

PUPPY TOILET TRAINING

Puppies do not automatically know where it is appropriate to go to the toilet so need to be trained to go where we want them to. Here are some **DO's** and **DON'T'S** of toilet training:

DO - take your puppy outside frequently. Young puppies have not developed full control of their bladder and bowel so cannot go for long periods without needing to go. Take them outside after they wake up, after they have eaten, after they've been playing, immediately after you return after an absence and every 30 minutes or so through the day. After a few weeks, they won't need to go outside quite so often and you'll learn to recognise the signs that they need to go, such as sniffing the floor, circling, whining or looking at the door.

DO – go with them into the garden. You should always accompany your puppy so that you can observe when they go to the toilet and praise them or give them a treat. This rewards them for going in the right place and makes it more likely that they'll repeat it in future. If you just put your puppy outside on their own, they're likely to feel lonely (and cold and wet when the weather is bad) and want to come straight back in without going to the toilet.

DO – provide an indoor toileting area if necessary. If you live in an apartment and do not have ready access to an outside area, you may need to provide an indoor toilet area and guide your puppy there at appropriate times. Newspaper or puppy pads can be used for this, but it will facilitate the transition to exclusively outside toileting if you can provide a shallow box containing a substrate similar to the outside areas your puppy already chooses to use – eg. soil or sand, gravel, or a piece of turf.

DO – ignore any toileting accidents in the house. Puppies do not urinate or defaecate in the house to be 'naughty', they just go when they feel the urge. If they do toilet inside you need to clean thoroughly and redouble your efforts to pre-emptively take them outside at suitable intervals. An enzymatic odour-eliminating spray or 10% solution of biological washing liquid will remove all odour of the urine or faeces to prevent your puppy being attracted back to the same indoor location.

DON'T – punish your puppy or tell them off for toileting inside. Your puppy would not be able to understand the reason for your physical punishment or your shouting. It would just make you seem unpredictable and frightening. This would risk damaging the bond that is developing between you and make your puppy more likely to go to the toilet where they can't be observed, such as behind the sofa.

DON'T' – make toilet trips into the garden too exciting. If your puppy has an exciting game every time you go outside together, they may be too engrossed in playing to remember to go to the toilet – and only recognise the urge to go when they are back inside! When you first go out, walk around quietly without giving them much attention so that they have the opportunity to work out that they need to go.

DON'T – come straight back inside after your puppy has passed urine or faeces. If your puppy really likes being outside, they might delay going to the toilet to prolong their time outside if you bring them in as soon as they have defaecated or urinated. You can avoid this by playing with them afterwards, before you encourage them back inside.

DON'T – carry puppies outside to the toilet. Many puppies do not like being repeatedly picked up. Large breed puppies will soon be too big to carry anyway and even small dogs should learn to follow you outside for toileting opportunities. This can be achieved by encouraging them to run after you and rewarding with a treat or some of their daily food.