



The Accident-Free Puppy Plan



Toilet Training



INTRODUCTION

Most puppy owners will experience the frustration of puppy toileting accidents! Toilet training is one of the very first skills a puppy should start learning from the first moment they arrive in their new home.

There is no set time for when your puppy will be toilet trained - like children, some will train quickly and have it mastered by 12 weeks of age, and others may be 6 months old before they are reliably toilet trained.

The key to mastering toilet training is remaining patient and consistent with your puppy's training, as well the implementation of strict management practices.

ADULT SUPERVISION

If your puppy is not yet toilet trained, or they can't be trusted not to chew your furniture, then they should never be allowed to freely roam inside, unless they are being **directly supervised by an adult**.

This means that your focus is on the puppy. It is not being distracted by cooking dinner, or doing homework with the children. Eyes should be ON the puppy at all times.

Examples of times when your puppy can be free within the home include:

- cuddle time
- training time
- feeding time
- brushing & grooming
- interactive play time with a family member

CHILDREN

Children are not suitable 'puppy supervisors'.

A puppy should never have access to young children, unless directly supervised by an adult.

This is important not only for the success of the puppy's toilet training, but also for preventing and stopping behaviours towards children, such as:

- play biting and mouthing
- jumping up, and
- aggression



MANAGEMENT

Reality is, that you cannot be supervising or training your puppy 24 hours a day!

This is where the implementation of 'management practices' comes in. There are a number of management options, depending on your household.

If you cannot directly supervise your puppy, then either:

- put the puppy in their crate
- put the puppy in their puppy pen
- put the puppy on a lead
- put the puppy outside (if safe to do so),

Let's take a closer look at these options:

CRATES & PUPPY PENS

Most dogs and puppies do not like to toilet near where they eat, play and sleep. Therefore most dogs will not toilet in their crate, making **crates** a valuable tool in toilet training a puppy.

Since young puppies often need to toilet as often as every 1-2 hours, we do not leave them in their crate for any longer than this during the day (unless they are still fast asleep).



Using the crate regularly throughout the puppy's day, also allows the puppy to get important periods of uninterrupted rest and sleep, which also contributes to reducing biting and chewing behaviours which result from puppies being over-tired.

If your indoor puppy needs to be in a safe space, or **left home alone for periods longer than 1-2 hours at a time**, then we recommend that the puppy is put in a **puppy pen**.



If you don't have the space in your living area for a puppy pen, then you can set up a small room (eg. laundry) the same way, and close the puppy in this area when you leave them home alone.

The main benefit of using a puppy pen over a small room though, is that you can also use the puppy pen as a management zone for the puppy when you are at home. If it is set up in the living area, the puppy can still be part of the family and learn to relax and watch the action in the household calmly, without jumping, biting or having toileting accidents.

LEADS

If you do not have the option of a crate or puppy pen available, then keep the puppy with you on a lead, or tether the puppy to a piece of furniture **near you**, to prevent them from wandering out of sight, and into mischief.

TEACHING THE PUPPY TO TOILET OUTSIDE

- Young puppies may need to be given a toilet break every 1-2 hours - it is up to you to ensure you are taking them out as regularly as needed
- Do not get in the habit of carrying your puppy out to the toilet. Let the puppy walk out with you, so they learn how to take themselves out to the toilet
- Select a spot outside, and take your puppy to this same spot each time you go out for a toilet break
- Wait at this spot for no longer than about 5 minutes - you may need to have the puppy on a lead to keep them there, if they are getting distracted with leaves, toys, the neighbours etc.
- If your puppy goes to the toilet, you can reward them with verbal praise, or with a treat
- If they don't go to the toilet, but you know they will toilet inside as soon as you go back in, either put them in their crate or puppy pen, or keep them with you on the lead, to prevent them from being able to wander away and toilet inappropriately in the house

- **If you put them in the crate**, take them back outside about 10-15 minutes later to give them the opportunity to go to the toilet. Most puppies will not want to go to the toilet in their crate, and will therefore hold on until you take them back outside.
- **If you put them in the puppy pen**, then they can toilet appropriately on the puppy pad if they need to go before you have taken them back outside
- **If you put them on the lead**, you can watch them and immediately pick them up and take them outside if they look like they are about to go to the toilet
- Not all puppies will be able to hold on overnight. Until your puppy can, they should sleep closed in a puppy crate, in a puppy pen (or laundry/bathroom), or outside

