



Training Tips

Keep in mind the following training principles when working with your dog:

 **Consistency**

It is important that you are consistent with the right commands, rewards, words, actions, and discipline.

 **Clarity**

Be very clear about your commands.

Use your voice and energy.

Inflection and tone are important.

Don't ask a question; give a command

 **Repetition**

Dogs learn through repetition. Consistently repeat the commands and cues as you are training your dog

 **Reward**

This is one of the most important aspects of training! The timing of, and appropriate reward is critical in a dog's training. Preferred method of reward or praise is verbal – "GOOD BOY/GIRL!" (tone and inflection important).

Also, petting your pet. Treats should be very intermittent (see note below about treats)

 **Discipline**

Let your pet know when you disapprove of their actions. Aggression, barking, biting, jumping, fighting and such should not just be ignored. It is important to say "NO"! or STOP of your choice of words. If necessary, there may need to be another consequence.

 **Progress!**

The best part! Keep upping your/their game. They have the ability to learn a great deal. Set and keep the bar high and you will enjoy many years with a well-behaved, content dog!

Why train your dog? *(The best and most responsible thing you can do for them!)*

 Makes them more comfortable in all surroundings

 Allows you (and others) to enjoy them more fully

 They behave for the vet, groomer, sitters and others and don't find these situations stressful, or at least, less stressful

 They handle emergencies better (evacuations, bad weather, illness, etc.)

 Less liability/stress – concern about them harming another person or pet

 The best trained pets don't usually end up in shelter, but when they do, almost guaranteed a quick adoption

 Some HOA's and apartments are starting to request the AKC Good Citizen certification

Choosing the right dog – Lots of consideration should be taken on this front. Do you have/will have kids? A big backyard? Any prior training with a dog? Are you active? Consider your lifestyle. Too often we see people choose the wrong dog. You have many choices of breeds and sizes. Also, whether to adopt from a shelter or purchase from a great breeder. This is a very important first step. Inform yourself, do your homework, and/or ask a professional. This is a 10-15 year commitment and should not be made lightly!

Start with a solid foundation

This includes the following:

 Provide exercise or play time to expel their energy before a training session. Then begin your training session with a walk on the leash.

 Walking on a leash. Directly beside you. Go slow, fast, stop, turn and insist they stay right with you.

 Use a collar instead of a harness. There is no consequence if you dog pulls or misbehaves with a harness. If he pulls with a collar (which he should not be doing) he will feel the consequence and get uncomfortable. Only then can you get to the next level of them behaving during your walks (which is the core of everything else you will train with your pet. If you cannot walk them successfully on a leash, you will have struggles from there)

-  **House training** – for young puppies, take them out every 30-45 minutes. As soon as they go, praise them in a big voice “Good Boy/Girl!”. They learn very quickly! Pee pads only make the training take longer.
-  **Kennel training** – This is very important for many reasons. They should be completely comfortable in their kennel. Start using treats and say “Kennel”. You might have to set them in initially. (within a week they will likely start going in on command). Praise them and close it. They will likely bark. You can ignore it initially. At some point you might have to say “No” (other tactics include shaking coins, water mist). NEVER release them from the kennel when they are barking/whining. Wait til they settle down/stop and then you can release them. Leave the kennel open and an occasional treat in the back. You will likely find they will go in on their own.
NOTE: Often people will say that don't want to kennel them. This energy from you alone will negate your ability to get them kennel trained. Don't dismiss how much your energy and lack of leadership will hamper your ability to train and work with your dog.
-  **Learn their name** – It is important that your dog learn his name (especially if you have more than one pet!). Start using it early and often in conjunction with your commands.
-  **Sit/Stay.** This is one of the first commands you can work with. Ask them to sit. You can use verbal and hand cues. Once they are sitting ask them to stay. To be successful you start with short stays and then start to increase them. Release them with a release cue (very important!)
-  **Utilize a release cue**
This is no doubt the biggest mistake people make that leads to problems. It is very important that you have a release cue to release your dog from a prior command like “Sit, Stay, Wait, Go, etc.”. Many people release with “Good Boy/Girl”. That is a mistake as you will no doubt use those words for praise as well. **“Alright!” or “Okay!”** said in a strong, steady voice work well.
-  **Come** – Start with a short leash and say, **“Come or Here”**. Bring them towards you and reward them. After a few sessions, get further back. When they have mastered this, put a clothes line rope (very light) attached to something other than your hands. Ask them to “Come”. They cannot get away and won't feel their rope or your hands. This will surprise them and they will likely come. Praise them. While they are mastering this, let them drag the leash or line so you can readily get them and reinforce the command. You will soon have a dog that can be off the leash (or gets lose) and will come when they are called.
-  **Be cautious about overusing treats!**
Using treats is one way to reward your pet, but do not overuse them. Two things happen – the dog becomes reactive and you are not connecting mentally at that point, and the second is that you are actually begging them instead of training and rewarding them. Use verbal and physical praise all the time for good efforts, and treats intermittently.
Note: the AKC Good Citizen test does not allow treats
-  **State a command, not a request** – in other words don't ask them, tell them what you want. Don't make it optional
-  **Ask once, then insist** – Once the foundation is set and solid, the way to keep things on track is to ask for the behavior or command once very clearly. Give them the opportunity to do the right thing. If they do not, then insist. This will keep your pet well-tuned to you and behaved.
-  **Distractions/Fear** – You can help your dog to not be overly fearful or distracted by connecting with them mentally, and letting them know that it is ok. Say their name, get their attention, and tell them (for fearful situations), you are fine. Help them get over it. Too often we help them become more fearful! For distractions, keep making them look back at you and connect. Don't accept their aloofness or distractedness. This is an area you cannot do enough training and roleplaying for. Once you have a foundation, go on walks or to places with distractions and work on this. That is how service dogs are trained.
-  **Don't make excuses!** These include “my dog is a rescue/been abused; they are afraid of _____; They don't like _____; their breed is hyper; etc. Every dog benefits from leadership shown by their owner and a solid foundation/training program. I have never seen an exception to this!
-  **Never accept bad behavior from your dog!**
Not even one time. If they misbehave in any way, let them know by using a stern voice saying “No” or “Quit”. Don't make excuses, and don't lower your standard or the bar to fit the situation.
-  **Get help!** – Many people are not skilled enough to get the basics trained with their dog. Hiring a professional is money well spent. It does not have to break the bank, but the investment in getting your dog to be well behaved and dependable, and not disrupt your life is well worth it!

Once you have a great foundation, there is no end to what you can do with your pet!

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