



Housetraining a puppy

To successfully housetrain a puppy you need to teach him three things: -

- That outside is the right place to eliminate. If early puppy housetraining is successful your adult dog will have a strong subconsciously developed natural preference to eliminate outside. He will then only eliminate indoors in extreme circumstances.
- To urinate and defecate on command, so you can ensure your puppy's bladder or bowels are empty before leaving him alone.
- How to tell you he wants to go through a door, so he can tell you when he needs to go outside



How do I teach my puppy that outside is the right place to eliminate?

This is best achieved by maximising the chances your puppy has to eliminate outdoors so the process of opening his bladder or bowels becomes a subconsciously linked to the sensations of being outdoors. To achieve this, take your puppy to the place where you want him to eliminate (e.g. the garden): -

- When he has just woken up
- After every meal
- After a period of play
- When he looks like he may want to eliminate: The signs include restlessness, whining, sniffing around and turning in tight circles.
- Before going to bed or leaving your puppy alone for more than 15 minutes
- If more than two hours has passed without taking him out

Don't talk to or interact with your puppy when you take him out, as this will distract him from the purpose he is there for. If he eliminates praise him enthusiastically and reward him with fuss, play or a small treat. You can then talk to and interact with him freely. If your puppy does not eliminate within 5 minutes bring him back in. Make sure you don't fuss or play with him until he is back inside.

If you have to leave your puppy unattended for more than 15 minutes restrict him to an area that he won't want to foul. This can either be the area of the house where your puppy's bed and feeding bowls are or a specially designed training crate. If using a crate your puppy should always be introduced to the crate gradually whilst you are there before being locked in it when he is alone (see separate advice sheet).

As accidents become fewer or stop, the length of time between each outside visit can be gradually increased. Once you are confident your puppy would prefer to eliminate outside and he is able to tell you when he wants to go out they can stop altogether.

If your puppy eliminates indoors: -

- Don't give him any kind of attention. Even negative attention is rewarding and so may make your puppy think he has eliminated in the right place.
- Only clean up the mess once your puppy has moved away and is distracted.
- Don't punish your puppy. He won't realise you are only angry with where he has eliminated, so may think you are angry that he has eliminated at all. This may make your puppy hide the next time he needs to go, making housetraining harder.

How do I teach my puppy to eliminate on command?

- Decide on one word to use to tell your puppy you want him to urinate and another to tell him you want him to pass faeces. The words used do not matter as long as everyone uses the same words.
- Whenever your puppy eliminates: -
 - As he does so, say your chosen word for whatever he is passing.
 - As soon as he is finished give him lots of fuss, praise and a treat.

Once your puppy has established the link between the word and the action, you can use the command to ask your puppy to empty his bladder or bowels whenever you

need to leave him alone for a period of time or overnight. Of course he may not need to eliminate every time you command him to, but your puppy will find his own way of letting you know he has understood the command but does not need to go.

How do I teach my puppy to let me know he wants to go through a door?

- Decide what signal you would like your puppy to give to tell you that he wants you to open a door e.g. a bark.
- Show your puppy a treat or favourite toy.
- Let your puppy see you put the treat or toy on the other side of the door then close the door.
- Your puppy will try different tactics to get through the door or get you to open it.
- As soon as your puppy performs the chosen signal open the door to let your puppy have the treat or toy.
- If your puppy does not give the right signal within about a minute distract him with a different treat without opening the door. This step is most effective if it is performed by someone else.
- Repeat this process 3 or 4 times a day until your puppy consistently gives the right signal first time.

What can I do if my puppy repeatedly eliminates in the same place indoors?

- Make sure the area is thoroughly cleaned with a biological detergent. Don't use anything with ammonia in, as this smells like urine to a puppy.
- Try moving his food or water bowls to this spot.
- If necessary, prevent your puppy having access to that spot until he is fully housetrained.