

TOILET TRAINING FOR PUPPIES.

The best time to start toilet training is as soon as you bring your new puppy home.

A toilet training aid can be very useful to help speed up the process; but the more training you can do, the better!

I don't advise using paper (or puppy mat) training. As much as possible you need to take your dog outdoors: They learn location & substrate preferences very early on, & the best location is outside & on a natural substrate or on something similar such as a portable dog potty (with synthetic grass).

Paper training is ok for overnight (if your dog is kept inside) however if you can provide a more natural substrate your dog will have more continuity otherwise see products like the PupHead portable dog potty. In some cases it may be useful to crate the dog overnight in a puppy pen, or confine them to a laundry or similar (with the tray or dog potty). Crates & puppy pens are quite useful as the puppy can then be kept near to the family rather than being relegated to the other end of the house.

TOILET TRAINING

A puppy needs to be taught the correct place to go to the toilet; it does not understand that going to the toilet on the floor is wrong until you teach it the correct behaviour.

Your puppy (or older dog) will learn much faster if you provide supervision and praise for when the correct behaviour is performed.

For instance walk or lead him / her out to the grass or desired (treated) area, allow it to sniff around (ignore any attempts to play) and if he/she should go to the toilet praise lavishly!

To train your dog you must be vigilant! If you cannot supervise your dog inside, then it may be best to leave it outside or in an enclosed area with a dog potty or artificial grass etc.

THE CRUCIAL TIMES!

*The puppy or dog is more likely to need the toilet:

*Upon waking from sleep

* After eating or drinking.

*After play or exercise.

*Learn to recognise when your pup needs to go to the toilet. A puppy will often sniff at the floor & become restless. (At this stage you should take the puppy outside). When the puppy is about to go to the toilet it will 'waddle' with back legs spread apart and ready to crouch or squat to go to the toilet.

*If you catch your pup going to the toilet (in the wrong area), correct it with a "No", as you pick up the pup and carry it to the correct area, place the pup down and allow it to sniff around, if it finishes going to the

toilet provide plenty of praise.

If the puppy does not need to go anymore, allow it to remain in the correct area for a minute or so then provide a gentle praise.

*If the puppy has already gone to the toilet and walked away, it is too late for correction, the puppy will not understand. (Do NOT smack the puppy, take it to the mess and scold it, OR rub its nose in it - you will only confuse it. This punishment is not necessary, it does not work and it can lead to further behaviour problems, not to mention your pup may start to sneak away or hide when it wants to go to the toilet). Just remove the puppy from the room and clean the mess up thoroughly, if it is not cleaned correctly the puppy will be encouraged to go there again; don't forget their sense of smell is far better than that of humans.

HINTS

*Take your pup to the correct area regularly and stay with them.

*You may also want to use a word such as 'toilet' each time as the pup is sniffing and showing signs of going to the toilet, this may help the pup to associate that now is the time to go to the toilet, and praise follows this behaviour.

*If the puppy is to be kept indoors, you may train it to use a litter tray or better still a dog potty. Use a shallow plastic tray with sand, a piece of lawn or the dog potty grass. When using tissue to clean up any mess it may help to put a small amount in the tray. Training is the same as described above. Ensure the pup has easy access to the tray. It may be gradually moved later.

*If the puppy is going to spend a large amount of time outdoors as an adult dog it is best to get it used to being outdoors now. Ensure the area is safe and secure, and the dog has shelter from the elements. If the puppy is spending more time outdoors it will get used to going to the toilet outside. (However as mentioned before this will not substitute for correct training habits and positive reinforcement from you).

*Toilet training will not happen overnight, it may take a puppy a number of months before it has full control of its bowel and bladder. Be patient and consistent with training.

* The more accidents the puppy has the harder the problem is to deal with. If the puppy is having too many accidents it is because it is not being supervised properly (or has a health problem). The more you can do early on the better.

TOILET TRAINING CONTINUED

CLEANING THE MESS

*Firstly remove or mop up the waste thoroughly.

Use a pet stain remover with an odour neutraliser or bicarbonate of soda (approx 5gm per 500ml of water).

It is important to clean the mess and then clean it again with a fresh cloth and cleaning solution, don't just use one batch, it will just mop the smell back onto the floor.

You may repeat this step a number of times depending on the floor surface.

On the final washes, extend the boundary of cleaning, especially on carpet as the smell may spread on the underlay.

*If the puppy or dog continues to go to the toilet in a certain area or room it may be necessary to block that area off.

*The area may also be dried with a hair dryer. This can also help with removing the smell after the area has been cleaned.

* You may also finish by giving the area a light spray of febreze or similar odour neutraliser (available from the laundry section of the supermarket).

DETERRENTS

If your puppy is consistently toileting in a place it shouldn't you may wish to use a deterrent. However a deterrent should not be a substitute for good cleaning and training practice.

In most cases it is best to prevent access to the 'unwanted' areas until training has improved, however if this is not possible then deterrents can be used.

Deterrent should be used sparingly. We stock a product called D-Ter which creates a feeling of being unsafe in the area. This product is useful for most species of animals so can be very useful for unwanted visitors! For indoor use this product can be applied to a towel or cloth; allowed to dry & then placed over the surface from which you wish to keep your puppy away.

For outdoors it may be mixed up and sprayed directly on areas where you want your pet to avoid. The product is effective when dry & 2 applications spaced 1 day apart should last 4-6 weeks. Don't use this in areas where your dog spends most of its time (only areas you want to deter the dog) A product to place over the top of where your pup has toileted (ie on the patio) is 'Get off my garden' (from most good vet hospitals). You can get this in a spray bottle and after cleaning the area (as above; make sure you remove the smell) then spray get off my garden over the patio/paving area. You may need to apply this daily after cleaning up any 'accidents' however persist with the spraying and use the housebreaker as directed and you will eventually break the habit. Be realistic about where you want your dog to toilet and make sure you clean up messes regularly or they will stop using the area (do not substitute a hidden area for cleaning up after dog dog daily).