

OBEDIENCE

Whatever the method you choose to train your puppy, the first step is to be absolutely sure that your puppy understands what is expected of him. It is important to **CONSISTENTLY** praise your puppy for doing the right thing. Positive reinforcement is a much more powerful and safer tool than punishment. Once your puppy understands what you want him to do and he misbehaves, a mild reprimand is all that is needed; followed by showing the puppy the correct behavior and praising him. Ignoring or isolating the puppy after he misbehaves can also be useful. Improperly applied or excessive punishment often backfires. Many puppies become afraid of their owners or sometimes try to fight back aggressively because they don't understand why they are being punished. Punishment after the fact does not work!

WALKING WITH A COLLAR AND LEASH:

Get your puppy used to a collar and leash right away. These are essential to protect the dog throughout its life. Start with a narrow, soft nylon collar and lightweight leash. When you are outside, try to walk along with your puppy, keeping the leash loose so that he does not get used to walking while pulling. If he lags behind or runs ahead, a few short gentle jerks on the leash are usually all that is needed to get him walking on a loose lead again. Some dogs may do better with a harness.

PRACTICE KEEPING YOUR PUPPY'S ATTENTION AND EYE CONTACT:

One of the biggest problems in training a dog is getting his attention so that he will listen to you. Getting your puppy to look at you and pay attention will make teaching any kind of command much more successful. Encourage your puppy to make eye contact with you by saying his name and holding a food tidbit close to your face when your puppy looks at you, praise him for maintaining eye contact. Now that he's looking at you, he's ready to listen to a command.

SIT:

This is the easiest command to start training. Take a food tidbit and hold it in front of your puppy's nose in a closed fist. Pass your fist toward the back of your puppy's head as you say "Sit!" As his head goes up and back to follow the treat, he usually will automatically sit. Repeat this exercise regularly until your pet learns to sit as soon as the command is issued.

STAY:

Stay is nothing more than a long sit. To teach your puppy to stay, stand in front of him and ask him to "Sit." When he does, praise him but don't give him a treat. Instead, say "Stay" as you step back and give him an open hand signal. Then immediately give him the treat. Repeat the process, increasing distance you step back from your puppy. Go only one step at a time.

Continued...

DOWN:

After your puppy has mastered "stay," he is ready to learn the "down" command. Start by giving him the "stay" command. Then, as you say, "Down," take a food treat in your fist, place it at his nose, and pass it down to the floor. Your puppy will follow the treat and lie down. After your puppy consistently goes into the "down" position, you can teach your puppy to stay in this position just as he learned for the sitting position.

COME:

When your puppy will sit or lie down and stay while you take ten steps away, he is ready to begin the "Come" command. Give your puppy the "Sit" (or "Down") and "Stay" command. Take five steps back, whistle, say your dog's name and "Come" in an excited tone of voice. You may want to open your arms or make some other welcoming gesture to encourage him to come. When he gets to you, praise him and give

him a treat. Follow with a "Sit." Repeat the command (taking only five steps) ten times, then increase the distance to ten steps. Always praise your puppy when he comes to you on command. Never call a puppy to scold him or do anything that he won't like (such as giving medication or a bath). Responding to the "Come" command should always be a positive experience for the puppy.

<date>

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

Dogs and people have lived together for thousands of years but that doesn't mean we always understand each other. Living with pets can sometimes be as frustrating and confusing as living with other people!

Dogs are **PACK ANIMALS**. They are social and like to interact with people and other dogs. Your dog will do what you want it to do if it earns him praise or petting and he considers you to be the leader of his pack. All dog packs have a leader dog that makes decisions for the rest of the group. Other dogs are subordinate to the leader. Your dog should never think he is the leader in your house. You are the one who should decide when to eat, when to go out, etc. As with children, dogs that have rules to follow and respect for their parents are well behaved. Many behavior problems are a direct result of a lack of leadership on the part of the owner.

Dogs behave as they prefer knowing that you are in charge, and often seem much happier when they understand that you have taken charge. Following the advice below may be harder on you than on your dog! It's lonely at the top, so give your dog a break and take over. He'll love you just as much.

Keep in mind that dogs are very sensitive to body language and visual cues. Behaviors that you don't think much about may have meaning to your dog in a way that may not be what you intended to say! For instance, two people talking face to face are confrontational in a dog's body language. Standing side by side is not. You can learn to take advantage of nonverbal clues to your dog.

The following suggestions are an effective and humane way to let your dog know that it is safe, well loved, and not the leader of the pack. Keep in mind that love is not related to social status and that most dogs live in relaxed harmony when the social hierarchy is clear, no matter where they stand in it.

It's not good to cater to your dog. Your dog's behavior should drive your decisions on how to treat it. If your dog has always been a perfect gentleman, you may not need to change a thing you are doing. But if your dog gives you problems, follow these suggestions.

