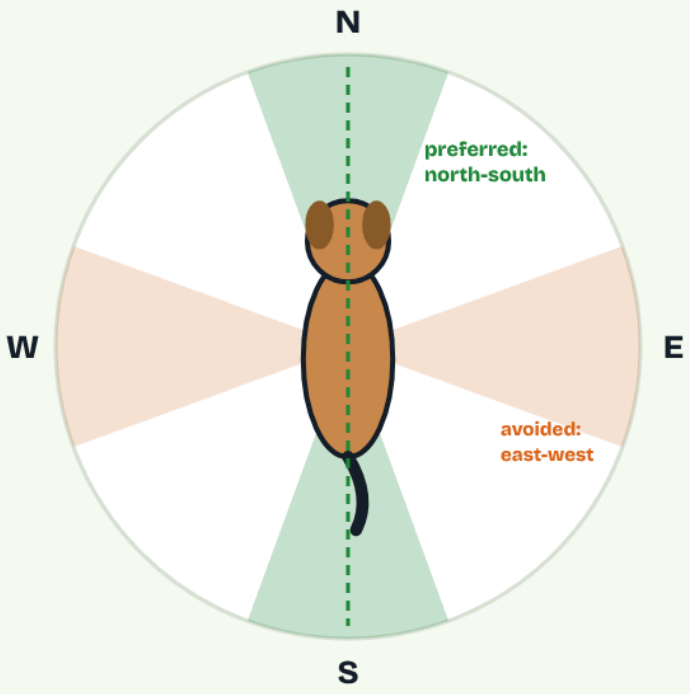
That is why

Why do dogs circle before they poop?

One study found dogs tend to line up north to south when they poop, but only when Earth's magnetic field is calm.

A What the study found



Seen in calm magnetic conditions. When the field was changing, the dogs' directions looked random.

B The study (2013)

70 dogs

of 37 breeds, watched for about two years

1,893

poops recorded, plus 5,582 pees

N–S

the favoured direction for pooping in a calm field

Why circle first?

The researchers suggested circling may help a dog check its bearings, like a hiker pausing to read a map. Why dogs would care about the direction is still unknown.

C Handle with care

1 Only in a calm field

The pattern appeared only on days when the magnetic field was quiet.

2 Doubts about the stats

Critics say the data were split in a way that suits the idea, and repeat visits add bias.

3 Not yet confirmed

A magnetic sense in dogs is possible but still unproven.

A fun finding with a big question mark: dogs may have a sense of north.

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Diagram: https://thatiswhy.com/diagrams/why-dogs-circle-before-pooping/ · Full guide: https://thatiswhy.com/why-your-dog-spins-before-pooping/