



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

Urine Marking

Cause

A dog may be perfectly housetrained and still lift his leg to urine mark. Females will also mark their territory with urine. Urinating and marking are two different behaviors, and the dog must be taught that neither of these is allowed in the house. Urine marking is a territorial, social, and sexual behavior. Therefore, to resolve the problem, you need to address the underlying reason for your pet's need to mark his territory in this way.

Treatment

Set your dog up to succeed by having him or her neutered or spayed. Asking an unneutered dog not to lift his leg on your credenza is like putting pepper under a person's nose and forbidding her to sneeze. Why make life more difficult?

A dog who urine-marks your home may also be saying that he considers himself "top dog" in your household. Teach your dog basic obedience words as a way of establishing your position (See our flyers *Obedience Training* and *Nothing in life is free*).

Start with yes. Show Muggsy that marking outside is good behavior. First teach him the meaning of the word "outside." Entice or call him to the door. Repeat several times, in an enthusiastic voice, "Do you want to go OUTSIDE? Let's go OUTSIDE!" When he's eager and excited, open the door, and go outside with him. Praise him and give him a treat. Every time he urinates outdoors, praise him effusively, just as you did when you were first housetraining him.

NO! The next training sequence requires impeccable timing. You need to catch Muggsy not after, or even during the misdeed, but when he's about to urinate indoors. Watch him closely, especially when he heads for areas that he has marked before. Fortunately for us, dogs give ample warning that they're about to mark. Muggsy will circle, sniff, and start to position himself. As soon as this ritual begins, startle him by clapping your hands or making a loud noise and say "NO".

Once you have his attention, tell him "Outside! Let's go outside!" Go outdoors with him, and praise him if he urinates. If he doesn't, you can let him back indoors, but continue to watch him like a hawk.

Until he is trained to eliminate outdoors only, he should not have free run of the house. Every time he's in the study urinating on the t.v. stand while you're in the kitchen, his habit of marking becomes more ingrained. Allow him to be in whatever room you are in, pay attention to him, and be ready to hustle him outside when necessary. Otherwise confine him to a small area with few marking temptations. (See our flyer titled *Crate Training*). Also clean areas he has marked with a product that will break down odors, so that he's not inclined to remark an area which emits odors, which tell the dog that area has been previously marked.

For more info, call our free Behavior Helpline (650/340-7022 x783 or, for Spanish, x786) or consider a low-cost consultation. To make a consultation appointment, call 650/340-7022 x667. The PHS/SPCA Behavior Department, like many shelter programs, is funded by donations.