



Submissive Urination

Submissive or excitement urination is when a dog urinates because they are excited or nervous. This often occurs when you come home, reach to pet him, or if something frightens him, like a loud noise. This is not a housetraining problem.

Your Dog May Be Submissively or Excitement Urinating If

- Urination occurs when he's being greeted.
- Urination occurs when someone approaches or reaches for him.
- He is a somewhat shy, anxious, or timid dog.
- The urination is accompanied by submissive postures, such as lowering head with ears back and slow motion licking or crouching or rolling over and exposing his belly.

How to Manage Submissive Urination

- Take your greetings outdoors to help with clean up management while you're working through this behavior challenge.
- Keep greetings low-key and nonchalant. Ask visitors to do the same. You can have your reunion later, when your dog is feeling more confident to approach.
- Using food during greetings can help change your dog's response to greeting. Since petting or reaching may cause the behavior to happen, avoid these behaviors. Instead try using food or toys to engage your dog in another activity. You can even keep a stash just outside your entryway to help make success more achievable!
- Training or playing with toys can be helpful as you can toss them away so that your dog takes the space he needs.
- Try adjusting your body by bending at the knees instead of the waist. Often reaching over a dog's head or leaning over them with our body is overwhelming.
- Adjust your greeting by offering them the side of your body rather than your direct posture, can help relieve the tension.
- Offer your hand below the dog's head so that they can choose to approach if they'd like.
- Avoid direct eye contact — your dog may find this overwhelming. Look at the dog's back or tail instead.
- Do not punish or scold your dog. This will only increase his fear and worsen the problem. If there's an accident — it's best to ignore it for the moment and adjust your plan to avoid it continuing. You wouldn't want your dog to think that scary things happen when you get home! So take a deep breath and set yourself up for success tomorrow.

Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation

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