

**Teaching the use of a bell to help with toilet training your puppy or older dog**

Teaching your puppy to use a bell help you to know when they want to go outside for the toilet a bell is clear indicator as to what they went whereas body language can be often be subtle and missed by us busy humans as we go about our daily lives.

Here is a step-by-step guide on how to teach your pup to target a bell and learn to ring it to ask to go outside.

**Teach nose to target the bell**

1. Start with the bell on the palm of your hand and offer it to your dog like it is something interesting. Most dogs will come in for a sniff to check it out; give them a little help by touching the bell to their nose gently, then mark/reward. Repeat 10-15 times, until your dog is touching the bell without your help reliably.

**Add a cue**

1. Say “Bell” in an excited tone right before your dog goes in to touch the bell again. make reward for successful attempts, making sure your dog actually touches the bell every time.

**Move the Bell**

1. Now put the bell somewhere close to your training spot so your dog does not have to move much to get to it. Give the cue, wait for the touch, mark/reward. Repeat 10 times before moving the bell around, staying in the same area so your dog will build up a lot of success.

**Move away to target the bell**

1. After you have a lot of repetition with this trick at close quarters, your dog will have some confidence with targeting the bell. Start to put the bell a few steps away, giving the cue, and waiting for your dog to go over and touch it. mark/reward, repeating a few dozen times.

**Target the bell with the bell already mounted by your door**

1. Put the bell on the door say “bell”, and mark/reward for each successful nose of the target. When your dog rings the bell, mark/treat., repeat 10-20 times.

**Ring the bell before going out**

1. Once your dog is consistently ringing the bell with the 'bell' cue, you can start waiting for the bell before letting your dog out. Change the reward at this point the reward will be going outside and toileting where they are rewarded. Every time your dog rings the bell, let them out. Eventually, with some practice, your dog will start ringing the bell on their own when they want to go out. Be sure to let them out every time they ring the bell for at least a few dozen times to reinforce the behaviour.