



Dog Training Tips for Success!



Train early and train often. Dogs need mental stimulation to thrive. Even if you think your dog is perfect and doesn't need further training, they will still benefit from the socialization and reinforcement of their commands. Dogs enjoy having a job to do!

Have fun! Keep training sessions upbeat so that the training process is enjoyable both you and your dog. If training starts to feel like a chore, cut the session short by ending it "on a good note" with a cue they know well and take a play break or come back to it when you feel refreshed. When you give a command, you should be calm and authoritative, but never harsh or loud.

Increase distractions gradually. If your dog doesn't respond reliably to commands at home where there are few distractions, he certainly won't respond to you outdoors where there are many distractions such as other dogs, squirrels, strangers, cars, strange noises, etc. When you are training your dog, start training in a location with few distractions, then gradually move to more and more distracting areas to ensure your dog's commands are reliable.

Increase duration gradually. As your dog starts to understand what you are asking of them, begin to increase the length of time they should hold the command before you click and treat. Ideally your dog should hold the command until they are released.

Increase the distance between you and your dog gradually. If you are working on a stay, you should be able to give the command and walk further and further away each time without your dog breaking their stay. This should be held true for all of their commands.

Do not let mistakes slide. Every time you give a command that is neither complied with nor enforced your dog learns that commands are optional and they may tune you out.

Set Boundaries and correct mistakes, by gently correcting them when they do the wrong thing with an "Ah-Ah" cue. Don't punish the dog.

Do not repeat the command. Give the command only once. If the dog fails to deliver the behavior, you can either ignore the dog for a few seconds then try again or you can try gently enforcing it. For example, if you are training the "Sit" command and the dog does not Sit, you can gently place or lure your dog into the sit position, then reward them.

Be consistent. Have everyone in your household use the same hand gesture and verbal command every time so the dog does not get confused.

Don't blame the dog! Usually when the dog fails to perform the command, it is because the dog doesn't know what you want, doesn't know how to comply, or he is unresponsive due to fear, stress or confusion. You should make every effort to give

clear hand signals and to speak clearly and loud enough so that your dog can hear you.

Use your dog's name positively, rather than using it as a form of reprimand or preceding punishment. Your dog should trust that when it hears its name or is called to you, only good things will follow. His name should always be a word he responds to with enthusiasm, never hesitancy or fear.

Timing is everything, whether praising or correcting. Dogs only have a 1-2 second window to associate a behavior with a reward or a correction. For example, if I was teaching my dog to Lay Down, the moment his elbows touched the ground is when I could click and give a treat so that my dog associates a full Lay Down with the reward. This short window is also the best and most effective time to correct your dog is before he misbehaves.

Know what is considered a reward to a dog. To a dog, any form of touching them, talking to them, giving them eye contact, giving them treats or a toy, letting them get their way, are all considered rewards.

Know what behaviors you are rewarding, by giving lots of attention when your dog misbehaves, you are rewarding bad behavior. For example, if your dog jumps on you and you push them down, you have just rewarded them for jumping. If your dog is barking excessively and you shout at them to be quiet, you have just joined in the conversation and rewarded them. Instead of rewarding bad behaviors, ignore them, and praise them when they do the right thing instead.

And lastly, **Practice, practice, practice!** The success of your dog's training depends on you and how much you practice their commands at home. If you invest your time and effort into your dog during training, you will reap the benefits for the rest of their life!