

House training takes time and effort in the short-term but gives you the long-term benefit of a dog who can be a part of your family.

Realize that adult dogs adopted from large scale breeders, shelters, rescues and kennels are often not house trained. If your dog came from one of these settings, he might need refresher training, or he might need to start from square one. Also, a dog which is houstrained in one home will often need to be taught again when taken to a new home.

The key to this process is to be consistent and patient. Most puppies will not be 100% houstrained until they're 7 months old. The goal is to have no "accidents" inside so that the puppy never gets into the habit of toileting inside, he is always taken outside to create a habit of going outside and to set him up for success.

Points to Remember

- Never, ever scold, punish or reprimand your dog for eliminating inside.
- Do not leave food out all the time. Keep your dog on a consistent, daily feeding schedule. 2 meals per day for adults and 3 or more meals per day for puppies under 6 months old, or per your vet. Remove any uneaten food after 20 minutes. Don't leave food out all the time. If the timing of the food going in is predictable, the food going out will be more predictable.
- Feed your dog outside and don't let him back inside for 20 minutes after eating or until you see him urinate or defecate. Stay out with him if you can.
- Clean up any accidents immediately using vinegar and water (50% each) on hard surfaces (never bleach or ammonia) and enzymatic laundry detergent such as Bio Attack on carpets, furniture and other soft surfaces.
- Don't allow your dog unsupervised access to the entire house until he's fully houstrained.
- When your dog is indoors with you keep him in the same room with you and watch him like a hawk! To keep him close to you, you may use baby gates or closed doors. You can also put him on lead and hold the lead, attach the lead to your belt, or tether him to a heavy piece of furniture. The idea is to keep him within your sight so you can prevent accidents.
- When you're not home setup the environment so accidents aren't possible. When you're not home the safest place for your puppy is in the house. If you will be gone less than 2 hours you can put him in a crate (dog cage), if you have conditioned him to like the crate. If more than 2 hours then put him in a bathroom or laundry, or setup an exercise pen in a room with hard flooring. Puppies are at risk of being stolen if left outside, especially when no one is home and after dark. If you have a secure yard with high fences, locks on all gates and the dog isn't visible from the road you can leave your dog outside. Make sure he has water and good shelter such as a kennel and bed in the shade under cover. Leave a back door open or have a doggie door but only allow your dog access to your laundry or other small part of the house which has hard flooring.

Housetraining

- Watch for early signs that he needs to eliminate so that you can anticipate and prevent accidents from happening. These signs might include pacing, whining, circling, sniffing or leaving the room. If you see any of these, calmly lead or carry (preferably lead) your dog outside as quickly as possible.

How To

- Take your dog outside on a consistent and frequent schedule. Puppies need to be taken outside every hour (adult dogs every 2 hours) during the day. Puppies also need to be taken out once in the middle of the night too. Set a timer on your phone to alert you every hour or two and take your dog outside.

Use the timer in between the following planned trips outside each day, for example:

1. first thing in the morning
2. after breakfast (give up to 20 minutes outside)
3. after mid-morning play session
4. after waking from a nap or being confined
5. after lunch (give up to 20 minutes outside)
6. after afternoon play session
7. after dinner (give up to 20 minutes outside)
8. before being put to bed for the night
9. (also, for puppies: once in the middle of the night - set your alarm!)

Remember to reward each incident outside with praise and/or a small treat.

