



Ewww! Toilet training pups

HALL VETERINARY SURGERY BEHAVIOUR ADVICE



Puppies urinate frequently and success in toilet training depends on anticipating their needs – they should be given the opportunity to relieve themselves outside at least every two hours. You can usually tell when a puppy ‘wants to go’ because they will look around anxiously, walk in circles and start sniffing in suitable corners looking for a place. That’s your cue to whisk your pup outside.



Scolding, hitting or rubbing the pup’s nose in its urine or faeces after it has eliminated in an undesirable place is ineffective when toilet-training. In many cases it makes matters worse. The pup can become anxious, and it learns to do it in the owner’s absence. For a human example, think of speed cameras—when in camera range drivers slow down and many speed up once past the camera’s range. Toilet training should start as soon as your puppy gets home, crate training can help as can installing a doggy door.

SCOLDING YOUR PUP AFTERWARDS DOES NOT FIX THE PROBLEM – THEY CAN BECOME FEARFUL OF YOU WHEN CONFRONTED LIKE THIS AND WILL STILL URINATE IN THE HOUSE, BUT NOW HIDE IT FROM YOU.

FEEDING AND DRINKING ROUTINE

Regular input = regular output! Feed your pup at regular times and you can predict when elimination is most likely to occur. Pups will require 2-4 feeds per day depending on age and breed size. All pups should have access to fresh water at all times. Don’t leave food out for the puppy to graze on as this makes toilet training much more difficult. If you take your pup outside after a meal and there is no defecation bring them inside and take them back outside shortly after. Premium brand puppy food makes toilet training easier – the stools are firmer, less smelly and not as expelled as quickly so you have time to get the pup outdoors once you see the circle sniffing behaviour that indicates elimination.



REWARD ELIMINATION IN CORRECT PLACE

Pups tend to eliminate away from their bed, in areas where they or other pups have eliminated, against structures like trees and fences, and in long grass. A pup is most likely to eliminate straight after a sleep, meal or play session. If the pup shows pre-elimination behaviour (restlessness, sniffing, circling, squatting or cocking) in the house immediately take it *without reprimand* to the desired place outdoors. Wait with the pup until it eliminates and reward it immediately AFTERWARDS (tid-bit, praise or pat). It may take from a few minutes to an hour after the meal before defecating. Puppies need to toilet much more frequently than adult dogs and they have small bladders and very little ability to ‘hold on’.

Once the pup is eliminating consistently in the required place, the owner can stop rewarding every time. Thereafter only random rewards should be given as they are more powerful at maintaining behaviour.

HOUSE ACCESS

Doggy doors make toilet training quicker and easier. Install one now! Take the flap off in the initial stages so the pup does not get a whack in the nose as they learn to use it. This is the number one puppy class success strategy. Doggy doors can be operated via microchip to prevent unwanted animals entering the house. Crate training is also useful in toilet training your pup. Access to the house should be kept to very small areas away from carpet and rugs until toilet training is completed and when the pup cannot be supervised it should not be left alone in the house. Child-proof gates can be installed to limit your pup’s access to areas in the house. Elimination is unlikely near food or sleep areas but only if these areas are small. Crate training can be beneficial to toilet and house training pups.



TOILET MATS ARE POPULAR WITH APARTMENT OCCUPANTS.

CLEANING UP

If your puppy has an accident, don’t be angry. If you catch them in the act, pick them up and take them outside. Deal with the mess by cleaning the floor thoroughly to remove the odour from the spot; otherwise your puppy will continue to go to the toilet in the same place. Use a bioenzymatic cleaner such as ‘Urine Off’ rather than household cleaning products which contain ammonia as this substance is eliminated in the pup’s urine and can cause a pup to continually urinate indoors.



For advice about dog training and behaviour issues PHONE: 6230 2223 or EMAIL: behaviouradvice@hallvet.com.au