

The only thing better than a dog, is a well-behaved one. Whether teaching a pup common manners like sitting or walking on leash, or trying to build up your pooches toolbox with more complicated tricks, many dog owners have questioned the best method for training their furry friends. When we asked four experts they all said the same thing: treats.

Not only does reward-based training ensure your dog enjoys training and is excited about participating, says DC-based trainer, Juliana Willems, but it also builds your bond with your dog. Many studies have also shown that more aggressive methods of training don't work as well, and can have long-term side effects for your pup.

Still, selecting the right treat can feel overwhelming and daunting to many dog owners. Andrea Arden, a certified trainer and four-time author about all things dog instruction, told us choosing the right product often comes down to the individual dog, but it's always best to have more than one option on hand. You'll want high, medium, and low value treats, she says. High value could be anything your dog goes crazy for and is extremely motivated by. They're best used with new behaviors or in situations with a lot of distractions, like at a dog park. Medium and low value treats can be used for familiar requests like sitting or laying down.

M. Leanne Lilly, DVM, DACVB, clinical assistant professor at the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, agrees that scientific data shows positive reinforcement is the fastest way to train complicated behaviors, but encourages owners to be mindful of calories and nutritional value when shopping for training treats. Ideally we want to keep treats to less than percent of the diet, she says. For most training treats something the size of a pea is ideal because it means you can rapidly repeat the task and provide a reward without waiting for chewing. Jennifer Coates, DVM, who serves on the advisory board for Pup Life Today, shared similar views with us while adding that clicker training can also be effective in conjunction with training treats to help limit caloric intake.

Willems says that as a general rule look for products that are small, squishy, and stinky — your dog will love the taste and their size and ability to be broken up ensures you can get in lots of training without compromising your pup's health. While Willems, Arden, Dr. Lilly, and Dr. Coates agreed that there is no one right answer when it comes to selecting training treats, they did give us some great recommendations that they have seen to be highly effective. Click through for the complete list.