- It's best to take your dog to the same place outside each time because the smell can prompt him to eliminate where he's eliminated before. Just stand there with him and be boring. Let him sniff around.
- Keep a jar of treats and a clicker (if you know how to use one) at your door or outside. Accompany your dog outside and say "do wee-s" as soon as he squats or begins to eliminate. At the precise moment that he is finished click and give a treat. Timing is important - be accurate. Throw a party! Praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat, play a game, or do anything else he loves.
- Keep in mind that some dogs tend to eliminate as soon as they go outside, but others need to move around and explore for a bit first, so give your dog up to 20 minutes outside before bringing him back inside.
- Take some treats and clicker with you when you take your dog for a walk and click and reward him when he does his business when on walks.
- To discourage "accidents" overnight, the main thing you can do is try to make sure he does a wee outside before bedtime. Unless it is warm weather, you can remove the water bowl 2 hours before bedtime, then replace it in the morning. So, if he empties his bladder before bedtime and doesn't have water available to him during the night, you have the best chance of reducing night time accidents.
- Not all dogs learn to let their caretakers know when they need to go outside by barking or scratching at the door. Others have very subtle signals such as waking up and leaving the room. If letting you know that she needs to go out seems to be a challenge for your dog, consider installing a dog door.

Housetraining

- Train your dog to sleep in a crate which has a bed and enough room to stretch out, stand up and turn around. If given a choice, dogs prefer to eliminate away from areas where they eat, sleep and play. If your dog is old enough and physically capable he will avoid soiling in his crate. Note that this means that if your puppy is under 6 months you'll have to wake up and let him out for toileting because he won't be able to hold it all night. If you puppy or dog spent time in a cage with a breeder, pound, or pet shop then he will have been forced to soil his sleeping area and therefore this strategy won't work.
 - **Note: Puppies from pounds, pet shops or large scale breeders or any other situation where they have spent a lot of time in a cage have been forced to go against their natural instincts and have had to eliminate on hard surfaces and where they sleep. Some extra patience with training may be required to housetrain them and crate training may not be suitable.*
- Crating and confinement should be kept to a minimum. Never keep your dog in a crate for more than 4 hours total throughout the day or more than 8 hours overnight.
- If your dog is still struggling with housetraining after a couple of months, your vet should check for a urinary tract infection or other physical ailment. The signs for this are pain when urinating, blood in the urine, or frequent urination. You might be able to spot these signs if you look for them, or you might not. If in doubt, check with your vet. Also, if he seems to be drinking a great deal of water, it could be a sign of diabetes or other illnesses. Please contact your vet if you suspect either of these medical conditions.

Houstraining Article

From the May 15th, 2009 issue of urban animal magazine www.urbananimal.net

Sit Happens - Tips and Techniques with Trudi Thorpe Email: trudi@doglogic.com.au

Hi, Trudi,

Hi, I have a 13 week old cocker spaniel puppy who is the most divine puppy in almost every way, she sits perfectly, comes to me when I call her and is soooo sweet, but she's a nightmare when it comes to getting her to pee and poo outside. I've tried everything I can think of to resolve this problem. I've made a loud noise and told her 'No' very sternly EVERY time she's gone in the house, when I've caught her going (usually on the carpet in the bedroom) I've picked her up as quickly as I can, told her 'NO!' and put her outside to make her go there, and I've even tried taking her outside and waiting with her so that I can tell her she's good when she goes, but nothing seems to be working. In fact, on the times when I've gone outside with her, I've waited at least 5 minutes but she never goes, and then almost as soon as we're inside and my back's turned she pees on the carpet just to spite me! We even have an older dog who's about 3yrs old and perfectly toilet trained and I can't understand why she's not just following him when she needs to go. I'm getting desperate now, and if I can't sort this out really soon I may have to think about giving her away as I can't live like this much longer. Pleeeeease help!!!

Sarah T, Newcastle

Hi Sarah,

Toilet training is one of the first things that you start teaching your puppy and as you are well aware, can also be one of the most frustrating. Eliminating, or going to the toilet in the very spot in which a dog is standing is a natural dog behaviour. We are the ones that want to get rid of that natural dog behaviour and replace it with a complex human behaviour like eliminating in a designated spot.

