

How to Ward Off Problem Peeing

It's no use scolding them for it, but what should you do instead? First of all, you'll want to find out which of these three types of urination problems it is. Then depending on what you find, here are solutions that are simpler than you might imagine.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE+

- Some dogs urinate a bit when they're excited; others do it as a form of submission
- In neither case are the dogs able to control their dribbling, so scolding and other forms of punishment are entirely inappropriate and will make the issue worse
- Excited and submissive urination are behavioral issues and quite different from urinary incontinence, which is a medical problem often requiring medical intervention
- Puppies usually outgrow excitement urination, so the goal until then is to manage the logistics of where and when your dog gets excited
- Submissive urination is seen primarily in timid dogs. The goal with these dogs is to boost their self-confidence

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If when you arrive home your excited, delighted dog leaves a little puddle of pee at your feet (or even on your feet), it could be your furry family member is dealing with a submissive or excitement urination problem.

It's important to understand your piddling pooch has very little control over the situation, so it's pointless, unkind and confusing to punish her for the behavior.

The first thing to do is make an appointment with your veterinarian to rule out a physical cause for her random peeing. Urinary incontinence is a disorder with similar symptoms but very different causes.

These can include a birth defect, central nervous system trauma, damage to the pudendal nerve, bladder stones or a urethral obstruction, age or hormone-related incontinence, or a disease of the kidneys, adrenal glands or the bladder (including infection).

Many causes of urinary incontinence are serious and require medical intervention, so it's essential to rule all those things out before deciding your dog's dribbling problem is behavioral in nature.

Once your veterinarian gives your pet a clean bill of health, the next step is to determine the trigger for his inappropriate urination.

Excitement Urination

Generally speaking, if your dog doesn't pee when you look him in the eye, bend over him, or greet him face-to-face — in other words, when you're in what canines consider a dominant position — he's an excited rather than a submissive dribbler.

His triggers are probably playtime and when family members come home or guests drop by. If he's still a puppy, he'll quite likely outgrow the problem if addressed correctly, so the challenge is to avoid as many triggers as possible.

Managing Excitement Triggers

Take playtime outdoors whenever possible, and when it isn't possible, make sure your dog has had a chance to relieve himself before engaging in play. Prepare an area of your floor with newspaper or puppy pads before play begins.

This should help keep accidents to a minimum, but when he has one (and he will), don't discipline or punish him.

The best approach is to simply stop the action, grab some treats and take him outside to his potty spot (or to his puppy pad). Give him lavish praise and treats the second he pees where he should. Once that's done, clean the floor without making a fuss.

If your dog tends to leak when you come home, make sure to keep greetings on your end very low-key. Move around quietly and speak in a calm, soothing tone.

If that doesn't alleviate the leaking, try ignoring him when you first arrive home to help him learn to calm down on his own. Once he's relaxed and if he hasn't peed, offer him praise and treats.

Boosting a Submissive Dog's Self-Confidence

Submissive peeing is most often seen in timid, nervous and shy dogs. Common triggers for these dogs include being greeted or approached by someone or being yelled at or disciplined. Many pets with this problem have a history of receiving harsh punishment for peeing accidents.

If your dog has a submissive urination problem, it's extremely important to avoid scolding or punishing her when she has an accident. This will only increase her anxiety and make peeing mistakes more likely.

A much better approach is to give your dog plenty of affirmative, high-quality attention to build her confidence. Use positive reinforcement behavior training to teach her basic commands like sit, stay, come, and drop it, as well as simple tricks. Lavish her with praise each time she does what you ask.

The goal is to give your dog tons of opportunities to succeed and earn praise, while avoiding situations that trigger submissive peeing.

How to Approach a Submissive Dog

It's also important to approach a submissive dog using non-dominant body language, which means you should:

- Avoid direct eye contact
- Approach from the side vs. head-on
- Lower yourself to your dog's level
- Scratch her under the chin vs. the top of the head

When your shy dog has an accident (and she will), it's extremely important not to raise your voice or punish her. Instead, handle the situation as outlined above for dogs with excitement peeing.

Calmly get a few treats and take your pup outside to her potty spot (or to her puppy pad). Praise her like crazy and offer treats the second she pees where she should.

If she tends to dribble when you arrive home, make sure to keep greetings low-key. You can also try ignoring her when you first come through the door to help her learn to self-soothe. Once she's calm and as long as she hasn't peed, give her some loving attention and treats.

Additional Suggestions

Something else to consider is a wrap (belly band) for male dogs or bloomers if your dog is female.



You can put it on before indoor playtime or when you're expecting guests. It's important to remove it once the situational trigger has passed, since you never want to leave urine against your dog's skin.

A wrap or bloomers will not only save your floor, it may also help gently remind your pup that if he pees, he won't be able to walk away from it. Canines are naturally disinclined to soil themselves. Some dogs have been completely cured of excited or submissive urination after a few weeks or months of wearing a wrap.

It's also important with a leaky dog to continue to offer lots of praise and treats whenever he pees in his outdoor potty spot and on walks.

Sources and References

[PetMD, March 24, 2022](#)