COMMON TOILETING TIMES

- Immediately when they wake up
- About 20 minutes after eating
- After excitement or play
- After a fright or stressful experience



PUPPY PADS

Some owners may wish to teach their puppy to toilet on puppy pads when they are inside. This is a great way to provide the puppy with an opportunity to go to the toilet inside appropriately, if they are unable to take themselves outside.

To teach the puppy to use puppy pads, you need to start with the toilet pads in a **confined area** such as a **puppy pen**, laundry or bathroom.

Set the space up with the puppy's food, water, toys and bedding/crate on one side of the space, and a few puppy pads on the other side. Most puppies **do not like to** go to the toilet where they eat/play/sleep, so they will usually move away from this area to toilet, which means they will (accidentally at first) toilet on the puppy pads.

Once your puppy has **successfully toileted** on the puppy pads for at least 3 days, then try taking ONE puppy pad away. If the puppy continues to successfully toilet on the remaining puppy pads, then take ONE more pad away. If they successfully hit this smaller area of pads for another 3 days, then take ONE more pad away, and so on, until the puppy is successfully targeting the single pad.

Once they are successfully targeting the single puppy pad for 2-3 weeks, then you can try to start leaving some puppy pads around the home, for the puppy to access when having **supervised free time** in the house.

If your **puppy chews up the puppy pads**, then try a real or fake grass puppy toileting tray.



ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN...

If you catch your puppy in the process of toileting inside, don't reprimand it - this can make the puppy scared to go to the toilet in front of you, even when they are outside.

Instead, give it a little surprise, such as "Ooh!", so that they tighten up and stop mid-way. Immediately pick the puppy up and take them outside to finish toileting

If you find an accident in the house, remain calm and clean it up - it is too late to reprimand your puppy, as they will not understand why they are in trouble

CLEANING UP

Once you have cleaned up the mess, it is important to then soak the area with an ODOUR-NEUTRALISING product. While you may not be able to smell the urine, your puppy still will - and this can encourage them to continue toileting in the same area inside.

For carpets and rugs, a commercial product will usually be the easiest option. When selecting a product, ensure that it contains **enzymes**, and/or states that it **neutralises** odour.

If washing soiled linen, choose a laundry detergent that also contains enzymes.

Enzymatic laundry detergent can also be mixed up in a bucket, and mopped over indoor hard floor areas, or thrown over outdoor decks and patios.



Crate Training

BENEFITS OF CRATE TRAINING

Dogs are naturally a den-loving species, and crate training creates this den or 'bedroom' for your puppy. Most households benefit from crate training and it is a useful tool to **help manage and overcome many problem puppy behaviours**, such as:

- biting
- jumping
- chewing
- over-excitement
- separation related anxiety
- inappropriate toileting inside
- sleeping problems
- car travel problems

If your puppy is not yet toilet trained, cannot be trusted not to chew things up or bite the children, then **when it is not being directly supervised by an adult**, it should be in a safe puppy space, such as its crate or a puppy pen.

Long term, we can continue crating our **adult dog** for purposes such as:

- a safe place for a timid or fearful dog
- safety during storms or fireworks
- taking the dog on holidays with you
- leaving the dog with a sitter while you are on holidays
- creating structured, relaxation time
- car travel
- separation related anxiety
- stopping unwanted night-time behaviours, such as barking

HOW TO CHOOSE A CRATE

When buying a crate, you should choose one that will be big enough to accommodate your puppy when it is fully grown. Remember though, that bigger is not better – choose a crate that is just big enough for your puppy as an adult dog, to stand up and turn around in.

Wire collapsible crates are a good choice, as they allow for more ventilation than plastic crates, and they can be easily transported. The crate can be moved from room to room, taken outside, to friend's houses, on holidays or in the car.



We do not recommend material crates for puppies, as they can easily chew through them or learn to undo the zips.



