



HOUSETRAINING

Teaching your dog to 'go' in all the right places!

Sometimes housetraining a puppy or newly adopted dog can seem difficult and be very frustrating. However, many puppies and dogs can be housetrained in around two weeks, as long as you stick to the following rules.

- The key to housetraining your puppy well and quickly is to give him as many opportunities as possible to get it right. It really is that simple! **The more times he is rewarded for going to the toilet in the right place, the quicker he will learn.**
- However, equally important is that you **must ignore any mistakes** that he makes during this training. If you give him attention (even though it isn't 'nice' attention) when he gets it wrong, you'll only confuse him and the training will take much longer.

How? – the basics

First of all, find somewhere that you can confine your dog where you don't mind 'accidents' happening – but this is only for times when you cannot supervise him during training. This could be an indoor kennel or an area penned off in the kitchen. It should be somewhere that he will still feel part of the family – don't shut him away where he'll be permanently on his own. This has to be a relatively small area, which will discourage him from going to the toilet there. Place his bedding and water in his safe area and also use this space to feed him in.

Please note that if a dog or puppy is shut in an indoor kennel or pen for long periods of time, this can become a serious welfare issue and is not something that we recommend.

- First thing in the morning, take your dog outside, stand with him and wait for him to go to the toilet. When he 'goes', give him lots of praise as he finishes (being careful not to interrupt what he is doing) and give him a treat. He should need a wee and a poo, so wait for him to do both.
- When he has gone to the toilet, you can take him back inside and have a play or cuddle. Let him have full access to the room that you are in – but only as long as you can give him your full attention and watch him – otherwise return him to his safe area.
- Take your dog out every hour on the hour from morning to last thing at night, to give him the opportunity to go to the toilet. You will also need to do this after exercise or play and after meals.
- If he goes to the toilet, praise and reward him and then write down the time of day that he went and what he did. If you keep a note of this every day, you will find that a pattern of when he goes appears. You can then use this to predict when he'll need to go to the toilet, so that after about a week you shouldn't have to take him out as often as every hour.
- Any time that you cannot watch your dog, place him in his safe area with something to do – with a chew toy for example. You should also put him here when he is sleeping or resting during the day. It is far kinder to put him in his safe area when you cannot watch him, than to tell him off if he toilets in the wrong place.

Make it easy for him.

- Do take him outside as often as possible to give him the chance to toilet in the right place. Do not leave him unattended in his safe area for hours on end.
- By rewarding your dog at the right time and ignoring mistakes, your dog will soon get the idea and be 'accident' free in no time at all.
- If you put him in his indoor kennel in the bedroom with you overnight, he'll let you know when he needs to go out and this will help speed up the process.

What if accidents happen?

- Make sure that you remove any smells left by accidents by cleaning these areas with a solution of one part biological washing powder with four parts water, or a purpose made cleaner from the pet shop. This will take away any smells and stains. Make sure that you do not use cleaning products that contain ammonia as this smells like urine to dogs and will encourage them to use the same spot again and again.
- When an accident happens don't make a fuss – your dog has not done it on purpose. If he is still going in the wrong place, then it may be because you are not watching him carefully enough. If you can't watch him, he should be in his safe area. It is not fair to let him get it wrong.
- If you find an accident, then quietly put your dog away from it in a secure place, whilst you clear up the mess with the biological washing solution. Then let your dog back in and forget all about it!

Important points to remember

- If you tell your dog off when he has accidents you will only be bringing attention to them. He may even learn to go to the toilet inside but out of sight to try to avoid the telling off that usually follows. This can make it harder for him to go outside in the right places because he won't want to go in front of you any more.
- Some puppies may be too young to hold it for too long, as their bladders may be too small to cope. If this is the case, then you will need to take him out more often until he is a little older and more grown.
- If a dog has diarrhoea or soft, runny poo and needs to go very often, then you may need to change his food, so that it becomes more solid. Ask your vet for advice about this.
- If housetraining problems aren't solved by following the advice in this factsheet, then your vet may need to check that your dog hasn't got a medical condition that is causing the accidents.

We hope that this factsheet will help you to housetrain your new puppy or adopted dog. **If you have any housetraining problems then please do contact us for further advice or ask your vet to put you in touch with a behaviour specialist.**

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