

KATHY KOPELLIS McLEOD



The respected WA dog behaviour consultant helps us understand our canine companions

Toilet training for your pooch needn't be a difficult and arduous process. Follow these simple steps to ensure your home remains clean and devoid of smells

ARE you fed up with cleaning up after your dog? If there's one problem that will cause almost all dog owners to tear their hair out, their beloved pooch doing their "business" inside the house has to be it!

As a newly acquired puppy or dog doesn't come automatically toilet-trained, it's your responsibility to help teach them what to do, but the good news is that house training is a pretty simple two-step process.

The first involves guiding your dog to the appropriate location to do their business and the second step is to stay vigilant so that every time they need to eliminate, you're there to ensure they're in the right place at the right time.

The second step is critical as it's the main reason dogs fail to go to the toilet where you'd prefer them to.

Follow these tips to help ensure your home smells a lot more inviting:

* **Reward your dog each time they eliminate in the right place:** Enthusiastic praise and special food rewards delivered at the correct location provide a valuable learning

experience. You should reward for the correct location during (with praise) and immediately after (with treats).

* **Pay your dog full attention:** If you're unable to supervise them in the early stages, either safely confine them in a specified room or dog crate, or leave them outside to prevent bad habits developing. Allowing your dog free run of your house without vigilant supervision is bad training and it only takes a few seconds of inattentiveness for them to eliminate inside.

* **Don't punish your dog after the fact:** Even if you catch your dog in the act, so to speak, be proactive rather than reactive. Getting angry, hitting them and/or rubbing their nose in their faeces serve no useful purpose in addressing the real problem of inattention. Take your dog outside, clean up the area and then figure out what you'll do better next time.

* **Provide appropriate instruction:** If you catch your pet eliminating, or find that they have eliminated in an inappropriate area, rather than punishing them, provide productive instruction. This need only be a brief, immediate "ah-ah" which serves as an interruption, perhaps followed by saying "outside" and promptly taking them outside.

* **Identify their natural toileting schedule:** Fairly predictable times are after a meal, drink or nap and following excessive activity, so tak-

ing them to their designated elimination spot around these times can fast-track their training. Be aware of signs that your dog is about to eliminate so you can quickly help them to the correct location. Signs include circling on the spot, sniffing the ground, nose in the air sniffing, investigating their surroundings, beginning to squat or eagerly standing at the back door.

* **Give your dog frequent opportunities to go to the toilet:** Establish a routine where you take your pup or dog outside every hour to prevent mishaps. In some instances this may have to be done more frequently, depending on their activity level and feeding schedule, and your lifestyle.

In essence, an easy toilet-training experience requires you to combine consistency and excellent timing with vigilant observation skills and management.

Apply these principles from the beginning and your efforts will be rewarded.

And, remember, if your dog does its business in the house, it's only doing what's natural, so it's up to you to tweak your toilet-training tricks.

* www.kathysdogtraining.com.au



home help

Shannon's Tip of the week

It's that time of year to get rid of spiders, cockroaches and other nasties. Warm weather, whether it is dry or moist, allows an insect explosion in and around the home. The best way to get rid of the spiders is to place a couple of drops of lemon oil on the head of a broom and sweep away the webs. Although this doesn't kill the spiders it does deter them and they won't come back and build their webs for about three months. To keep cockroaches down, include a couple of cups of salt in your rinse water when washing down cupboards, floors, skirting boards, steps and windowsills. Cockroaches don't like to cross salt and if they do, the salt sticks to the underside of their carapace. They dehydrate and die without dropping their egg sack.

Q&A

Q I recently bought an Italian red leather handbag. I was using the bag when I went to a shop to download and print out my holiday photos. I put the bag on the counter next to the photo processor, but as I was leaving I noticed a wet stain on it. I presumed someone had spilt drink on the counter. I washed the stain with soap and water and dried it with cool air from the hair dryer. Unfortunately, it has made no difference (picture) and since I have no idea what caused it, I don't know what to do next. Can you help?



A Thank you for sending the photo — it makes helping you so much easier. What you have is an oil stain and there are two ways of dealing with it. The first way is to take a little dishwashing liquid (a couple of drops on your fingers will do) and massage it into the stain until it feels slippery and jelly-like. Then wipe away with a damp cloth before cleaning your bag with saddle soap. The second way is to use white spirit (Murlax). Put the Murlax on a soft cloth and stroke it across

the leather (in even strokes). Then sprinkle talcum powder evenly across the leather. Leave it to completely dry so that the talcum powder can absorb the white spirit back out of the leather and the oil with it. Then brush the talcum powder away with a soft brush. Do not use a cloth to wipe away the talc because you can rub it into the grain instead of brushing it away.

Thank you for all your questions. Keep them coming, keep them specific and, where possible, send a digital photograph. It makes it so much easier! Questions about alternative recycling methods are also welcome.

Shannon

Email your home help questions to Shannon Lush at spotless@sundaytimes.newsld.com.au. Shannon will not be able to answer your questions privately. © Shannon Lush 2010.

* Spotless, Spotless 2, Speed Cleaning, How To Be Comfy and SAVE, by Shannon Lush and Jennifer Fleming, published by ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, all \$19.95.

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