



Submissive Urination

Submissive urination is normal and very common in young dogs. This is something puppies usually outgrow however; it can also be a concern in some adult dogs. Submissive urination may be a sign of timidity, anxiety, fear or confusion on the part of your dog. It is a type of communication from your dog telling you that they want to avoid confrontation. You will usually see submissive urination in the following contexts:

- When your dog meets a new person
- When your dog meets a new dog
- When your dog is approached in what the dog perceives as a threatening manner
- When your dog is yelled at or scolded
- When your dog encounters someone that has scared them in the past
- When your dog hears a loud and unexpected stimulus, like a siren or a clap of thunder

Although submissive urination can be frustrating, if you become upset or angry at your dog for the deed, it will only make the problem worse. In many ways, the dog is trying to appease you. If your dog is uncertain of your expectations or unclear about acceptable behavior they will show signs of insecurity- submissive urination is one of those signals. When trying to stop submissive urination, there are several things you can do to help your dog.

1. Consult a veterinarian to ensure there is no underlying medical condition.
2. Use positive reinforcement training methods.
3. Keep your environment and routine as predictable as possible.
4. Avoid rewarding submissive postures and behaviors.
5. Introduce your dog to new people, places and things gradually and with lots of encouragement and rewarding. When meeting people, it is helpful to avoid loud, boisterous greetings and to have the new person initially ignore your dog.
6. Let your dog have a choice. If your dog does not seek out interaction with a new person, do not force the issue. Reward your dog for proximity and save greeting until such time as your dog is ready.
7. Avoid threatening body language and yelling as these will only serve to frighten or intimidate an insecure dog further.

If your dog is displaying a hunched back, low and frantic tail wagging or rolling on their back, do not approach. Simply ignore the behavior and wait for a more confident one to reward such as sitting or standing. Be aware that you cannot reinforce an emotion. If your dog is clearly afraid, it's okay to talk to them softly and offer encouragement.

Submissive urination is a completely normal behavior. When you take steps to develop a nurturing relationship with your dog, you will lessen their need to appease you through urinating. Using positive reinforcement to train more confident behaviors and interactions will help you develop a stronger relationship with your dog.