

Banish Pet Odors with This Simple Trick

Discover the step-by-step process to eliminate stubborn smells, protect your home from repeat accidents, and keep your living space fresh and clean.

Reviewed by [Dr. Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- When a dog is urinating indoors, it's important to address the root cause in addition to cleaning stains and odors
- To discover where your canine family member has done the deed, walk through your darkened house with a black light, which will turn all new and old urine stains a fluorescent green, so you know exactly the spots to tackle
- Removing pet stains and odors requires a multi-step process using the right tools and the right technique ... and patience
- For the best outcome, use an enzyme-based cleaning product specifically designed to remove pet stains and smells
- Once the urine is completely removed from a spot your pet has repeatedly soiled, try applying a few drops of a pure essential oil

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If you have one or more dogs in the family, chances are you've dealt with at least a few urine-related accidents in your home. Housebreaking a puppy isn't a perfect science, after all. Aging dogs sometimes forget they're housebroken, and once in a while, a well-trained adult dog is left too long with no outdoor access or is dealing with an injury or illness that results in a mistake indoors.

The fact is accidents happen. It goes with the territory when you're a pet parent. Your dog's urine contains pheromones that encourage him to return to the same spot to relieve himself, which is a good thing outdoors, but which is also why you need to be a pro when it comes to getting rid of dog pee smells inside your home.

Locating Pee Spots

One of the challenges in dealing with dog pee accidents is finding the exact spot(s) where she did the deed. Often when a pet urinates somewhere in the house, no one notices right away because it's a small spot that dries quickly, soaks right into thick carpeting, or is somewhat hidden.

That's why it's a good idea to find out exactly where your dog or cat has been soiling. Believe it or not, the quickest way to do this is with an inexpensive black light. Urine stains appear a lovely shade of neon green when illuminated with a black light, so darken your house and walk around shining the light on floors, baseboards, and anywhere there are suspicious stains or smells.

Removing Urine Stains and Smells

For dried urine spots, treatment will depend on the type of surface you're dealing with. Hard materials such as tile, wood flooring, and baseboards can be cleaned using a safe, natural solution like one part hydrogen peroxide and two parts water, or undiluted white vinegar.

Liberally spray the solution on the urine stain, wipe, and repeat as often as necessary to eliminate any lingering odor. If the smell remains despite your best efforts, purchase an enzyme-based cleaner as described below and re-treating the area(s).

Cleaning carpeting, upholstery or another absorbent surface requires a bit more effort. Pet urine is composed of several different chemicals, including pheromones as discussed earlier, plus strains of bacteria and other substances. And while natural cleaners like hydrogen peroxide, vinegar or baking soda can deal with some urine odors, they don't deal with them all.

That's why it's important to have an enzyme cleaner on hand to deal with the uric acid in urine stains.

“Enzymatic cleaners denature (destroy) the proteins and enzymes that make up the pheromones in dog pee,” writes veterinarian Dr. Tiffany Tupler in an article for PetMD. “This not only helps to get rid of the dog urine smell, but it also decreases the chances of your dog being a repeat offender in that same spot.”¹

Take these steps to thoroughly clean urine stains and odors from carpets, rugs, and other absorbent surfaces:

1. If the spot is still wet, use paper towels or another absorbent material like a rag or cloth and blot up as much of the urine as possible before moving to step 2.
2. Pour plain water over the spot and soak up the moisture, again using clean, white cloths or paper towels — continue blotting until no yellow appears on the towels.
3. Saturate the spot with a commercially available enzyme-based “digester” solution and let it sit for the prescribed amount of time. Thoroughly saturate the soiled areas, including carpet padding, if you suspect the urine has soaked all the way through.
4. Use more clean paper towels to blot up as much moisture as you can and then allow the spot to air-dry. Protecting the just-treated area is a good idea to prevent humans from walking through it and your pet from finding it and re-soiling. You can place aluminum foil loosely over the spots or use upside-down laundry baskets, bowls, baking sheets, or similar items.

If the urine spot has been there awhile, you may need to repeat the last two steps at least once. Depending on the scope of the problem, be prepared to make this a multi-week project as you soak the spots, blot them, allow them to dry, and then repeat the process as many times as necessary to completely remove stains and odor.

As Tupler explains, products containing accelerated hydrogen peroxide can help decrease the foul odors. She recommends the following steps:

1. First, manually soak up excess moisture with a towel
2. Next, soak another towel with a hydrogen peroxide-based cleaner. Leave the towel and cleaner on the wet spot for 15 minutes
3. After 15 minutes, blot and soak up the remaining moisture with a dry towel
4. Finally, apply an enzymatic cleaner, such as Nature's Miracle®, to the spot, and leave it for another 15 minutes

Cleaning Other Pet Messes

If your dog poops on your floor, with any luck she'll leave a nice, dry solid little mass, which you'll pick up cleanly with a tissue, and to your relief, it will leave no trace of itself on your carpet. Or not.

If the mess leaves a small stain on your carpet, wipe or blot it gently using a damp paper towel or clean damp cloth, then perform the first set of steps 3 and 4 above.

If the mess is more extensive, for example from diarrhea or vomit, first scoop up as much of the solid or semi-solid material as possible using something flat like a piece of cardboard and discard. Try not to mash or spread the mess further during this process. Then perform the first set of steps 2 through 4 above.

Additional Tips

Do yourself a favor and do not make the mistake of using any old carpet-cleaning product you have on hand instead of a specialized pet formula. The products sold specifically for pet messes contain bacteria and enzyme digesters that are extremely effective at eliminating stains and odors in both carpet and padding, without damaging or discoloring most flooring materials.

If you try something else on the spot first, then use a specialized pet formula, you may not get the same good result you can achieve using the pet product only.

Also, no matter how bad the stain may look or smell when you discover it, resist the urge to use a harsh scrubbing motion to remove the spot, as this can quickly destroy the texture of your carpet or rug, and scrubbing really isn't necessary.

If you're patient and follow the steps listed above for stain removal, even if you have to repeat the process a few times to get all the stain out, there's a very good chance you won't notice the spot after it dries thoroughly. Even light-colored carpeting and rugs can be returned to good condition with the right cleaning agent and technique.

Once the urine is completely removed from a spot your pet has repeatedly soiled, try applying a few drops of a pure essential oil (like lemon, tangerine or lavender) on the area as a deterrent.

Unfortunately, urine occasionally soaks all the way through carpet and padding into the subfloor. If you can't get rid of the smell despite all your best cleaning efforts, you may need to remove that area of carpet and padding, neutralize the odor with an oil-based, stain-blocking primer on the subfloor, and then replace the padding and carpet.

Sources and References

¹ [PetMD, June 30, 2020](#)
