

Training Your Dog

Every dog owner has a responsibility to train his pet to be a well-behaved and disciplined member not only of the home but of the neighborhood and community.

Disobedient, uncontrollable dogs can be a nuisance or a menace to everyone. A healthy dog may even be abandoned or euthanised because of an owner's inability to control problem behaviour.

A dog's basic instinct is to please his master and accept his master as leader. This forms the basis for effective communication and training. Your job as leader and responsible owner is to teach him "right from wrong" and satisfy his need for pack security.

The secret of successful training is to train from a viewpoint that the dog can understand. Whether only seven weeks old or two years old, pure breed or mixed breed (local) you can train your dog completely and effectively once you have taught him how to please you.

Remember that even the best behaved dog will have unpleasant moments. We all do! Puppies will be full of fun and mischief. Be patient. Be kind. Expect setbacks. Never hit your dog no matter how frustrated or impatient you become during the training.

An obedient dog is a positive reflection on his responsible pet owner.

Who should do the training?

One person should be in charge of training especially when getting started. It helps avoid confusion and conflicting signals at a critical time. Obedience training requires an adult's sure and strong hand, even if only in a supervisory role. There are potential problems, such as dog fights and dog bites, that require an adult's better judgement, strength and mobility.

Praise and Correction

Praise or reward for following commands or demonstrating the proper manners is the basis of obedience training. Praise is usually an enthusiastic compliment such as "Good dog" (or use its name) or petting. Rewards are usually tasty tidbits. Every time you praise or reward your dog, you are teaching him to repeat whatever he just did. Praise and reward are big motivators of people and work just as well for pets.

A correction is a signal to the dog that he did not obey a command or conduct himself properly. Traditional corrections include a stern tug of the leash or a firm scolding. There should NEVER be any pain or physical punishment connected with a correction. Pain and punishment are inhumane and ineffective training methods.

Training Tips

- Seek the help of professionals
Having a properly trained, well-behaved dog is too important to be left to chance. Seek the help of professional trainers and veterinarians and educate yourself with formal obedience or training classes, videos and books.
- Train in a quiet, confined place
Make sure it is free of distractions for both of you.
- Keep the lesson short
This is so you and your puppy will not get tired, bored or frustrated.
- Train routinely
Keep a regular schedule.
- Train consistently
Use the same tones and commands every time.
- Stop destructive or annoying habits early
Jumping up, barking or begging may seem cute as a puppy, but are downright annoying or intolerable in an adult dog. Keep commands simple and teach one command at a time.
- Use your pet's name before each command
This gets his attention.
- Train firmly
Remember, your puppy is a baby with a short attention span and is full of mischief. If he fails to obey a command, repeat it.
- Maintain a good attitude
Be enthusiastic and patient.
- End with a happy note
Always play after the lesson is over. Training should be a pleasant experience for both of you.

Source: A Dog's Best Friend by Dr. Marty Becker