

Toilet training

Setting the scene for success

Most dogs prefer not to toilet in the house but, occasionally accidents happen. To help ensure that your dog doesn't have any accidents, we recommend that you begin the process of toilet training straight away.

Teaching your dog to toilet outside

Firstly, you will need to decide upon the verbal cue you're going to use to let your dog know that it's time to toilet. Phrases such as 'be quick', 'get busy', 'wee-time,' 'time to get busy' can be useful cues. You will also need to ensure that everyone in the family is consistent in using the same cue.



To begin toilet training, you will need to accompany your dog into the garden, each time you let them out to toilet:

- Each time you let your dog out for a pee/poop - give your cue (just as you open the door) eg "time to get busy" (choose a phrase that works for you)
- Accompany them into the garden, and as soon as they start to urinate/defecate say your cue again and praise them (verbally)
- Watch to make sure they finish toileting
- The moment they have finished toileting reward them immediately with a bit of food - chopped cheese, chicken, hotdog and verbal praise
- The food reward must be high value, so not just kibble
- It is important that you reward your dog 'in-situ' (so to speak), so that the connection can be made between the action of toileting outside = reward

You will need to keep watching and remain with your dog until they have toileted and then reward them (even when the weather is bad). Eventually, you will be able to fade the food rewards and just use verbal phrase, as you call him back in.

Remember: Calling your dog in to the house and rewarding them, is rewarding them for a recall, rather than toileting outside.

What to do if your dog toilets in the house

Sometimes mistakes will happen. If your dog has an accident in the house clean it up calmly and make sure you use a proprietary cleaner and odour eliminator, or a solution of biological washing detergent, to eliminate the smell.

It is imperative that you **do not** scold or punish your dog as they will not know what they have done wrong. Punishment will only serve to undermine your relationship with your dog and delay toilet training.

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Predicting when your dog needs to toilet

If you learn how to predict when your dog needs to be taken out to toilet, you will find house training much easier.

Generally, dogs will start sniffing and circling just before they toilet. Don't wait for your dog to start toileting in the house! Quickly encourage them to follow you outside and as soon as they start toileting in the right place, say your verbal cue, praise them and give them a food reward.

As a rule of thumb, take your dog out to toilet immediately after:

- Sleeping/Waking up
- Eating
- Playing
- Becoming excited

What to do if?

Your dog was clean & then starts toileting in the house?

If your dog suddenly starts toileting in the house, this can often be caused an underlying infection, or incomplete toilet training. In the first instance, we recommend that you speak to your vet so that any potential medical cause can either be ruled out or treated.

Sometimes, inappropriate toileting – particularly urination – can be the result of a urinary tract infection (UTI), or for defecation, a result of gastro-intestinal issues. A urine or faecal sample, analysed by your vet, will be able to determine whether your dog a medical reason for toileting in the home and, if appropriate, provide a treatment plan.

If the tests are clear, it is likely that your dog's toilet training has broken down. This means that you will need to go back to the basics of toilet training.

Your dog will only toilet in the garden and not on walks?

Some dogs may, initially, be reluctant to toilet outside the confines of your garden. This can be quite common, particularly with dogs who may be a little nervous or lacking in confidence. When a dog is defecating or urinating, they are at their most vulnerable, so it makes sense that they need to feel secure in order to toilet.

With time, patience, and lots of confidence building games, most dogs will relax enough to be able to toilet when outside the garden.

Proprietary cleaners

To help prevent the chances of your dog toileting in the same spot, it is important to use specific cleaning and odour removal products that break down the enzymes in dog urine and faeces.

There are several cleaners and odour removers that can be purchased online and are effective at dealing with urine/faeces, including: Odorcide 2000, Safe4 odour killer, and Urine- off range of stain and odour removers

Further help

If your dog continues to experience toileting issues please do contact me for further advice.