

Training Tips for a Happy Dog

The best way to start training with your dog or puppy is to develop trust. Building a strong relationship is built on trust and confidence. If your dog feels confident and secure with your training guidance they are much more likely to respond.

Training Tips

- When interacting with your dog keep it positive! Encourage good behaviour with praise.
- Use reward based training. This means using rewards that your dog likes. Rewards can include verbal praise, pats, food, toys, play or 'life rewards' for example if your dog is walking nicely on the lead let them 'stop and smell the roses' (or whatever interesting smell they may be drawn to...)
- Set your dog up for success; put them in environments that help build their confidence and at the same time have some level of control (such as a long lead if needed) so they respond to you when its needed.
- Ignore unwanted behaviours (where possible). Sometimes dogs misbehave for attention. An example of this would be jumping up. If you ignore this behaviour it will tend to stop. Just keep in mind attention to the dog includes; eye contact, verbal corrections or pushing them away. When you start to ignore the behaviour it may get worse to start with (as the dog may try even harder to get your attention!) but it will reduce.
- Make sure all family members are consistent. If some family members encourage misbehaviour then it will make it much harder to manage & correct.
- Get the family involved. Family members should help in all areas of the dog's life; from walking and general care, feeding, play and training. This will ensure consistency with the family members & helps the dog bond with all family members.
- Teach the dog what it needs to know! It may seem obvious but sometimes people think dogs should just know what to do in situations: If we haven't taught them how we would like them to respond then it is not fair on the dog to correct behaviours when we have not taught them what is appropriate.
- Training & re-training can take time & patience, especially with an older dog. But if you manage situations so that an unwanted behaviour is not practiced then you will find it's easier and less stressful for all.

If a dog is not responding well to training there may be a few reasons why

- Have you taught them the skills they need to know and practiced it in different environments with different levels of distractions? Dogs don't generalize training well so it is important to practice training in different environments & increase the level of distraction gradually if your dog is having trouble.
- They may be stressed. If they have an underlying behaviour problem this should be dealt with first. Stress will reduce learning ability.
- Avoid punishment. It can cause fear, anxiety or even aggression. It can also damage the bond you have with your wonderful companion.
- They may not understand what you are asking of them. Try a different approach to your training.