

Toilet Training

Your Puppy or Dog

Learning where to eliminate is one of the first lessons that you want to teach your new puppy or dog. A house trained dog is a pleasure to live with and will be allowed more freedom, around your house and to visit others houses, than one who is not house trained.

The goal with house training is to have your pet readily and consistently eliminate in a chosen area and/or on cue. The specifics of where, for example on what surface, are up to you but how you get there is through making a good house training plan and being consistent in its application.

Management:

Temporary Indoor Toilet Options...

- Newspapers
- Puppy Pee Pads
- Artificial Turf
- Real Grass or Sod Pads

There are pros and cons to each approach.

If you choose to use newspapers or puppy pee pads, you may increase your chances of success by putting them in a tray with a low edge or use a puppy pee pad holder rather than just putting them directly on the floor.

This will prevent them from moving and will make the distinction between the floor and the potty area clearer for your puppy.

Set up for Success:

Make a plan...

Actually, it's not just one plan but three that you'll want to make for the housetraining process for...

- a) when you ARE at home and are ACTIVELY supervising or engaging your puppy/dog
- b) when you ARE at home but NOT actively engaging your puppy/dog
- c) when you are NOT at home

Plan A: When you ARE at home and are ACTIVELY engaging your puppy...

Observe your puppy/dog closely and take them to the toilet spot whenever you see signs of them wanting to eliminate e.g barking or scratching at the door, squatting, restlessness, sniffing around, or circling.

After eating/drinking, exercising/playing or resting/sleeping take them immediately to their toilet spot, as these are the times they are most likely to eliminate.

When they eliminate follow the rewarding elimination process (see Celebrating Success).

Plan B: When you ARE at home but NOT actively engaging your puppy...

Option 1

Tether your puppy to you or a nearby piece of furniture with a six-foot leash if you are not actively training or playing with them.

Watch for signs your puppy needs to eliminate e.g barking, squatting, restlessness, sniffing around, or circling and when you see these signs, immediately take them to their bathroom spot.

When they eliminate, follow the rewarding elimination process (see Celebrating Success).

Option 2

Alternatively if you cannot watch your puppy/dog closely [have them behind a baby gate or other secured area](#) e.g within an exercise pen or crate. For any area, other than a crate, you should have their temporary indoor toilet accessible.

[Regularly take your puppy/dog to their toilet spot](#) to give them the opportunity to eliminate (for a very young pup this could be every half hour, for older dogs it can be longer, but the longer you leave in between opportunities the more likely a mistake will happen).

[When they eliminate](#), follow the rewarding elimination process (see Celebrating Success).

Plan C: When you are NOT at home...

Your housetraining plan for when your dog is at home alone needs to consider the age of the dog and how long they'll be by themselves. If confined to a relatively small area your dog will be discouraged from wanting to eliminate there.

Dogs (unless they have to) don't want to eliminate near where they eat or sleep.

For puppies or dogs that CANNOT hold on for the length of time that you'll be away

[Have them behind a baby gate or within an exercise pen](#) in a room, like the laundry or kitchen, where it's easy or relatively less stressful for you to clean up any messes.

[Have their temporary indoor toilet easily accessible](#), for the times when they cannot hold on.

[When you come back](#), **immediately** and calmly, take them to their long term bathroom spot to eliminate.

[When they eliminate](#), follow the rewarding elimination process (see Celebrating Success).

For puppies or dogs that CAN hold on for the length of time that you'll be away

Option 1

[Have them behind a baby gate or within an exercise pen](#) in a room, like the laundry or kitchen, where it's easy or relatively less stressful for you to clean up any messes.

[Don't have an indoor toilet available](#). If you are progressing from the puppies who CAN'T hold, to puppies who CAN hold stage, then initially don't include the temporary toilet area in the "space". You might need to make the general area smaller so they are not tempted to make a new toileting area for themselves.

[When you come back](#), **immediately** and calmly, take them to their long term bathroom spot to eliminate.

[When they eliminate](#), follow the rewarding elimination process (see below).

Option 2

[Crate train your puppy](#) and use the crate to confine them (refer to our *Crate Training Tip Sheet* for more information on how to do this).

[When you come back](#), **immediately** and calmly, take them to their long term bathroom spot to eliminate.

[When they eliminate](#), follow the rewarding elimination process (see below).

If you must be away for long periods of time, you'll need to:

[Arrange for someone](#), such as a responsible neighbour, friend or a professional pet sitter, [to visit your puppy/dog](#) during the day to give them an opportunity to go eliminate in your chosen toileting area.

[Train the dog to eliminate in a specific place indoors](#). Be aware that doing so can prolong the process of outdoor housetraining.

Celebrating Success:

Rewarding Elimination...

Be sure your puppy/dog has finished eliminating before you reward them. Puppies are easily distracted. If you praise them too soon, they may forget to finish until back in the house.

Reward your puppy every time they eliminate in the chosen area. You need to reward them immediately after they have finished in order to encourage the behaviour to happen again.

Reward Phase #1: Praise and give them a reward like a food treat or favourite toy. Do this after they've finished eliminating and while you are still at the elimination area so they make an association with the act AND the location.

Reward Phase #2: Praise them and take them out for a longer walk, play with them or let them off the lead for more freedom after he has eliminated (you're now using life rewards to reward the behaviour you like).

When they learn that good things happen when they eliminate in that area they will be more likely to practice the behaviour in that location.

Track successes and any setbacks...

By recording their successes and setbacks you can trend any times of the day or periods of time after drinking or eating that might be problematic.

Certain foods will have higher water content or conversely may be so dry that your dog drinks a lot after eating and so they may need to eliminate sooner.

Consider the weather and how heat may be affecting the amount of water your puppy or dog is drinking and therefore how often they may need to empty.

There are many factors to consider so tracking can help narrow down the causes of any accidents.

Put it on Cue:

Controlling Elimination...

When you know your puppy/dog is about to eliminate, softly use your word or phrase, like "be quick" or "go toilet". This word or phrase will eventually be the cue to remind them what to do and allow you to have more control over when your dog eliminates.

Be careful not to interrupt the elimination process by being too enthusiastic with your cue. Make it calm but audible and over time, with repetition, they will associate it with the act.

Being able to have your dog toilet on cue is particularly helpful if you want to make sure they are empty before visiting friends and family so it's definitely worth the time and effort involved.

Be responsible:

Clean up after your dog...

Unsightly, smelly, a breeding medium for germs and disease, and a huge hassle on the sole of a shoe, dog waste is not a desirable feature in any neighbourhood, park or beach.

Dog faeces plays a significant role in water pollution, especially in cities, and the bacteria that makes its way into streams, lakes and the water table can make people sick. Removing dog poop and disposing of it properly is therefore a public health and safety activity, and one in which every responsible dog owner should proudly participate.

Courtesy of your instructors at
Central Allbreeds Dog Training School

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