If your puppy is a larger breed, you can either purchase a smaller crate now, then upgrade to a larger one later on, or you can save money by purchasing an adult size, wire collapsible crate that comes with a puppy divider. The crate can then grow with your puppy.

If the crate is too big for your puppy, your puppy is more likely to toilet in the crate - the crate should only be big enough for a bed, not a bed and ensuite. **A crate that is too large, will also not feel as safe, secure or calming.**

SETTING UP THE CRATE

For the purpose of crate training, position the crate somewhere where you would like the puppy to sleep and relax throughout the day. It is often a good idea to **place the crate within the family circle**, such as in your home's living area. Do not place the crate in an isolated spot like the laundry or bathroom during the crate conditioning process (it can be moved there once the puppy or dog is crate trained, if needed).

It is up to you if you just have one crate that you move around if needed, or if your puppy sleeps in their crate beside your bed at night, you may want to keep one crate in your bedroom and have a second crate that you have in your living area to use throughout the day.

If you are using a puppy pen in the living area, the crate can go in the puppy pen if it fits.

Deck the crate out with soft, comfy bedding. Dogs are a scent dominated species, and love the strong odours from their pack – placing a smelly, unwashed old piece of your clothing can help provide comfort in the crate.

When you are not using the crate, leave the door **OPEN during the day**, so that your puppy can start going in and out of the crate whenever they want to. To help encourage this, put some of your puppy's favourite toys in the crate, or randomly throw some high value food treats into the crate for them to find throughout the day.

You can also start **feeding your puppy their meals** in the crate to increase their positive association with it.



CRATE TRAINING TIPS

- We recommend **using the door at the narrow end of the crate** when crate training (as in picture above), as it provides more room for the puppy to walk their full body into the crate to reach the treats at the back of the crate.

If you use the door on the wide side of the crate, the puppy may only need to put their front 2 feet in to reach the food treats

- Ensure that you **spend enough time on each step of the crate training process, before moving to the next step**. Some puppies may only need 1 session on STEP 1, and other puppies may need a few sessions before they are ready for STEP 2. Most puppies should be able to be fully crate trained within 1 -2 weeks if each step is followed properly.

STEP 1: CRATE GAMES

- Using some high value food rewards, show the puppy the food then throw the food toward the back of the crate
- When the puppy goes into the crate to eat the food, mark "YES" and throw some more food into the crate
- Continue to throw more food in the crate a few more times, then give the puppy a verbal command to exit the crate eg. "FREE"
- Use the food to keep the puppy in the crate until you say "FREE", rather than allowing them to walk out of the crate when they decide to
- When the puppy comes out of the crate, throw some more food into the crate, and repeat the above activity
- At this stage we are just teaching the puppy that it is fun to go into the crate, get some yummy treats, and come out of the crate when we tell them

STEP 2: TEACH PUPPY TO STAY IN THE CRATE WITH THE DOOR OPEN

This is similar to the Step 1 Crate Games, but now we will expect the puppy to stay in the crate (with the door open) and **wait for the next piece of food**, rather than having a continual supply of food being thrown in.

- Throw food into the crate
- Wait until the puppy finishes the food in the crate and realizes there is no more food in the crate (they might look up at you or around the room)
- When the puppy realises there is no more food in the crate, reward them straight away by throwing some more food into the crate
- Repeat 4-5 times, then command the puppy to come out of the crate (eg. "Free!")
- When the puppy is ready, you can gradually start to make the puppy wait longer between pieces of food. For example, instead of throwing food in as soon as they realise there is no more food, you would wait an extra 2-3 seconds before throwing the food in, then 5 seconds, 10 seconds etc.
- Before you move onto STEP 3, your puppy should be happily staying in the crate for 5-10 seconds after finishing the last piece of food, rather than running out of it.
- At this training stage, never push or physically force the puppy into the crate

STEP 3: SHUTTING THE CRATE DOOR

Once your puppy is happy staying in the crate with the door open (STEP 2), you now need to teach them to stay in the crate with the door closed.

