

T RAINING



Every interaction with your puppy or dog is a chance to create good behaviour.

A dog's world revolves around food, survival, defence and reproduction. Dogs will hunt, use their smell, herd and work together to get food. Every dog has a drive to find and catch their prey. Most dogs get their food presented in a bowl leaving their natural instincts unsatisfied. Provide your dog with sufficient mental and physical stimulation or they might start chasing birds, running after dogs, barking, chewing, digging and leaving you with less or no control.

When you adopt a new dog you must start training him immediately so he begins to learn what is and isn't acceptable in your home. There are several training methods you can use but the most powerful and successful method is **positive reinforcement**.

Dogs learn by association. The theory behind positive reinforcement training is to make the dog associate his good behaviour with a good consequence. When the consequence is positive, the dog is most likely to repeat the behaviour. Grab a particularly delicious treat and use this to reward your dog for doing the right thing. Most dogs love food but rewards can also be a game of fetch, letting off the leash, getting your attention or getting to sniff a bush. Each dog will have his own favourite rewards and it is in your best interest to work around it.

One common example of association is when your dog jumps up. If you give him a hug every time he jumps on you, the consequence is positive (rewarded) so he continues jumping up on you.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR DOG TRAINING

Marker

A marker is a short word (such as "yes") or sound (clicker or whistles) to help your dog identify the precise behaviour that results in the reward. If your dog spoke English, the translation of "yes" will be "THAT's right, your reward is coming." but he will understand it only if the marker is followed by a reward.

Timing

Whatever your dog is doing at the time you give him the reward is the behaviour that he is going to repeat. If you ask your dog to sit and he obeys, say "yes" and give him a treat. However, if he gets excited and jumps on you to get the treat, make sure he sits again before he is rewarded. Otherwise you're training him to jump.

The 3Ds: Duration, Distance, Distraction

To give you a better chance at being successful when training your dog, keep in mind the 3Ds. Let's take an example of teaching your dog to "stay". If for the first time you ask your dog to "stay" for 5 min at the dog park while you go to the other side of the park, it is more likely that your attempt will be a failure. So here is a quick explanation of the 3Ds :

Duration: 1sec, 2min, 10min etc

Distance: between you and your dog, or between the dog and whatever he is reacting to.

Distraction: of any kind, ie: movement, noise, toys, people, animals etc.

For any training, work each D separately until the dog knows it before adding one or all of them together. To teach a stay, start by showing your dog to stay in front of you (no distance) for few seconds (duration), in a room of your house by yourselves (no distraction).

Short Successful Sessions

Several five minute sessions a day are much more beneficial than a single one hour session when it comes to training your dog and it is usually easier to fit into your lifestyle. Set up the session for success bearing in mind the 3Ds, choose a time and place where your dog is not stressed and try to finish on a high note.

Be Careful with Commands

Use a short, easy to remember command rather than a multi-word phrase for each behaviour you would like to teach him. For example, tell your dog to "sit", rather than "sit down right now". Also, a command for a dog is just a sound associated to a behaviour so "sit" is a completely different command than "sit, sit, sit!" Choose one word for each behaviour, and stick with it.

Consistency

Be clear in your mind what you are trying to teach your dog each time you train him. That way you'll get the most out of each session and he won't become confused. Make sure all members of the family use the same command for the same behaviour. You may want to create a list of the commands that your dog is learning and pin it to the wall so everyone can become familiar and re-read them as needed. When teaching a new behaviour to your dog, it's best to stick to only one person teaching until the behaviour is learnt.

Lead Training

In many areas the law requires you to walk your dog on a lead. Lead training should start straight away when you bring your dog home. Depending on their background older dogs may take a longer time to become used to walking on a lead, but all dogs can learn to behave nicely while they are being walked.

Dogs are like people in that some learn faster than others. Don't be frustrated if your dog takes a little while to learn to walk on a lead, just continue your training and he will get there. Never hit or yell at your dog while he is learning and don't jerk on the lead; it won't help him learn any faster.

There are many different types of lead, collar or harness combinations available. Most dog trainers recommend a flat fabric lead which is comfortable to hold, and one that is 1.2m to 1.8m (4ft - 6ft) in length. Use a flat collar on your dog when you are training him.

Training your dog is an investment in your future together. It means that you'll avoid the stress of a badly behaved dog and he'll have the security of knowing what's expected of him. Training is also a good opportunity to give your dog the kind of mental exercise he needs to thrive. Best of all, training

is a natural bonding opportunity where you can demonstrate leadership and your dog can learn to become comfortable following your lead.

Every interaction with you is a learning experience for your dog!

Dogs learn best by repetition, consistency and association. They need to know their boundaries as this makes them feel secure. Sit down with your family before you bring your dog home and lay out the ground rules. You must agree on whether any parts of the house are out of bounds, if your dog is allowed on the furniture and if he can be given food scraps from the table. If he's not allowed on the couch but Mum sneaks him up when nobody is looking, he will end up feeling confused.

Work out who is responsible for feeding, bathing and exercising your new dog. Find out where and when the local training classes are so you can start working with your new dog as soon as he has settled in. You're much more likely to enjoy your dog if he's well mannered and regular training is the best way to achieve this.

It will be a busy and exciting time when your new dog comes home for the first time. If you are well prepared you can fully enjoy his arrival knowing he will have everything he needs to be healthy and happy.

CRATE TRAINING

We recommend getting a crate for your dog or puppy. Crate training is a great way to create a secure spot for your dog and ease him into home life. The crate will become the dog's den, a place where he can have a break from the hustle and bustle of a busy household. It's also ideal for toilet training, can be used in the car and when going away on holiday.

When you choose a crate it should be large enough so your dog can comfortably stand up, turn around and lie down. Put a soft bed in the crate so your dog is comfortable.

How to make a puppy feel at ease in a crate:

- Start crate training in the morning. By the time it is evening, your puppy will feel comfortable in the crate.
- Locate the crate in a place where the puppy can see you during the day.

- Put a soft blanket and a chew toy in the crate.
- If the puppy goes in, reward using the positive reinforcement method and leave the crate open.
- Once the puppy feels comfortable close the crate and stay next to it. Don't pay attention to your puppy. Don't make a big fuss if your puppy starts whining. Just sit next to the crate without making any contact.
- If the puppy is quiet, even for a split second, open the crate again. Opening the crate will be a reward.
- Repeat the last two steps and extend the time the puppy stays in the crate. Don't ask too much too soon from your puppy. It is better to increase the time by 5 seconds and keep going forward all the time than expecting the puppy to stay in for 5 minutes straight away and have a setback.
- Once the puppy feels at ease leave the dog in the crate and go into another room for a second. Enter the room again and if the puppy is quiet open the crate.
- Do not let the puppy out of the crate if it is whining or barking. It is important to take the training in little steps.
- Repeat the last two steps and extend the time you are in another room.

Slowly teach your dog to stay in the kennel/crate for longer times by making it a happy experience. Don't go too fast with the training. Remember it's better to take small steps and be successful than to take big steps and have a setback.

