

Housebreaking Your New Dog

Housebreaking a new BRLA Boxer:

The good news is that most rescue dogs are 6 months of age or older. As opposed to puppies, who don't even know when they are going to the bathroom, juvenile and adult dogs are much easier to housebreak as they know when they have to go.

That being said there is one magical word of advice in housebreaking your new dog. Don't give them the opportunity!

Many newly adopted dogs come from homes where they were completely housebroken. When they first arrive at your house, they do not consider your home their home and going back to the basics of housebreaking 101 will insure they get it quickly.

Housebreaking 101

- Even if the dog was housebroken in their previous home do not assume they will make that transition to your home immediately. They need guidelines
- Upon arrival at home go directly to the location you want them to eliminate (yard, patio, etc). Cut them loose and stay with them as they sniff and run around. You need to be there if they eliminate to lavish them with praise.
- After some time in their designated area (and hopefully they have eliminated) it's time for them to explore their new house. **ON A LEASH.** You do not want the excitement of new surroundings to allow them to slip out of view, for even a second, as accidents happen that quickly. You cannot blame them as they do not yet know this is **THEIR** house.
- After the tour, setting in one place with your new Boxer. Either on a leash in a room with you or other family members, or in a crate in a room with you or other family members or in a room with closed doors with you or other family members.
- Let the new dog settle down and watch for any signs of needing to eliminate: circling or sniffing or looking for the door.
- It is important to take your new dog out to their designated area every 2 hours in the beginning. Yes, this sounds crazy, but the strict routine is the absolute best way to ingrain the process in your new dog. If you are very diligent in the beginning the entire process will sink in much quicker. If you give them too much freedom and accidents occur in the beginning, it can be a longer process.
- Make sure your new dog goes to their designated area these critical times:
 1. First thing in the morning
 2. After they eat
 3. Before being crated
 4. Before going to bed
- Use the same door to the designated area to keep it simple for your new dog. You will soon see the dog going to that door, or looking at it as a sign they need to go out.

- The first night with your new dog is when many accidents happen as you are asleep. Best solution is to have them sleep in a crate until they prove they are trained.. Second best solution is to tether them to a heavy piece of furniture in your room near their dog bed. This allows them to sleep comfortably and they will usually not eliminate where they sleep. Another tip is to put a bell on your new dog so if they get up in the night, you will wake up and immediately take them outside. It's all about establishing outside good – inside bad.
- If an accident occurs be sure to clean with Natures Miracle or other enzyme agents that completely eliminate the odor. You cannot reprimand the dog after the act has been committed. They live in the moment and will not be able to connect something they did earlier with you yelling at them now. If you catch them in the act, say NO and immediately take them outside to hopefully finish.
- Establishing a routine for feeding, walking and exercise is also very helpful in housebreaking. Dogs flourish in a routine and when things happen at the same time everyday you will soon be able to predict when poop will happen.

The most important factor in housebreaking your new dog is to **NOT GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY**. This is a lifetime commitment so do not feel bad about limiting their access for the first few days. This will speed the process to a trusted, housebroken family member.

Crate Training and Housebreaking

Crate training is one of the most efficient and effective ways to train a dog. The single most important aspect of training is that you reward and praise your dog each and every time they do the right thing. For example: praise her when she chews her own toys instead of the couch or eliminates outside instead of in the house. The more time you spend with your dog the quicker and easier it will be to train her.

The key to houstraining is to establish a routine that increases the chances that your dog will eliminate in the right place in your presence, so that she can be praised and rewarded; and decreases the chances that your dog will eliminate in the wrong place so that she will not develop bad habits.

It is important that you make provisions for your dog when you are not home. Until your dog is houstrained, she should not be allowed free run of your house. Otherwise, she will develop a habit of leaving piles and puddles anywhere and everywhere.

Many people, when they leave home, confine their new dog to a bathroom or a laundry room. This is counter-productive for many reasons. First, the dog is not used to spending time in that room. It is filled with unfamiliar and uncomfortable smells. They do not associate you with that room, but rather the fact that you are leaving. This may lead to separation anxiety in the future. Second, the floor surface is uncomfortable and there is no traction available, making the dog more nervous. Also, the bathroom is much too large to create the "den" environment that dogs need to feel comfortable. Lastly, the bathroom and laundry room are seldom the rooms you are in, therefore the dog will not willingly go there and use that as a "safe place" when they are nervous.

Crate training is one of the most efficient and effective ways to train a dog. Many people feel that locking your dog up in a crate is cruel, but what is being confined to a small space didn't make you feel uncomfortable, but rather made you feel secure and safe? Believe it or not, dogs instinctively seek out tight space. This area soothes them as well as diminishes the area they feel they need to protect. Many dogs make their own crates by crawling under coffee tables, desks and beds. It is not their cage, it is their den, and every dog needs a den. Training your dog to use a crate is *not* cruel and unusual punishment! Quite the contrary, when dog is crate trained *properly* before long he or she will consider the crate as a "den" and go there automatically when they are tired or just want to be alone.

1. Be certain that your dog has fully eliminated shortly before being crated. Be sure that the crate you are using is not too large to discourage your pup from eliminating in it. Rarely does a dog eliminate in the crate if it is properly sized and the dog is an appropriate age to be crated a given amount of time. If your dog continues to eliminate in the crate, the following may be the causes:
 - a. The dog is too young to have much control.
 - b. The dog has a poor or rich diet, or very large meals.

- c. The dog did not eliminate prior to being confined.
- d. The dog has worms.
- e. The dog has gaseous or loose stools.
- f. The dog drank large amounts of water prior to being crated.
- g. The dog has been forced to eliminate in small confined areas prior to crate training.
- h. The dog is suffering from a health condition or illness (i.e., bladder infection, prostate problem, etc.)
- i. The dog or dog is experiencing severe separation anxiety when left alone.

Accidents In The Crate

If your dog messes in his crate while you are out, do not punish him upon your return. Wash out the crate using a pet odor neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle). **Do not** use ammonia-based products, as their odor resembles urine and may draw your dog back to urinate in the same spot again.

The Crate As Punishment

NEVER use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand for your dog or dog. This simply causes the dog to fear and resent the crate. If correctly introduced to his crate, your dog should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may however use the crate as a brief time-out for your dog as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

[NOTE: Sufficient daily exercise is important for healthy puppies and dogs. Regular daily walks should be offered as soon as a dog is fully immunized. Backyard exercise is not enough!]

Children And The Crate

Do not allow children to handle your dog while he/she is in the crate. The crate is your dog's private sanctuary. His/her rights to privacy should always be respected.

Barking In The Crate

In most cases a dog that cries incessantly in his crate has either been crated too soon (without taking the proper steps as outlined above) or is suffering from separation anxiety and is anxious about being left alone. Some dogs may simply need more exercise. Others

may not have enough attention paid them. Some breeds of dog may be particularly vocal (e.g., Miniature Pinchers, Mini Schnauzers, and other frisky terrier types). You may need to increase the amount of exercise and play your dog receives daily.

When Not To Use A Crate

Do not crate your dog or dog if:

- Dog is too young to have sufficient bladder or sphincter control.
- Dog has diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by: worms, illness, intestinal upsets such as colitis, too much and/or the wrong kinds of food, quick changes in the dogs diet, or stress, fear or anxiety.
- Dog is vomiting.
- You must leave him/her crated for longer than they can hold it.
- Dog has not eliminated shortly before being placed inside the crate.
- The temperature is excessively high.
- Dog has not had sufficient exercise, companionship and socialization.