Stage 1

- Verbally command the puppy into the crate and throw a piece of food in
- Throw a few more pieces of food in to ensure that the puppy is feeling calm
- Shut the door of the crate, then immediately throw a few more pieces of food into the crate
- Continue to throw 1 piece of food into the crate, every couple of seconds, for a total of 10-15 seconds
- Then open the door and use their release command (eg. "FREE") to let them out of the crate
- If the puppy tries to barge out of the crate when you open the door, immediately shut it, and repeat this until the puppy waits calmly while you open the door. Once they can wait calmly, release them from the crate with their release command (eg. "FREE")

If your puppy is not showing any concern with this first stage of STEP 3, then you may only need to repeat this 4-5 times, before moving straight on to Stage 2, below. If your puppy is showing any signs of stress when the door is shut, then you will need keep practicing Stage 1 over a few training sessions, before you move to Stage 2, below.

Stage 2

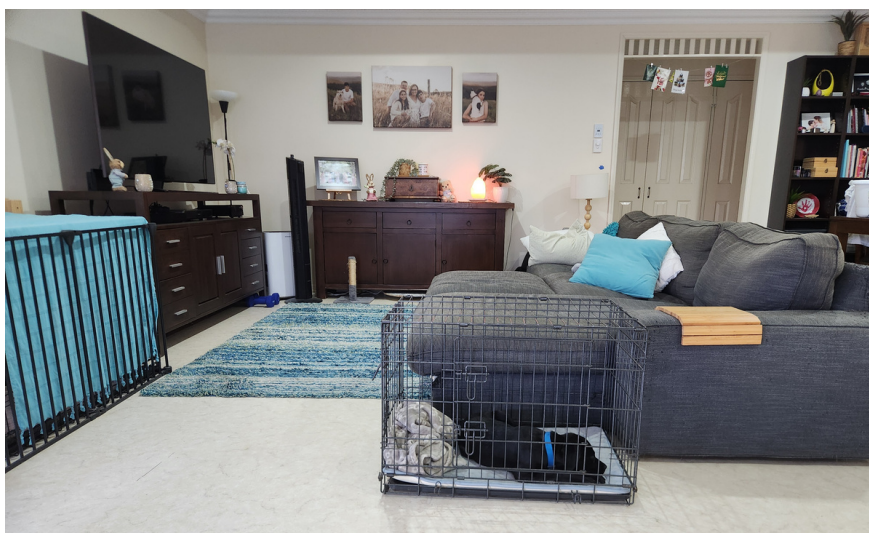
- Once the puppy is comfortable with the door shut in Stage 1, instead of continually throwing food into the crate, you will wait until the puppy finishes the food in the crate, and realizes there is no more food in the crate
- As soon as they realise there is no more food in the crate, reward the puppy straight away by throwing another 1-2 pieces of food in the crate
- As training progresses, start waiting longer between when the puppy realizes there is no more food, and when you throw the next piece of food in (eg. 5 sec, 10 sec, 20 sec)

Always aim to mark "YES" and return to the puppy with a food reward OR let them out of the crate, BEFORE they start to stress, whine or bark.

There should be NO continuous whining or barking at this stage - if there is, then you are waiting too long between the food rewards, or keeping the puppy in the crate for longer than they are trained/conditioned for.

STEP 4: INCREASING TIME IN THE CRATE

- Now that the puppy is happy to be in the crate with the door shut for repetitions of a few minutes at a time, we need to teach them to stay in the crate for longer periods.
- An easy way to do this is to start incorporating your crate training into your daily activities. For example, putting the puppy in the crate beside you when you are:
 - Sitting on the couch to watch TV
 - Cooking in the kitchen
 - Eating your meals at the table or on the couch
- Throw food into the crate at whatever interval is required to ensure your puppy stays calm and relaxed in the crate. By now that should be increasing to minutes between food rewards, rather than seconds.
- Work towards having your puppy happy in the crate for at least 10-15 minutes at a time
- By this stage of training, you can be using their normal dry kibble to hand feed them their meals in the crate while crate training
- If your puppy starts to lie down and fully relax or fall asleep, stop throwing food rewards into the crate, and just let them chill out
- While they are sleeping, you may find that you can now move away from the crate and start going about your life in the house, if needed. Some puppy's may allow you to move away (but still in sight) while they are relaxed, but awake.
- If moving away from the crate while they are relaxed or sleeping causes them to wake up and whine or bark, then **do not yet progress to moving away** - you will need to continue on with the next step → **STEP 5: Moving Away From the Crate**



STEP 5: MOVING AWAY FROM THE CRATE

Ultimately, for crating to be a useful skill, the puppy needs to be calm in the crate while we move around and go about our daily life. Some puppies will have no problem with you moving around the house, once they have learnt to rest or sleep in their crate with you beside them.

