

Toilet Training your Puppy In 5 Easy Steps

Some people find it really difficult to toilet train their pup but it needn't be difficult. While some breeds are easier to toilet train than others, all should be trained where to toilet by 6 months of age, although you may also get great results in just 2 – 4 weeks.

To achieve quick and easy toilet training you will need to be extra diligent in the first few weeks of bringing your new puppy home. The extra time you spend toilet training will pay off 100 fold when you have a perfectly toilet trained puppy by 12 - 16 weeks of age.



Talk to your breeder to find out how they began the toilet training process prior to bringing your puppy home. Early learning can shape your pups toileting habits. The surface that they learn to toilet on from 4 – 5 weeks of age will remain in their memory. Breeders that provide access to grass once pups come out of the whelping box will help them to learn to toilet on grass rather than on carpet, tiles or floorboards - making your job easier once you get pup home. If however pups have been allowed to toilet on bedding or carpet – your job will be much harder.

Setting up your toilet training program

-  Before you bring puppy home, **print out several copies of the toilet training** record (below) and place it somewhere prominent as this will be your guide to successful toilet training.
-  **Buy an enzymatic washing powder or a urine odour eliminator** product from a pet store. These are the only products you should use to clean up accidents as they remove all traces of urine and faeces to prevent the pup returning to that spot.

-  **Decide where you want pup to toilet not just now but when they are an adult dog** and teach them to use that surface NOW e.g outdoors on grass. Avoid using intermediate steps like newspaper or Puppy pee pads indoors. These might sound tempting to use but they end up setting up your pup to fail. Dogs are actually quite selective as to where they choose to pee and poop and definitely do not want to get their feet wet or worse from their own or another dogs excrement. So to truly get good results with pee pads you would need to provide your pup/dog with an area of at least 4 sq metres for them to feel comfortable enough to keep returning to it once used. The other problem with pee pads is that we confuse our pups – we tell them it NOT ok to toilet indoors but then we encourage indoor toileting by using pee pads. The SOLUTION – provide access to outdoors (grass, soil, mulch) at all times while toilet training. Talk to your trainer about your unique circumstance so you can work out an outdoor toileting option together. Check out some of these below.



Five Steps to Success: Step 1

Put some treats in your pocket and encourage (or initially carry your pup onto the lawn if pup is a small breed or the distance is greater than they can manage at present) your pup to come outdoors to their toileting area with a happy voice. You may need to put their lead on initially to help guide them. In order to successfully toilet train, your pup will need to learn to walk on their own to the toileting spot. So for small breeds slowly increase the distance they must walk to the lawn so they learn how to do it themselves.



Step 2

Once on the lawn - wait for pup to go to the toilet – be patient as this may take a while – as soon as puppy is finished going to the toilet – praise lavishly and give them several treats one at a time. Make toileting the best trick ever and puppy will be sure to repeat it. Once pup is toileting fairly quickly outdoors, add a verbal cue eg ‘toilet’, ‘go potty’ etc

Step 3

Record the time, what puppy did and where they went on your toilet training record. This will map out your pups toileting habits so you can predict when they need to go.

Step 4 – This one is REALLY important

Repeat the above procedure every hour. Repeat also after puppy wakes or before bedtime. In between toilet times – supervise constantly. Keep pup in your sight at all times. Don't let accidents happen on your watch.

Step 5

During the night – have puppy close to you in their bed or crated in your room. Close your door or use a baby gate to keep pup in the room. The millisecond your pup wakes, steps out of bed or cries – rush them straight out to the toilet – as pup will have a full bladder/bowels after a prolonged rest and will not hold it for longer than 30 seconds. This is a matter of urgency to prevent an accident. So get up quickly and get pup outdoors.

Toileting Accidents

Accidents are always our fault and never the puppies. An accident means supervision lapsed, or you didn't get puppy outdoors or haven't carefully mapped out puppies toileting habits. Using the record sheet, you can quickly see when puppy is likely to need to go toilet and get them outdoors sooner.

Oopsy!



If you find urine or faeces in the house and puppy has left the scene, simply get out your enzymatic cleaner and clean it up and record the accident on the record sheet.

If you catch pup in the act – don't get cranky but instead say something like – ‘oh no’ in a disappointed tone and gently pick puppy up or get them outdoors to the lawn so they can finish and get rewarded.

Never punish your puppy for a toilet accident. Scolding puppies can make them scared to toilet in front of you and that is definitely not what we want – you will be jeopardising your whole toileting program. We want puppy to **happily toilet** in front of us and get rewarded for doing so. Accidents will happen, just clean them up and get puppy outdoors sooner next time.

Reducing accidents – restrict access to the floor types that your pups seems to be making mistakes on. If it is your bathroom tiles, close the door or put up a baby gate. If it is on rugs, remove all rugs or cover the rugs with a material that puppy does not associate with toileting eg towel or sheet. When your puppy has had zero accidents for 14 days you can slowly begin to allow access to these previously restricted areas or surfaces. Continue to closely supervise these new surfaces for a further 14 days.

