



Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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Submissive and Excitement Urination

Submissive Urination

Submissive urination occurs when a dog feels threatened. It may occur when he's being punished or verbally scolded, or when he's approached by someone he perceives to be threatening to him. It's important to remember that this response is based on the dog's perception of a threat, not the person's actual intention. Submissive urination may resolve as your dog gains confidence. You can help to build his confidence by teaching him commands and rewarding him for obeying. You should also expose him to new people and new situations and try to make sure all of his new experiences are positive and happy.

Your Dog May Be Submissively Urinating If:

- Urination occurs when he's being scolded.
- Urination occurs when someone approaches him.
- He has a history of rough treatment or punishment after the fact.
- Urination occurs when he's being greeted
- He is somewhat shy, anxious or timid.
- The urination is accompanied by submissive postures, such as crouching or rolling over and exposing his belly.

What to do if Your Dog Has A Submissive Urination Problem:

- Take your dog to the vet to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low-key.
- Encourage and reward confident postures from him.
- Give him an alternative to behaving submissively. For example, if he knows a few commands, have him "sit" or "shake" as you approach, and reward him for obeying.
- Avoid approaching him with postures that he reads as intimidating, for example:
 - Avoid direct eye contact - look at his back or tail instead
 - Rather than leaning over from the waist, get down to his level by bending at the knees and ask others to approach him in the same way.
 - Pet him under the chin rather than on top of the head.
 - Approach him from the side, rather than from the front, and/or present the side of your body to him, rather than your full front.
 - Don't punish or scold him -- this will only make the problem worse.

Excitement Urination

Excitement urination occurs most often during greetings and playtime and is not accompanied by submissive posturing. Excitement urination usually resolves on its own as a dog matures, if it's not made worse by punishment or inadvertent reinforcement.

Your Dog May Have An Excitement Urination Problem If:

- Urination occurs when your dog is excited, for example during greetings or during playtime.
- Urination occurs when your dog is less than one year old.

What To Do If Your Dog Has An Excitement Urination Problem:

- Keep greetings low-key.
- To avoid accidents, play outdoors until the problem is resolved.
- Don't punish or scold him.
- Take your dog to the veterinarian to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Ignore him until he's calm.