himself in front of you.

If you find an accident in the house at a later date, you must ignore this too. He will make no connection between your bad mood and his bowel movement on the floor. It will only create a negative relationship between you and your dog.

Potty breaks must be on a consistent routine, even on Sunday mornings.

When your puppy is not on the leash with you he is in his crate or small room.

Be patient. You are building a lifelong positive relationship with your puppy.

