



## Toilet Training

As we have already mentioned, all our dogs, regardless of being clean in their foster homes, will have accidents. So please do not expect them to be clean.

Remind yourself how long it takes to toilet train a child. It can take months!!!

Toilet training your dog should be quite a simple process, as long as you take the time and trouble to get into a good routine.

Initially, you will have to build your routine around your dog's needs. All dogs have different body clocks. All need to urinate immediately after waking up, so you need to be there to take them straight into the garden without any delay. If you're dog is a suitable size to use a doggy door, then training them to use this at the same time, so they can take themselves to the toilet, can be useful.

Eating meals stimulates their digestive system, and in the case of puppies, they normally urinate within fifteen minutes of eating, and defecate within half an hour of eating (although this will vary slightly with each individual).

Puppies have very poor bladder control, and need to urinate at least every hour or two. They can urinate spontaneously when they get excited, so take your puppy out frequently if it has been active, playing or exploring. But it's not just puppies. A lot of dogs, after excitement or play, will need to relieve themselves. So be ready!

You may find it useful to keep a record of when your dog eats, sleeps, urinates and defecates. A simple diary list will do. Repeat cue words like 'wee wees' and 'poo poos' or 'be busy' and 'be clean' while the puppy is actually urinating or defecating. Use different words for each action so that you will be able to prompt them later on.

Always go with your dog into the garden so you are there to reward and attach the cue words to the successful actions! Fortunately, dogs are creatures of habit, so as long as you introduce the garden to your dog as its toilet area early on, you should be able to avoid most of the common pitfalls.

### **How to toilet train your dog: common errors**

Unfortunately there are many reasons why 'toilet training' might not go as smoothly as it could, so make sure you do not make any of the following mistakes:

- Over-feeding.
- Feeding an unsuitable diet or giving a variety of foods.
- Not feeding at regular times.
- Feeding at the wrong times (which could cause overnight defecation).
- **Punishing a dog for its indoor accidents (which can make it scared of toileting in front of you - even outside). This is a big no-no.**
- Feeding salty foods (e.g. stock from cubes) which makes them drink more.

- Using ammonia based cleaning compounds (which smell similar to urine).
- Expecting the dog to tell you when it needs to go out; this is unrealistic, so it is better to take them out at regular intervals.
- Leaving the back door open for the hound to come and go as it pleases (it may lead to the dog thinking that the garden is an adventure playground, rather than a toilet area. Also, what is a dog meant to do when the weather gets cold, and it is faced with a closed back door?).
- Leaving the hound on its own too long, so that it is forced to go indoors (which sets a bad precedent, or even a habit of going indoors).
- Mistakenly associating the words 'good girl' or 'good boy' when they toilet, as opposed to the specific cue words. Guess what could happen the next time you praise your dog?
- Access to rugs or carpet (which are nice and absorbent - just like grass). It's a good idea to remove them.
- Laziness on your part, resulting in more wees indoors than outdoors.
- Leaving the dog alone in the garden, so you are not there to reward it for going outdoors... how is it meant to learn that it is more popular and advantageous going outdoors, if you are not there to show your approval?
- Submissive or excited urination on greeting (if this occurs, take your puppy outside before you greet it and tone down your greeting so it is less exciting or overwhelming).
- In the case of puppies, it is unfair to expect your puppy to go right through the night when it is very young.
- Sleeping the puppy in a crate or puppy pen can help with house training but you should let it out in the garden to relieve itself during the night.

### **How to teach your dog to toilet out on a walk**

Many owners appear disappointed that their dog will not toilet when out on a walk, yet relieve themselves the second they get back home. This is usually due to a dog's anxiety of being in a new place, or feeling unsafe in a different environment; they feel vulnerable when toileting. It can also be because the dog has been taught to toilet only at home (hopefully in its garden), and being creatures of habit, they often wait until they have returned home before evacuating their bladder and/or bowels.

To break this habit, you will have to get up very early one morning (when you have plenty of time), and get your dog out on a walk before it has had its morning wee. You should not bring it home until it has been forced to go out of desperation. If however, you are unsuccessful, and your dog has not toileted, then take it immediately into the garden on your return, or you risk it relieving itself indoors.