



House (Toilet) Training

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House training your pup or your adult dog is a must. Your dog won't figure it out by himself, nor should he be expected to.

The first step is to understand the basic premise of dog training that is that the dog will only work for one of two influences.

To gain reward or to avoid punishment.

This is typical Hedonistic behaviour and this premise can be used to train just about anything. When training your dog though, I find it unfair to use punishment with a dog that does not know what is required of him and the fallout can be hazardous.

Having a "clean" dog starts with the breeder. When we were breeding dogs, I had a rule that the **whelping box** litter (*we used shredded paper or newspaper*) was changed every two to four hours, win lose or draw. This means that when it was time to change the litter, it didn't matter if the litter had not been soiled; it got tossed out and changed on schedule.

Most people will find that in a number of **days** their dog is becoming more and more reliable on the toilet command, and if they have been vigilant, there have been no accidents.

Pups that I have bred never came into this world walking through their own faeces before they even opened their eyes; this makes a big difference to how the pup and adult dogs view their own waste.

This is also helpful later on for providing the negative stimulus required to ensure the pup does not toilet in its own bed. We want the pup to be uncomfortable around its own waste, meaning it will prefer to toilet away from where it sleeps and eats.

I have consulted with a number of clients over the years that have had very tough times getting their dog house trained, in all these cases, the dog was not at all concerned about its own waste and was happy to lay in it or sleep with it.

In my Distance Learning Program, Raising a Pup The Right Way, there are sections on selecting a pup and some time is spent explaining why we need to make sure the breeder has begun the work the right way.

We also have a course that we run for breeders that help them understand this and many other aspects of breeding dogs with great temperaments and preparing them for life with their new packs. If you're thinking of getting a pup or you're a breeder who would like more information, see our website for more details or simply e-mail me. info@k9pro.com.au

I always use some equipment to help me achieve great results fast. I crate train the pup as soon as it gets to my home.

This gives me a place to put the pup or adult dog when I cannot supervise all of the time, and if the dog makes a mistake, until I notice and get him out, the “punishment” if you can call it that is that the dog is in close proximity with its own waste. The crate needs to be just big enough for the dog or pup to lie down and relax, it isn’t a play pen.

I also use a kitchen timer, this allows me to plan toilet breaks for my dog on a schedule and stops time slipping away.

Dogs eliminate after they have slept, eaten or exercised, so it becomes predictable when the dog will need to go to the toilet.

I crate the pup or dog and I use the following time scale to take the dog to the place I want him to toilet.

- **Pups 8 weeks – 12 weeks**

I set my timer during daylight, non standard sleep times for 40 minutes. I take the pup outside every 40 minutes on leash until it toilets. When it does I set the next time for 2 hours.

- **Pups 12 weeks – 20 weeks**

I set my timer to remind me every hour until as above the dog toilets, and then I set the next time for two hours.

- **Dogs 20 weeks – adult**

I set the timer for 2 hours, when the dog toilets, I just rest it for two hours through the daytime.

If I won’t be home through the day, the pup stays outside in the yard or the pen, which ever you have chosen.

The cue

We need to have a verbal cue chosen that were going to use when we want to encourage the dog to toilet. You can use outside, toilet, pee pee, whatever takes your fancy.

The method

Ok so we have a clean dog, we have a crate and we have a timer, we have put the pup in the crate and we either see a sign the pup needs to toilet or our timer says it is time to go outside.

I leash up the pup, this is important so you can stop the pup running around the house and having an accident, it’s also important so you can show the pup or dog where it should toilet.

We walk outside with the dog and go to the spot. We stand still, say nothing, we don’t allow the pup to search the yard for the golden blade of grass, but rather keep it on a loose leash but we don’t move.

I give the pup 10 minutes to go, if it doesn’t we go back to the crate for the times above. If it does here is the important part.

When the pup or dog starts to eliminate, we have a toilet cue (e.g. “toilet”) in the back of our mind ready to go. It is at this time we verbally praise our dog, such as “good boy, good toilet, good boy”. Sound impressed, sound “rewarding”.

You can use a clicker to mark the right action too if you're going to clicker train.

Allow him to finish and run him back inside, by all means give him a treat now when he gets inside and remind him again "good toilet". Crate him again.

Now we have developed the following: We have a dog that is in its crate, not having accidents that it can leave behind for you. It understands that if it makes a mistake in the crate, it has to live with it for a while.

We have a clean dog that doesn't like its waste so we have a correction or negative stimulus for toileting here.

We have a reward system that teaches the dog that if you toilet where I say, you will get rewarded. You have basically taken advantage of the dog's need to eliminate, added a cue and reward. Now you can instigate the action with the cue.

Things you should not do

I don't recommend puppy pads or newspaper to teach the pup to toilet on. This just teaches the dog that it is ok to toilet in the house, when it clearly is not.

I don't expect the dog to use a dog door until it knows that toileting outside is the right idea. Do not punish the dog or rub its nose in its waste, this is just dumb! Punish yourself for not being vigilant.

If you punish a dog for toileting accidents then you can create a dog that urinates in submission in your presence or even a dog that sneaks away from you to toilet in hiding.

Troubleshooting

If you have persisted through the above and still do not have a dog that is reliably house trained in 4 weeks for a puppy, 2 weeks for an adult, some reasons may be as follows:

If the dog is an entire male, it could be marking its territory rather than urinating. The crate will help with this but also you may need to consider a belly band. These control marking reasonably well while you're getting a handle on the training.

Belly Band

A Belly Band is made of lightweight cotton and secured with Velcro. The Belly Band is worn around the male dog's waist/belly covering his private parts. If the dog urinates wearing the Belly Band it will feel wet against its skin which the dog does not like and therefore provides an aversive to the dog urinating whilst wearing the belly band.