

Toilet Training your Dog



A dog is never too old to learn to toilet in the 'right' place. They may have many years of incorrect behaviours to 'unlearn' before they will pick up the new routine. In an older dog, perseverance is the key, so you will need to re-commence training as if you are toilet training a puppy.

Choose a place you want your dog to go to the toilet. It should be one location. This can be inside on a special mat or newspaper or just outside, depending on where your dog will be when you are not home. If your dog is confined to a smaller room when you are not home, they may need a second toileting spot for these occasions.

There are 4 times when a dog is most likely to go to the toilet:

- 🐾 Just after eating
- 🐾 Just after playing
- 🐾 Just after waking
- 🐾 Just after release from confinement e.g. if he has been locked in the laundry while you have been out.

At these times you need to put your dog on a lead and collar and take him to the spot where you want him to go. Stay with him by holding the lead! You may need to wait 20-30 minutes. When he does go reward him immediately with a food reward and praise.

If you are doing this and he is not going on the spot but rather when you are inside again, set a timer to go off every hour or so to remind you to take him out for a chance to go to the toilet. When the timer goes off, place him on the collar and lead and take him to the toilet spot. Again, when he goes reward him with a treat and praise. Perseverance and consistency are the keys to success.

What not to do

- 🐾 Don't yell or chase your dog when you catch them having an accident. This will only make your dog anxious about toileting and lead to more accidents.
- 🐾 Don't punish your dog for an accident you don't see happen. By the time you find the accident, they will forget they've done it at all! All you can do is clean up the accident and try to catch the next one.
- 🐾 Cease all punishment of him for going to the toilet in the wrong spot. Some dogs learn not to go to the toilet in front of their owner because they will get punished! Then he learns to urinate when you are not looking or not around or behind the couch etc.
- 🐾 Do not rub his nose in it! The dog will not understand why this is happening so it will not help, and you now have more of a mess to clean up!

If you catch him in the act of going to the toilet in the wrong place, distract him with a loud clap or similar. Do not punish him but rather take him outside to the spot and then reward him if he goes in the correct spot.

Other articles: www.rspcavic.org/health-and-behaviour/dogs/house-training
www.rspca.org.au/sites/default/files/website/Adopt-a-pet/Your-new-dog/Information Sheet-The First Few Days-Dogs.pdf

Home alone...

When you are not home, confine your dog to a small area. If he does not have access to the regular toilet spot, provide some newspaper or similar as a toilet in one corner of the room and place his food, water and bedding in another corner.

Be sure to clean up the urine inside the house with enzymatic cleaning products. Do not use other chemical cleaners as they can attract your dog back to the same spot. This can include steam cleaning the carpets. Ensure to soak the carpet with the enzymatic product (after testing a small area for colour fastness) to get into the carpet underlay.



Be patient – accidents will happen

Be patient with your new dog. It may take them a while but once they learn that when they go to the toilet outside they receive a reward, the process will become much quicker. The more regularly you take him out and the more rewards he gets the quicker he will learn and will begin to ask to go outside when he needs to.

If accidents are still happening

There are some illnesses that can cause a dog to start going to the toilet in the wrong place. These can be anything from a bladder infection to arthritis to 'doggy Alzheimer's'. Your vet may want a urine sample to run tests on.

Another consideration is to ensure that your dog does not have separation anxiety or distress. If this is the case, the toileting inside usually only occurs when a dog is separated from their owner. This can be just when you are in separate rooms. This is something to discuss with your veterinarian or a veterinary behaviourist. 🐾