

HOUSEBREAKING

5/7/12

This is an issue that can put a big strain on a human/dog relationship. We would like to help you work through issues and keep your dog in his home.

Puppies - Westie pups are often a little slower to housebreak than larger breed dogs. A Westie who is housebroken at six months is a fast learner. When a 7 month old comes in to rescue because he isn't housebroken, it is usually just a matter of a month or so before he is reliable. Don't be upset if it takes 8 months.

www.thedogspeaks.com is a great resource for information about dogs. There is a lot of information available about housebreaking. The behaviorist here is a Westie person". If you need to do so, it would be worth the investment to buy her e-book and get the free consultation that goes with it.

If you have read all of the articles and followed the advice carefully and have an adult Westie who is still having issues, consider these tools:

- **Baby gates**

If your dog goes into parts of the house where he can be alone and has an accident (sometimes it feels more like an "on purpose" but let's call it an accident), you want to make it impossible for him to get to those areas. Baby gates can do the trick. Get the kind with a pedal on it so that you can open it without using your hands. That way, it won't be a great inconvenience to you and your family. Consider putting one on each bedroom door or the entrance to that part of the house, depending on where the dog is having his accidents. This can force the dog out into the open and lessen the likelihood of accidents.

- **Bellybands and piddle pants**

These are great tools for dogs who are urinary incontinent, or who mark. For the incontinent, they make the issue almost disappear. You use an incontinence pad inside the band or pants and just throw it away when it gets

wet. For marking, you really should be watching the dog closely and training while the dog is wearing the band, but having the band on saves your furniture and carpets if the dog gets ahead of you and marks.

Note: Please be sure to check the pad and change it if wet; wash the area and keep it clean.

- **Proin or DES**

These are drugs that can help the dog with a physical issue that causes them to "leak" or even have larger accidents. Consult your vet.

Doggie Prozac.

Some dogs, like some people, have special needs. For some dogs, any little upset may trigger a housebreaking incident of either type (urinary or solid). It may be beyond the control of the dog. And the upset may be as simple as a break in their normal routine. If you get mad at the dog when it happens, it just makes everything worse. But you have tried everything and are at the end of your patience too. Often we just think the dog is being bad. But he is actually just being anxious. If you simply cannot solve the issue, you may want to talk to your vet about starting a test period on this drug. The vet can prescribe people Prozac or give you a doggie version. A small dose morning and evening may make a huge difference. Please do understand though, that it may take a couple of weeks or even a month to work. So don't give up too soon. And it can make your dog less peppy. You may have to play with the dosage (under vet supervision of course). And remember, that using the drug doesn't mean you don't have any work to do. If it doesn't work, you haven't lost anything but if it does, you will have a much happier dog and you will be happier too.

Important: Combine the use of the drug with training. Over time, with training, you may be able to reduce the dose and maybe even wean off the drug.