



Puppy Preschool – Week 2



Toilet Training

Toilet training is challenging and is something we are commonly asked to repeat. It is not instinctive for our puppies to go outside to the toilet when and where we want them to. Whilst it can be a frustrating and a time consuming process, it is our responsibility to teach them what we want. One of the most important things in this training is to make sure we do not let this frustration get to us. This will only create anxiety for everyone and make the process of toilet training even harder.

Just like the house rules, there is no right answer as to where your puppy toilets. These tips and tricks are to provide you with a toolbox to ensure your puppy is toileting in somewhere appropriate for your household.

How to train:

- Give your puppy every opportunity to go to the toilet outside
 - In the beginning you'll need to take them out or even train them how to use a doggie door.
 - It is important to know that expecting your puppy to tell you when they need to go to the toilet is unrealistic. Eventually you may become attuned to their need and they may become better at letting you know when they need to go to the toilet. However, it is up to you to control their environment and let them know when and where to "toilet".
- Take your puppy outside at regular intervals before they have the opportunity to have an accident inside.
 - As a general rule your puppy will need to do some kind of toileting after play, eating and sleeping.
- Controlling your puppy's environment will help you out a lot with this by limiting the amount of spaces that they have the opportunity to have accidents in.
 - Ideally, when puppies are inside they should be supervised 100% of the time.
 - Using a crate can help control their environment when you can't be fully supervising them.
- At the start, take your puppy out to the toilet on a lead and minimise the excitement.
 - Use a command to let them know this is the time to toilet. Examples are 'Toilet Time', 'Potty' or 'Wee-wees'.
- When your puppy goes to the toilet in the right place, reward them.



How to deal with accidents:

- Be patient! Mistakes should not be considered punishable; this will just lead to anxiety and confusion. Remember, your puppy won't know what the punishment relates to if it is given more than half a second after the event. If you don't catch them mid-mistake, there's nothing to do but pick up the mess and keep persevering.
- If you do catch your puppy mid-accident, scoop them up and take them outside. If your puppy continues their toileting outside, give them praise as soon as they finish and give treats as you would normally.
- If your puppy seems to be having more accidents than usual, take them outside more often giving them more opportunities to toilet outside.
 - Only increase the time period between opportunities when you are completely confident your puppy can last a little longer.

- Puppies will often have ‘excitement’ accidents where they will pass a small amount of urine during times of intense excitement or even anxiety. It is important not to yell at your puppy during these times as this can make them fearful.

How long will it take?

- Toilet training will not be mastered in a week or two. It can take months and relapses are very common. As with all puppy training, patience and consistency are the most important qualities.
- A puppy can be considered house trained when he has gone for six weeks without urinating or defecating in an undesired area.
- All dogs are individuals and will develop at different rates. Some puppies will gain effective bladder control very early and for others it may take much longer.
- Once house trained, your puppy should be able to last through the night, but may still have the occasional accident.
- If your puppy still has poor bladder control at 6-7 months of age, seek advice from your vet as there may be a physical problem.

Puppies need to go potty more often than adult dogs. Follow the following for successful and fast house training:



2 Months	→	2-3 Hrs.
Every additional month	→	Add 1 Hr.
6 Months and beyond	→	6-8 Hrs.

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Basic training – DROP

This is the command which we use to train your puppy to lie down on cue. ‘Drop’ can be very handy when you need your puppy to settle on the back seat of a car or when there are visitors and excited children present. It is initially taught from a sitting position, but once your puppy is familiar with the command they should also be able to perform it from a standing position. Some puppies feel vulnerable when they are lying down and may be reluctant to do it. There are also some breeds of dogs which are more difficult to train to drop because of their size or the length of their legs. For this reason, there are 3 different methods outlined below. One is the method outlined in class, but if you are having problems training your puppies try one of the other methods. Be patient and keep the training slow and consistent with lots of praise.

