

House Training

A new dog can usually be house-trained in about 2 weeks. During that time it is essential that your dog learns to associate going to the toilet in the right place with a reward. The more times you reward your dog the quicker he will learn.

It is also very important to ignore any mistakes that your dog makes during the training period. If you give your dog attention when he goes to the toilet in the wrong place your dog will become confused and it will take longer to train him.



In the first week or so you may wish to confine your dog to an area where accidents do not matter. This should be a fenced off area in the house in which your dog has access to food, water and is still able to interact with you. Do not confine your dog alone or in a small space for long periods of time as this will have a negative effect on the health and welfare of your dog.

During the first week, take your dog out as often as you can – ideally every hour. First thing in the morning, give your dog the chance to do a wee and a poo.

Make a note of the time of day he goes to the toilet and what he does. A pattern should emerge of the times of day your dog needs the toilet and this will help you to predict when to take him outside.

Reward your dog, every time he goes to the toilet in the right place.

Once your dog has gone to the toilet bring him inside and reward him with attention. You may let the dog have full access to the house as long as you watch him. If you aren't able to give the dog your full attention, return him to his safe area.

Place your dog in the safe area when he is sleeping or resting, but do not leave him unattended in the safe area for long periods of time.

If accidents happen:

If your dog has an accident, do not punish him – he has not done it on purpose. Continue to give your dog as many opportunities as you can to go to the toilet outside and reward him whenever he gets it right.

Clean up carefully after accidents with a non-ammonia based detergent. Ammonia based detergents may encourage your dog to keep going to the toilet in the same place, because they remind the dog of the scent of urine.



Remember:

- Give your dog as many opportunities as you can to go to the toilet in the right place.
- Reward your dog whenever he gets it right.
- Never punish your dog for getting it wrong
- Clean up carefully after accidents
- Puppies have smaller bladders and will need to be taken outside more often.

If you follow these simple steps your dog should be house-trained very soon. If not, you should take him to your vet to check whether he has any medical conditions that may be preventing the training from working.

Please remember that in Malta, as in many countries, there is no legal requirement to have undergone any training before you can call yourself an animal trainer or behaviourist. Ensure that before you accept and follow any advice from veterinary clinic staff, trainers and rescue charities, you check their experience and credentials. The MSPCA has UK qualified behavioural and Registered Veterinary Nursing personnel on staff and the information in this document has been collated from other qualified professionals as well.

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