There are some puppies though, that will start to become distressed as soon as you move away from the crate. **If your puppy starts to bark or whine** when you move away from the crate, then you will need also need to complete **Steps 5 and 6**.

- Put the puppy in the crate and shut the door
- Throw some food rewards in the crate, and make sure the puppy is feeling calm in the crate, before you attempt to move away
- Take 2-3 steps away from the crate
- Stop, mark "YES", then walk straight back to the crate and drop in a piece of food
- Repeat this, by stepping away another 3-4 times, before releasing the puppy out of the crate
- As the puppy is ready, gradually increase the distance you walk away from the crate, while staying in sight
- **Always mark "YES" when you are away from the crate**, then come back to the crate to deliver the food reward. By using a reward marker "YES" when you are away from the crate, this communicates to the puppy that you are coming back to give them food because they were calm in the crate while you were away from them
- Initially when starting STEP 5, you will walk away from the crate, mark "YES", then immediately return to the crate to reward the puppy.
- When the puppy is fine with you walking away from the crate, and immediately returning, you can progress to increasing the time you stay away from the crate.
- For example, you would take 4 steps away, stop, wait 5 seconds, mark "YES", then return to the crate to deliver the food reward. Gradually extend the length of time you can stay away from the crate (eg. 10 seconds, 20 seconds etc.) as you start to walk around the couch or the kitchen table
- Again, ensure that you mark "YES" and return to the puppy with a food reward OR let them out of the crate, BEFORE they start to stress, whine or bark

STEP 6: MOVING OUT-OF-SIGHT

Once your puppy is calm and happy staying in the crate while you move around away from them in sight, start teaching them to stay calm **when you go out of sight**.

- Move away from the crate, and duck out of sight for 1 second, mark "YES", and walk back to the crate to deliver a food reward
- If the puppy is remaining calm, repeat going out of sight for 1 second, another 3 times, before releasing the puppy out of the crate
- Put the puppy back into the crate and repeat this activity another 4-5 times in your training session
- Once this is easy, gradually increase the time you stay out of sight - for example, step away and go out of sight, count 5 seconds, mark "YES", then return to the crate to deliver food reward. Repeat another 3 times (if your puppy is calm), before releasing the puppy
- If at any point the puppy starts to become stressed with you going out of sight, simply go back to an easier step of the training, before progressing again.

Generally, once your puppy is happy to relax in the crate for at least 15 minutes, with the door shut while you move around (in and out of sight), we would consider the puppy "Crate Trained".

WATCH THE VIDEO:

Click below or scan the QR code, to watch the video demonstrations of how to put each of the above steps into practice!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWBuT44gdA0>



VOCALISATION IN THE CRATE

The 3 main reasons for whining or barking in the crate are:

1. The puppy is not fully crate trained

The most common reason I have found new puppy owners struggle with their puppy barking in the crate, is that they have NOT taken the time to work through the full crate training process. They may have spent a couple of days throwing treats in the crate with the door open, then suddenly expected their puppy to relax in the crate when they shut the door while they move away and cook dinner or have a shower.

SOLUTION: Go back to the crating step the puppy struggles with and follow the crate training process fully

2. The puppy needs to go to the toilet

Your puppy can be closed in the crate overnight, but you will need to let them out to the toilet if they cannot yet hold on over-night. You will usually know that it is vocalisation for toileting, because the puppy will have had a long period of sleep before waking up - usually any time after about midnight.