With toilet training comes a number of very important facts that you need to be aware of. To start, your puppy has absolutely no bladder control until she is around about 4 months old. This means that what goes in one end takes no time at all to come out the other. It is also important to understand that your puppy has absolutely no concept of what a house is, or even that she is in a house, therefore if you reprimand her in any way, shape or form when she eliminates in the wrong spot, she will always associate the reprimand with the fact that she went to the toilet and NOT that she went to the toilet inside the house. That is far too complex for her to be able to work out. Reprimanding her will only make her fearful of going to the toilet in front of you and she will therefore become secretive when she needs to go. She will wait until your back is turned, or go into another room or go behind the couch etc. This is possibly why you are already finding that the minute your back is turned that she pees on the carpet.

It has nothing at all to do with spite, it simply means that she has no idea of what you want her to do, is totally confused, thinks that going to the toilet is a bad thing (even though she can't help it) and is becoming fearful of you. If you find that you are taking your puppy outside and standing out there for a period of time then coming back in only for her to go to the toilet the minute you step back inside the door usually means that you are redirecting

her attention when you are out there by either moving around too much, talking to her, being animated or simply just distracting her from what it is that you want her to do, which is simply just to go to the toilet OUTSIDE! This is why when you come back inside the house and go back to doing your own thing that the puppy suddenly remembers she wants to go to the toilet, so she does!!!

The reason she is picking the carpet is because dogs are very sub-strata or surface conscious. This means that if given the choice, they will pee on carpet, a rug or mat rather than a hard surface like wood or tiles. The most important thing about toilet training your puppy is remembering that is NOT your puppy's responsibility to toilet train herself, it is yours. And by the way, older dogs have extremely good bladder control so there's no way they are going to be able to toilet train your pup.

So, how do you go about doing this? To successfully toilet train your puppy, it is imperative that you have patience, persistence, consistency, understanding and a good sense of humour to help you through this period. Toilet training requires the puppy to understand a concept, and that concept is to go to a designated spot (be it outside in the garden or inside on a piddle pad) when they feel the need to eliminate.

In order to build an association between a full bladder and emptying it in the correct place, you first need to condition this association. This is done through monitoring your puppy and taking her to the spot every time she needs to go. Try not to carry her, but encourage her to walk to where she needs to go to assist in building that association. Particularly concentrate on the times that you KNOW she is going to have to go, like straight after she wakes up from a sleep, after playtime and 10 minutes or so after she eats or drinks. Outside of these times, watch her and take her to her designated spot every hour or hour and a half and just stand there quietly until she goes. Praise her lavishly each time she gets it right. If she has an accident and goes anywhere other than where she is supposed to, DO NOT REPRIMAND - if you find you need to take it out on someone, simply grab a newspaper, roll it up and hit yourself over the head for not monitoring her close enough and then clean it up without fuss. When you are not in a position to monitor your puppy, confine her either in a puppy pen or behind a baby gate in the laundry or the bathroom or just somewhere that is tiled so that if she does go firstly, you know it and secondly, it is easy to clean up.

Toilet training is time consuming but done the right way, it won't be long before your puppy gets the concept and will go in the right spot for the rest of her life.*

***Editors note:** There will also be those times where puppy goes backwards in training. I call this the "whoopsie, I forgot I was housetrained" moment. It can happen at anytime between four and eight months or beyond. It often happens in a really rainy period where pup just goes "nope, not venturing out there in miserable weather".

Teach Your Dog to Wee When You Ask

If your dog is an inside dog go outside with him when you let him outside for a toilet break. If your dog spends time outside then spend some time with your dog in the yard, especially during his meals and after. Keep a jar of dog treats outside or at your door.

Every time you see your dog show signs that he is about to urinate, or if you see him urinating, say "do wees" (or whatever you choose) in a bright, happy voice. Immediately after he finishes quickly give him a treat and lots of praise, right on the spot.

You should also take some treats with you and do the same thing when you take him for a walk. If you don't have any treats on you still say your word cue and praise him afterwards.

This will teach him to associate your command "do wees" with what he is doing, and also that he gets a reward if he does it outside and with you.

Eventually, you should be able to tell him to "do wees" and he will do it when you ask. This is most useful just before bedtime, just before a long car trip, or anytime you need to leave him indoors. You can take him outside and ask him to "do wees" first.