



Toilet training

Toilet training is not only helpful to maintain a hygienic household, but also to help in the prevention and management of problem behaviours such as coprophagia.

Most adult dogs are toilet trained but puppies will take some time to learn where they should eliminate and this process requires lots of praise, patience and practice. Follow the steps below to help toilet train your dog, whether young or old.



1 STEP 1

Decide where you want to train your dog to toilet. Most owners simply aim to get their dogs to toilet outside, but some owners may prefer to train their dog to toilet in a specific zone of the garden. In this case, it is helpful to visually demarcate these areas to help your dog learn faster. For young puppies, "puppy training pads" can be used initially.

2 STEP 2

Offer regular and consistent opportunities for toileting to help your dog to develop a routine. Playing, feeding and waking from sleep can all increase the need to urinate or defecate, so it is a good idea to take your dog to the desired toileting zone following these activities, to reinforce toilet training.

3 STEP 3

Praise your dog for displaying signs of behaviours associated with toileting (such as sniffing and circling) when done in the correct zones. If these behaviours are spotted in an undesired place, use this as your cue to encourage them towards the preferred area (such as letting them outside). When your dog is toileting you can use a word, phrase or sound, so that they build an association between that cue and urination/defecation. Reward your dog following toileting in the correct location, with praise (and/or a toy/treat).

4 STEP 4

Continue to reinforce this behaviour with praise and reward every time your dog gets it correct. You can use your cue word or sound, along with going towards the toileting zone, to prompt your dog to take the opportunity to eliminate.

Toilet training tips:



- As with all behaviour training, consistency is key! Make sure everyone in the household is on board and reinforcing the same message, to avoid confusing your dog.
- NEVER punish your dog if they toilet in an undesirable place! This is not only unpleasant for your dog, but provides no direction on what they should be doing. It can also teach your dog not to urinate/defecate in your presence, even when they are in the right zone and outdoors.
- A consistent feeding regime can help provide some consistency to your dog's toileting schedule.
- Clean soiled zones with an effective enzymatic commercial pet product (avoid house hold cleaners containing ammonia) to remove the odour.

