

## How to Toilet Train Your Puppy or Dog

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Begin to house train your puppy or dog the day you bring him home. Before you start, choose a word to use as a command for relieving himself. It doesn't matter which word, but bear in mind that you may have to say it in public! "Be clean" is polite enough for most company, or use "hurry up" if you want to be more subtle.

Be patient and expect him to make mistakes. If you don't want to find them everywhere, fit baby gates to limit his movements to a small part of the house at first. As with all dog training, you should use reward-based methods that concentrate on the right behavior rather than punishment based ones which only look at mistakes.

- Your puppy will probably need to relieve himself after a meal, after a sleep and after (or during) a game. Watch him and learn the body language, which means he needs to go out - he may sniff the floor, seem distracted, or wander about looking for a spot. This can be subtle, and often doesn't give you more than a couple of seconds warning: stay alert.
- At these times take him straight outside and (most importantly) stay out with him. When he naturally starts to wee, chant your chosen command in an encouraging tone. When he has finished praise him as much as you can. Let him know what a clever dog he is - lots of hugs, love, tickles, even food if you like.
- Don't try to use your word as a command at first, wait until you are sure your dog has made the connection between the word and the deed. Then you can take him out and say "hurry up" (or whatever) to encourage him. This is a very useful trick, especially if you are leaving him at home for a short time or taking him on a long car journey.
- If you see your puppy peeing indoors shout "NO" as loudly and suddenly as possible. Aim to startle him rather than scold, so that all the muscles in his body tighten and he stops mid-stream. Get him outside as fast as possible and wait with him till he finishes so you can praise him when he has done. This may take a while so don't give up too soon.
- If you don't catch your dog in the act, clean up accidents without comment. This is difficult when it's your carpet yet again, but don't shout, smack, rub his nose in it, or point to the spot and snarl; he will not know why you are angry.
- Your puppy or dog knows you ARE angry (this is why he acts as if he is feeling guilty) but he connects your anger with what he is doing now, not what he did an hour (or even five minutes) ago. By forcing a connection between your anger and feces or urine you may teach him to hide, or even eat, his mess to keep it out of your way. He will certainly not be keen to "perform" in front of you when you take him in the garden.
- These routines also apply if your puppy or dog is wet or dirty overnight. Telling him off when he comes to greet you can make him confused, stressed and more likely to make a mess. Greet him, let him out, and clear up without comment.

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- Disinfectant leaves a tangy, urine-like (to a dog) smell; use biological soap powder to clean your floor. Better still, your pet shop will have cleaning preparations which are designed to break down the chemicals in urine so you don't get any lingering aromas. These are particularly useful if he develops a "favorite" indoor spot, since smell is one of the things which keeps him coming back to it. A plastic sheet or opened up carrier bag spread under the carpet at his favorite spot will stop the urine soaking into or staining your floorboards.
- If the weather allows, leave the door open at first. If your puppy or dog goes out by himself watch him; then follow him out and praise him (outside) immediately he finishes. If you can't leave the door open, take him out whenever he makes a move towards the door. Do it immediately, even if he picks the most exciting moment in your favorite TV show. As before watch, follow, and praise.
- When you are confident his training is complete, you can begin to (very) gradually reduce the amount of praise you give, and then to let him go out alone.