



Houstraining The Full Perspective

Let's face it. Houstraining stinks.

We understand the distinction between in and outside for using the potty, but this is not obvious for your dog.

Look at the chart on the right which shows the first dozen attempts of Henry, a newly adopted dog.

From the owner's perspective, there were only three mistakes: the first in hall, the one under dining room table and the one in the gameroom. But what has Henry learned? It's possible that he's learning all indoor locations are dangerous and grass is safe.

But, it's also possible that he's learning bedrooms and living rooms are dangerous, dining rooms are dangerous if you're under a table, and grass, sofas and gamerooms are, so far, safe. He has learned that it's safe when the owner is absent and dangerous almost half the time when the owner is present. If Henry had to play the odds, he might hold it when his owner is present (including in the yard) and slip away to the gameroom for relief.

Henry's Behavior

Urinates in hall
 Urinates in living room
 Urinates in yard
 Urinates in living room
 Urinates in hall
 Trip to yard, no urination
 Urinates in yard
 Urinates in bedroom
 Urinates in dining room
 Urinates in dining room
 Trip to yard, no urination
 Urinates in gameroom

The Context

Braided rug, owner absent
 Thick carpet, owner present
 Grass, owner present
 Thick carpet, owner present
 Braided rug, owner present
 Grass, owner present
 Grass, owner absent
 Thick carpet, owner present
 Under table, owner absent
 Corner rug, owner present
 Grass, owner present
 Sofa, owner absent

Result to Henry

Bladder relief
 Yelling, shaking
 Relief, praise
 Yelling, shaking
 Yelling, shaking
 Taken in
 Relief
 Yelling, shaking
 Relief
 Yelling, shaking
 Taken in
 Relief

What's missing above?

A solid history of reinforced trials in the desired location.

This establishes the owner's presence and the location as both safe and reinforcing. Subsequent punishments would have a narrower interpretation: the location must be unsafe. This solid foundation is frequently missing in houstraining



To Be Successful

1. catch behavior timely
2. be the good guy - ❤️🦴
3. prevent mistakes inside

Every instance of elimination prevented inside is saved for the right place - outside, which is another opportunity to condition outside elimination through reinforcement and be the good guy at the same time.

