

Toilet training

Toilet training will begin from the minute you bring your puppy home. I am often asked how long it will take, the honest answer is that every puppy is different and some will take longer than others. Girls tend to 'get it' quicker and smaller dogs can take a little longer (smaller bladders!). That said, we can help our puppies get the hang of where is appropriate to toilet by being consistent in our training.

- **Puppy pads.** Puppy pads are impregnated with a scent that mimics urine, we can't smell it as our sense of smell is far inferior to our puppies. A puppy will usually toilet where they have been before (this is why you sometimes find they have gone in the same place repeatedly), the puppy pad mimics this behaviour and is why they are often used.
 - They can be handy if you prefer not to get up over night with your puppy (although this can slow up the toilet training process).
 - If your bedroom is on the 2nd or 3rd floor or if you live in a flat they can also be handy.
 - My personal preference is not to use puppy pads and to encourage our puppies to toilet outside from day 1.
- As a general rule of thumb, our puppies can hold their bladder for about 1 hour per month of age, they don't develop bladder control for several weeks and if they need to 'go' they need to 'go'.

How to toilet train:

- During the day, set an alarm in your phone for every hour and take your puppy out when it sounds.
 - Puppies will generally need to toilet:
 - As soon as they wake up
 - After they have eaten
 - After they have been playing.
 - Depending on the size of your puppy and the distance to outside you may want to carry your puppy to their toilet area initially.
 - You can also carry them to just before the door and then encourage them to walk out themselves.
- If it is safe to do so there is no need to pop their lead on.
- Go out with your puppy every time (and grab a tasty reward as you go).



- Keep a close eye on them, when they have started going to the toilet, wait until they are just finishing and give quiet praise and a tasty reward (if we are too exuberant with or praise we may startle our puppies who may then feel they have done something wrong and be reluctant to toilet in front of us).
- Depending on the weather / time of day and how busy you are you may choose to let your puppy have a little play in the garden / have a sniff around or just bring them back inside. **Top tip:** Don't always come straight back inside, if your puppy enjoys being outside they will quickly learn that going to the toilet means the fun stops and may delay going as they get a little older.

Night time toilet training:

Like us, our puppies don't need to go to the toilet as frequently overnight, some puppies will sleep right through from day one, for others it may take a little while, you will quickly learn your puppies' personal needs (fingers crossed you get one who sleeps through straight away!)

- Our puppies don't generally like to toilet where they sleep, this is where crates can come in handy. If their crate is of a suitable size and their bed fills most of it you will find that they will whine or cry when they need the toilet. **Top Tip:** If you have bought a much bigger crate than your puppy is you can block a proportion of it off with something like a solid box.
- During the night don't make coming out of their crate fun. Try not to turn lights on, or interact with them, it is purely a functional visit outside.
- Depending on where your crate is you may need to carry your puppy outside.
- When we are crate training our puppies (see separate sheet) our ideal is that we don't let them get 'upset' in there as they can quickly learn that squeaking gets them let out. Overnight they often squeak to wake us up. After your puppy has been home for a few days you should hopefully see a pattern in terms of time starting to form. You can help speed up the toilet training process by setting an alarm for 15 minutes before they are usually waking you to take them out.
 - The benefits here are a few – by us waking our puppies rather than the other way round they don't have chance to fully wake up and are often quicker to settle back down.
 - They learn that someone will come to let them out and are less likely to squeak.
 - We can slowly move the time they are taken out until it becomes a more human acceptable time.

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Accidents in the house:

- Accidents are inevitable, the key is to not make a big fuss of them (and then check the alarm is still set in your phone!).
 - If you find an accident use something such as [Simple solution](#) or a dilution of biological washing liquid. Both of these will break down the lingering smell that our puppy may return to.
 - If you find your puppy does return to the same spot frequently try a physical barrier, something as simple as a cardboard box over the spot.

Top tips:

- If you can't supervise your puppy in the house, for example while you cook dinner, pop them in their crate with something to entertain them while you are busy.
- A quiet puppy is usually upto no good, so try and make sure they stick close by if they are due to toilet.
- Try to make sure your puppy has the opportunity to toilet on different surfaces such as grass, gravel, concrete, artificial grass. If they only ever toilet on one substrate you may run into difficulties further down the line when that surface isn't available.
- If your puppy likes to play or 'faff around' in the garden before they toilet you can pop their lead (or a [house line](#)) on when you take them out, it means you can help them focus on the task in hand and the lead comes off once they have been to the toilet. Be cautious that your puppy doesn't think that they can only go to the toilet if they are on lead.

Putting toileting on cue:

If you would like to teach your puppy to toilet on cue (handy in the middle of the night), there are a few simple steps which will help:

- Stage one – wait until your puppy has started weeing or pooing and give you chose cue e.g. 'Be quick'
- Stage two – wait until your puppy is 'committed' for example if they are sniffing and have started to squat or are just about to poo. Then give your cue.
- Stage three – once you are outside with your puppy give their cue to toilet and praise if they do.

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Over time we can stop taking our puppies out every hour and increase the time between toilet trips. It will be a bit of trial and error, for example you may take them out every hour but they only go on the second hour. Or, you delay taking them out by 30 minutes and they have an accident. Keeping your diary will be handy here.

Once puppies have the hang of where to go to the toilet they will usually 'ask' to go out. Some puppies can be quite vocal about it and others may just sit at the door and hope that someone notices them. If you have a quiet puppy you could think about using [toilet bells](#), beware though, some puppies like to ring them frequently just to go out to play!

Toilet training diary.

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Date	Time	Accident ?	Wee	Poo



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