

# Toilet Training

**Some people find it really difficult to toilet train their pup, but it needn't be difficult.**

Pet Professional Guild of Australia  
- Member Resource Tool

<http://www.ppgaaustralia.net.au>

While some breeds are easier to toilet train than others, all should be trained where to toilet by 6 months of age, although you may also get great results in just 2 – 4 weeks.

To achieve quick and easy toilet training you will need to be extra diligent in the first few weeks of bringing your puppy home. The extra time you spend toilet training will pay off 100 fold when you have a perfectly toilet trained puppy who can be trusted not to toilet in the house by 12-16 weeks of age.

Talk to your breeder to find out how they have begun the toilet training process prior to bringing your puppy home. Early learning can shape your pups toileting habits. The surface that they learn to toilet on from 4–5 weeks of age will remain in their memory. Breeders that provide access to grass once pups come out of the whelping box will help them to learn to toilet on grass rather than on carpet, tiles or floorboards - making your job easier once you get pup home. If however pups have been allowed to toilet on bedding or carpet – your job will be harder.



## **Before you bring puppy home**

Before you bring puppy home, print out several copies of the toilet training record (below) and place it somewhere prominent, as this will be your guide to successful toilet training. Buy an enzymatic washing powder or a urine odour eliminator product (eg. Urine Off) from a pet store. These are the only products you should use to clean up accidents as they remove all traces of urine and faeces to prevent the pup returning to that spot. Decide where you want pup to toilet so that you can direct the puppy to this spot. A mix of 50/50 white vinegar and water has also been known to assist in cleaning up accidents. Thoroughly clean the area, don't just spray.

### **Step 1**

Put some treats in your pocket and either carry your pup onto the lawn (if pup is a small breed or the distance is greater than they can manage at present) or encourage them to come to you with a happy voice. You may need to put their lead on initially to help guide them (avoid pulling your pup). In order to successfully toilet train, your pup will need to learn to walk on their own to the toileting spot. So for small breeds slowly increase the distance they must walk to the lawn so they learn how to do it themselves.

### **Step 2**

Once on the lawn - wait for the pup to go to the toilet – be patient as this may take a while – as soon as they are finished toileting, praise lavishly and give them several treats one at a time. Make toileting the best trick ever and your puppy will be sure to repeat it. Once the pup is toileting fairly quickly on the lawn, add a verbal cue eg 'toilet', 'go potty' etc. So whilst the pup is actually eliminating, say your word so they are learning the activity equals that word. Over time you can move this word to the start of the process.

### **Step 3**

Record the time, what the puppy did and where they went on your toilet training record.

### **Step 4**

Now repeat the above procedure every hour. Repeat also after your puppy wakes up or before they go to bed for the night. In between toilet times – supervise constantly. Keep your pup in your sight at all times. Don't let accidents happen on your watch.

## Step 5

During the night – have your puppy close to you in their bed or crated in your room. Close your door or use a baby gate to keep pup in the room. The millisecond your pup wakes, steps out of bed or cries – rush them straight out to the toilet – as pup will have a full bladder/bowels after a prolonged rest and will not hold it for longer than 30 seconds. This is a matter of urgency to prevent an accident. So get up quickly and get your pup outdoors.

## Toileting Accidents

Accidents are always our fault and never the pup's. An accident means you were not diligent enough at getting your puppy outdoors, or you haven't carefully mapped out their toileting habits. By recording all toileting on the record sheet, you can quickly see when your pup is likely to need to go out to the toilet and what the pup needs to do at what times. If you find urine or faeces in the house and your puppy has left the scene, simply get out enzymatic cleaner, clean it up and record the accident on the record sheet. If you catch your pup in the act don't get cranky – instead say something like 'oh no' in a disappointed tone and calmly scoop them outside to their toilet place as soon as possible. Be careful about giving your pup a fright at these times. Essentially if they have all ready started going, it is too late! However, it doesn't hurt to visit the outside spot immediately after the inside accident, to encourage toileting association with the preferred area.

Never ever punish your puppy for a toilet accident. Scolding puppies can make them scared to toilet in front of you and that is definitely not what we want – you will be jeopardising your whole toileting program. We want the puppy to happily toilet in front of us and get rewarded for doing so. Accidents will happen - just clean them up and get your pup outdoors sooner next time.

**To reduce accidents** – restrict access to the floor types that your pup seems to be making mistakes on. If it is your bathroom tiles, close the door or put up a baby gate. If it is on rugs, remove all rugs or cover the rugs with a material that your pup does not associate with toileting eg a towel or sheet. When your puppy has had zero accidents for 14 days you can slowly begin to allow access to these previously restricted areas or surfaces. Continue to closely supervise these new surfaces for a further 14 days.

It is no secret that dogs that are allowed inside the home with you have far more training opportunities than those that are relegated to be a backyard dog. More training can mean less behavioural problems. The dog allowed indoors learns to be calmer in the house, have a greater relationship with you, is more relaxed and better socialised than outdoor dogs. Therefore, it makes sense to invest time in toilet training so that your dog can live with you in the home.

Here's how to use your toilet training record. At the end of each day, you can total up the number of accidents, urine and faeces so it is easier to see your progress over time.

Puppy Toilet Training Record

Date	Time	Urine	Faeces	Accident	Location/situation
8/10	5 am	yes	yes		Back yard
	6.10 am	yes			Back yard
	7.20 am	yes		yes	Bathroom floor – door left open
	8.00 am	yes			Back yard
	9.15 am	yes			Front yard
	10.30 am	yes			Back yard
	11.45 am	yes	yes		Back yard
	12.30 pm	Yes			Back yard
	1.45 pm	Yes		yes	Kitchen floor – didn't make it to yard
	2.30 pm	yes	yes		Back yard

