

Trudi Thorpe runs dogLOGIC Dog Training based in Sydney and specialises in Individual Behavioural Strategies, Puppy Pre-School and Adult Dog Classes. She is an AABP Professional Dog Trainer, Accredited Delta CGC Instructor, Accredited Delta CGC Assessor and a Certified Dog Behavioural Trainer. She is a member of the Delta Professional Dog Trainers Association, The Association of Animal Behaviour Professionals and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers.

Email: trudi@doglogic.com.au Phone: 9591 1886
Mobile: 0419 999 975

Ask Trudi a question regarding behaviour by emailing:
behaviour@urbananimal.net

Dear Trudi,

We recently got a little three-year old rescue dog who is absolutely gorgeous! I don't know too much about her background except that she was a neglect case. She is settling in quite nicely, but we have a few issues that we were hoping you could help us with. She is not toilet trained, and we are having difficulty working out when exactly she needs to go during the day, so the majority of the time we miss it and she goes inside. She also has never worn a collar or been walked on a leash, so it is difficult to walk her because she doesn't like the feel of the collar and fights against the leash. Sometimes she refuses to move at all, so we find we are pulling her along a lot of the time, which doesn't make walking fun for either of us! And the last thing is that she is very short coated, and even though she is an inside dog she feels the cold. So I bought a little dog coat for her but she hates it and tries to pull it off, ripping and chewing it. Is there any way I can teach her to wear it, because it would make her so much warmer?

Thank you, **Lynda Forsyth**

Hi Lynda,

How wonderful that your little dog found you and that her world is now a better place! It will take around 4-6 weeks for her to really settle in and start feeling confident about her new home and the environment she is now living in, so expect to see and learn different things about her over the next couple of months or so. Take things slowly so as not to confuse or scare her – this is the start of a whole new life for her, so the more positive experiences she has in the beginning, the better she is going to be in the end.

Toilet training an older dog is a little more difficult than toilet training a puppy because they have a lot more control, and therefore you have a lot fewer opportunities to get them to the spot where you want them to toilet before they actually go. I suggest that you grab a pad and pen and jot down the time when she toilets, so that over a couple of days you get a feel for her toileting patterns.



Once you have an idea of when she needs to go, get her to the spot before she goes and treat her when she gets it right. Routine is

the key here. You need to build an association between a full bladder and going outside, so feed her first thing in the morning and then take her outside and wait until she toilets. When she does, reinforce the behaviour with a treat so that she knows she has done the right thing. Make sure that you are feeding her each meal period, rather than leaving food down all of the time for her to graze. If you control the times that food goes in, you have a better chance of controlling when it comes out!

As for the collar and lead, leave her collar on her all the time that you're with her so that she gets used to the feel of it. (Take it off when she's on her own so that the collar doesn't get caught on anything.) Make sure that it is a soft, lightweight collar with no danglybits on it (like a name tag or council tag). Make sure that the lead is also lightweight and that the bolt that attaches to the collar is also small, so there is no extra pressure on the collar.



DO NOT pull or force her with the lead – you won't win, and will only make her anxious and unwilling to even go for a walk in the first place. Encourage her along on a loose lead and allow her to investigate the world at her own pace – not yours! You may only get to the end of the street, but that's ok! Take your time with this and it won't be long before she is walking happily along beside you.

As for the coat, habituate her to it slowly. Put it on her when you are cuddling her or playing with her. Put it on and feed her breakfast, then do the same at dinner time, so that she starts associating it with good things – when the coat goes on, something good happens.

The key to anything you do with your little rescue dog is taking things slowly and giving her lots of positive experiences.