If it bites you, totally ignore it for two days to notify it there's been a change in the household. Don't speak to it or look at it, even when feeding or letting it out. Then follow this program to the letter for at least a month before giving any slack. Applying "social distance" when your pet is misbehaving and rewarding with praise and attention only when it is good is the key to good behavior. Reward the behavior you want to see continued!

TRAINING STRATEGIES

Petting:

Keep it brief and pet only for obedience. Reward obeying commands with attention. If your dog demands petting, either looks away (fold arms, turn head up & away from the dog) or asks for a sit or down and then pet when it obeys. If you want to pet your dog, call it to you, don't go to it.

Practice "Look Always":

Don't let your dog demand play, food, or petting. **IF** your dog gets pushy, simply cross your arms, turn your head upward and to the side away from the dog. If your dog counters by moving to your other side, turn your head the other way. This is good practice to do any time your dog approaches you if he is very dominant and pushy. It is especially important if your dog has been aggressive towards you.

Continued...

Teach "Lie Down & Stay."

A good solid down & stay is one of the best learning tools. It teaches your dog to be patient and to wait for your command. You can practice while watching TV. Start with one-second stays for the first few days, and work up to longer and longer ones. After three weeks, most dogs can handle a half-hour down stay during a quiet time of the day. Correct breaks with a body block or a downward leash correction—not by simply repeating "down" & "stay" over and over again. If your dog gets up 25 times, then correct it 25 times with the same actions and tone of voice. Do not include anger in your correction. **BE FIRM!**

"Wait At The Door":

The pack leader has priority meaning they get to push out the door first to get something they want. This is why a lot of dogfights occur at doorways over who gets to go out first. Control the space in front of the dog and you control the dog. Use body blocks or head toward a door or doorway and then suddenly turn and go the other way if your dog tries to get ahead of you. This puts you back in the lead. Praise and pet your dog when it starts to turn around after you and keep moving until it reaches you. Practice this as you move around the house until your dog is content to stay behind you and follow your lead.

"Four On The Floor."

Dogs interpret an increase in height as an increase in status. Dogs who sleep up on the bed are especially impressed with themselves. Keep dominant dogs on the floor, not up on the chairs, couches, or bed. If you want to cuddle, get down on the floor, ask for obedience, and then pet when your dog complies.

Teach "Heel" Leaders are in the lead:

Teach your dog to stay at your side while you initiate pace and direction.

This basic obedience program should make treating any other behavioral problems easier. A dog that looks to you for direction can be taught almost anything. It will be happy to work for what it wants and it helps keep its mind occupied constructively. Integrate this training into your day by asking your pet to perform some action whenever it wants to go outside, be fed, play ball, etc. Letting you be in charge will soon become second nature to the dog.

Most problem dog behaviors are **NORMAL** dog behaviors that are simply unacceptable to the humans they live with. Redirecting and retraining can make our canine companions better and happier pets.

A few more tips:

Do your homework! There are plenty of good books available to assist you in training your dog. Be cautious, as there are many philosophies of how to train a dog. Outdated or cruel methods are still widely available in print. Much progress has been made in the past few years in understanding how dogs think and learn. We are able to deal with problem behaviors much more effectively once we understand how a dog's mind thinks. Read more than one book and pick the methods that make the most sense to you. Consult with our staff if you are having problems. In severe cases, we may refer you to a pet behavioral specialist.

Consider using the **PROMISE™** halter. This is a different style of training collar, which takes advantage of the dog's natural response to pressure over the muzzle and behind the ears rather than a choke collar. Promise™ halters are more humane and more effective in solving several behavioral problems.

Using food as a reward for learning new commands is OK, but don't give a food reward every time. Giving food intermittently means your dog will perform commands for you even when you don't have a food, and also prevents weight gain. Keep all training positive and consistent. Call us to discuss any specific problems that develop with your pet.

Animal Medical Center & Spa

Rosa Cardentey, Certified Trainer

Phone (305)222-7387

Housebreaking tips

Do

- Put the pet in a cage or puppy proof room if you are not able to watch him. Be enthusiastic when putting him (her) in and give a favorite toy or treat.
- Put your puppy on a feeding schedule. (i.e. 2x a day)
- Use a cue so the puppy can recognize it and advise you.
- Designate a specific area and stick to it until fully trained.
- Watch your pet closely after sleeping, playing, bathing and eating.
- Ignore until finished.
- Praise any sniffing action and when done.
- Have time to play before going back inside.

Do not

- Leave food or water down all day
- Let your pet roam around the house unsupervised.
- Punish him after an accident if you didn't catch him (her) in the act.
- Play before he has a bowel movement or urinates.
- Train to use pads or paper if it's a male or a large breed dog.
- Use cage to punish or ground your pet.
- Let the pet go out unsupervised.