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## Toilet training

At a young age puppies have little bladders and therefore need to be taken to the toilet frequently. I.e. after every nap, drink, feed. Most puppies do not have full bladder control until 5- 6months of age.

When going to the toilet puppies have a substrate preference. This substrate may be the soft feel of the carpet, the smoothness of the tiles or some times newspaper - due to what the breeder or Pet Shop used. When they go to the toilet on this substrate they are self rewarding with the good feeling of emptying their full bladder.

To change their substrate preference, to a substrate you desire, requires you to give them a greater reward than their self reward. By rewarding, you increase the frequency of that behaviour. This means you will need to be with them as they do their wee to give the treat reward.

Follow the following steps:

1. Take your puppy on a lead to your desired substrate i.e. grass, bark.
2. Wait for him/her to do a wee (this may take some time, so be patient).
3. As he/she is doing a wee say your cue word i.e. 'go wees', toilet time'.
4. Immediately after he/she finishes, reward the behaviour with a treat.

Hints:

- \_ Make sure you go out with your puppy to give the reward, rather than leaving puppy to do his/her business and rewarding when he/she returns. You will actually be rewarding the puppy coming inside rather than urinating on the grass.
- \_ When your puppy is frequently using the desired substrate for wees, you can start using praise rewards with the occasional treat reward.
- \_ If your puppy does have an accident inside and you catch them in the act, don't punish, urination and defecation is a natural act, just clean it up and take them out earlier next time.
- \_ When you come home from work and your puppy has been outside all day don't assume he/she has been to the toilet. Tell him/her to go before letting inside.
- \_ If you are taking your puppy for a car ride, tell him/her to go to the toilet before getting in.

If you do a good solid 2 weeks of this process it will pay off long term, so stick to it. You will find when your puppy is trained to the substrate, every time he/she meets this substrate on a walk they will want to squeeze out a wee to get rewarded.