Hand signal: Start with hand at shoulder with palm facing downwards, move hand in a straight line towards the ground

Verbal command: Drop

How to train: Class method

- Ask your puppy to sit. Use a treat if your puppy still needs this. Reward your puppy as soon as they sit (either with the treat or with a verbal reward).
- Hold another treat in front of your puppy’s nose and slowly lower the treat to the floor between the puppy’s front paws.
 - If your puppy just looks down at the floor with their head, try moving the treat more slowly, or run the treat along their chest and then along the floor almost in an L shape.
- Repeat until your puppy is lying down reliably, then add the verbal cue ‘Drop’. Say ‘Drop’ as your puppy’s front end touches the floor, say ‘yes’ and reward with a treat.

Basic training – COME

This is an essential command to master early for your puppy’s safety. It will allow you to call them back if they are heading towards a dangerous situation, such as a busy road. If your puppy comes back to you reliably, you can allow your puppy more freedom because you will be confident to allow them off leash more often – of course where it is safe and legal for your puppy to be off leash.

Hand gesture: Swinging arm from side with hand moving the chest.

Verbal command: Come

How to train:

- Start at a short distance and in a very safe environment. Say their name in an excited happy voice to get their attention. Remember, you need to be more exciting than any other distractions around.
- Extend your hand toward the puppy with a treat.
- Move the food towards you toward the chest and say “Come” as the puppy runs to you.
- Immediately give your positive marker and the treat.
- Take a few steps back and repeat.
- Practice this exercise at home and move further and further away from the puppy. You can also use a long lead to keep your puppy secure or start in your backyard.
- Once the puppy is doing well, begin calling your puppy when they are not looking at you and reward them when they come.



Keeping treats powerful

Food is often a powerful motivator for dogs which is one of the reasons it can be very effective for obedience training. Training is often confusing for puppies as they have to understand verbal and visual cues and perform the desired behaviour. By using the motivating power of something that is very primal to them – food – the learning task can be made easier for them.



Our puppies are clever, but they are also a bit cheeky. They will quickly work out the value of treats and can ‘work the system’ in their favour. Once they start to become familiar with the training process and the commands, they may only do the command when they know there is a tasty treat waiting at the end. The aim is to teach puppies different commands without becoming ‘treat dependant’.

Initially we use a treat to help lure the puppy into the desired behaviour. Once our puppy is performing the command well, we should start to reduce the frequency of using treats. Eventually, you’ll want to only randomly provide the treat, and then stop using treats entirely. Utilising attention, affection and playing with a toy in lieu of treats as reward can also lessen your puppy’s reliance on treats.



Having a variety of different valued treats for training can also help to reduce treat dependence. Any treat that you use will have a different value to your puppy. Identifying low, medium and high value treats will allow you to switch between them so your puppy doesn’t always know the value of the treat they will be receiving. Higher value treats (such as chicken) can be used when you start asking your puppy to do more difficult commands and we want their motivation to stay high.

Remember, the behaviour that precedes the treat is the behaviour which is reinforced and this includes your dogs position. If you want to reward your dog for lying down, then only give it when they are lying down (or taking an incremental step towards lying down) – not after they pop up excitedly begging for the treat. Be careful you are not unintentionally rewarding hyperactive or incorrect behaviour. Wait until your dog is doing the desired behaviour, then reward.

Basic training – ON YOUR BED

Training your puppy to go to a mat and settle will allow them to have a space when they need a quiet moment. This can also be useful in situations where you may not want your puppy underfoot such as in the kitchen or if they are starting to become a little unruly.

How to train:

- Place a treat on the mat so the puppy goes there to investigate, or use a treat to lure the puppy to the mat.
- When the puppy is on the mat ask the puppy to sit and reward them with a treat and 'yes'
- Repeat until the puppy is happily going to the mat and sitting.
- If the puppy goes to the mat of his own accord reward and quietly praise immediately.
- As the puppy becomes more at ease on the mat, you can start to slowly move further away and praise the puppy for staying on their mat.
- Over time, you can start to use a hand gesture and verbal cues such as 'go to the mat'. Note that you will need to start phasing out the treats by only giving rewards intermittently and using your hand gesture as the signal to go to the mat. However, whenever your puppy goes to their mat on their own, give praise and/or a reward immediately, every time.
- Use a leash with excitable puppies when teaching this command.
- Keep the mat in the same position until your puppy understands the command and goes to the mat consistently. You can then start to move the mat to other areas of the house and even if you are visiting somewhere else.

