

## Dog Training Overview

Owning a dog is a big responsibility. As a pet owner, you are obligated, both morally and legally, to keep the dog sheltered, well fed, and safe from harm. You need to keep your pet clean, and provide him with necessary health care, including immunizations. Above all, you need to provide the training your pet needs to lead a happy, safe and productive life.

Basic dog training provides a problem-solving foundation for your pet. By understanding simple commands like "sit" and "stay", your dog will be able to develop the skills needed to refrain from bad habits like incessant barking, chewing, fighting, biting, and urinating or defecating indoors.

There are two main reasons that pets, and pet owners, fail to succeed or follow through with dog training. First and foremost, it is not necessary for you to dominate your dog. To properly train your dog, you need to show patience, kindness and support, rather than assuming the "alpha" role and commanding respect through fear. Those "macho" tricks have been shown to be false. The second most common misconception of dog training is that you can't teach old dogs new tricks. You most certainly can train a dog of any age, so long as the trainer approaches the situation in the appropriate manner.

The first step in training your dog is finding the right program. Check your local listings for nearby obedience schools. You and your dog can become educated on basic training methods in the classroom setting, and then practice the lessons at home. After you have mastered the basic safety commands including "stay" and "come" at home, you can move your practice sessions to other areas, such as local parks. It's nice to have a dog that obeys your commands and home; this obedience is essential when you and your pet are in a public place.

Short, positive lessons are always most successful. Try to incorporate the dog training into regular daily activities and situations. If your dog follows you in to the kitchen to watch you make breakfast, ask him to sit. If he obeys, praise him and give him a treat.

Ideally, training will become your dog's favorite activity. Your dog loves to please you, so the key to successful dog training is giving him a lot of praise. If you reprimand your dog when he does something bad, but neglect to praise him for his good behaviour, he'll concentrate solely on the negative aspects of training and will miss out on all the fun.

When done consistently and correctly, dog training can be fun and simple for both of you. The key steps are catching your dog in a questionable act, giving a firm (never cruel) reprimand, and redirecting his attention and energy toward an acceptable activity. Don't nag your dog, and never spank him. Praise him whenever you can. Even if he's just lying on the floor minding his own business, take a moment to praise him and tell him what a good dog he is.

Dog training is a great way to bond with your pet, and you'll both enjoy a safer, happier life. With plenty of fun, too!