During the day, a young puppy may need to go to the toilet as often as every 1-2 hours. You will usually start to know they difference in body language and vocalisation when they are trying to communicate they need to toilet, otherwise, if they have been confined for more than an hour when they start vocalising, and you know they need to toilet frequently, then let them out for the toilet.

SOLUTION: Be aware of your puppy's toileting schedule, and let the puppy out for the toilet if you think they need to toilet

3. The puppy is crate trained, but it just doesn't want to be in the crate - ATTENTION SEEKING barking

If you know the puppy is fully crate trained, because they have demonstrated the ability to sleep and relax in their crate multiple times before, and you are confident they do not need to go to the toilet, then they are most likely just barking for attention, or to get out of the crate.

SOLUTION: Completely **IGNORE** the puppy until they settle.

- **Do not** look at the puppy
- **Do not** tell the puppy to "be quiet" or "settle down"
- **Do not** try to soothe the puppy
- **Do not** let the puppy out of the crate

If the puppy is escalating or you need it to quieten urgently, you can correct the barking behaviour in a non-attention giving way, by simply **giving the crate a firm bang** with your hand, or by throwing a shoe at the crate. The noise surprise will interrupt the barking and de-escalate the puppy. They will most likely start barking again, so be ready to repeat the bang as soon as they start to bark again. It may take 5-6 repetitions before the puppy gives up and settles. **This repetition teaches them barking = bang**

If after about the 6th repetition, the puppy starts immediately barking again, then this method will not be working, so do not continue it.

Building Independence

It is important for healthy emotional development, that we don't allow our puppies to become overdependent on us, or another dog in the household.

Overdependence is bad for our puppies, because it creates unhealthy stress. It may seem cute to have a puppy that won't leave your side when you are at home, and it might make you feel wanted and special, but it is not in the best interests of your puppy. When you have to leave them at home alone, you may find that you have a stressed and anxious puppy who is barking or howling while you are gone, or partaking in some stress relieving chewing, such as destroying your couch or your door frame.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Start setting your puppy up to learn independence, rather than waiting for them to start showing signs of separation stress.

If you have crate trained and/or puppy pen trained your puppy and are using puppy pens or crates throughout the day when you are at home, this will already be teaching them independence.

If safe to do so, also start giving your puppy short periods of time outside alone. Giving them a filled food toy or puzzle can be a great way to start creating positive associations with being outside alone. Always try to let them inside again, or go back out to them, **before** they start to whinge or stress.

WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME

When you are at home, don't allow your puppy to be with you all the time.

If the puppy is always following you, create positive, calm separation by allowing them to spend time in their crate or puppy pen when you are at home, to physically block them from following you everywhere.

Even having the puppy 1 meter away from you in their crate, while you eat dinner or sit on the couch to watch TV, is a great start to creating separation, if your puppy struggles to be separated from you.

Give the puppy enjoyable activities, such as a food toy, when practicing separation, and always aim to go back to the puppy, let it inside (if outside), or out of their crate or pen **BEFORE** they start to become anxious or stressed. This may mean repeating short intervals such as 5 seconds, and building up to longer duration separation, if needed.



Ready for the Next Step?



You've started building the foundation—fewer accidents, a calmer puppy, and more clarity in what you're doing.



But this is where many owners get stuck...
Because toilet training is just the beginning.

The real challenges tend to show up next:

- Pulling on the lead
- Jumping on people
- Ignoring you when it matters
- Overexcitement, distraction, or lack of focus

If you want a calm, well-behaved dog—not just an accident-free puppy—this is your next step.

The Ultimate Puppy Start Program

Inside, I show you exactly how to raise a focused, responsive, and easy-to-live-with dog—without frustration or guesswork.

You'll learn how to:

- Build the foundations for reliable obedience that works in real life
- Create engagement and focus around distractions
- Prevent and address common behaviour problems early
- How to correctly socialise your puppy
- Raise a calm, confident, well-mannered dog

As a customer of **The Accident-Free Puppy Plan**, you're already ahead! Plus, as a thankyou, please use the code: **PUPPY20** to receive a 20% discount on the purchase of The Ultimate Puppy Start.

Toilet training is sorted—now let's start building the calm, well-behaved family dog you've dreamed of

**[Continue training
HERE!](#)**