

A Guide To Successful Obedience Training



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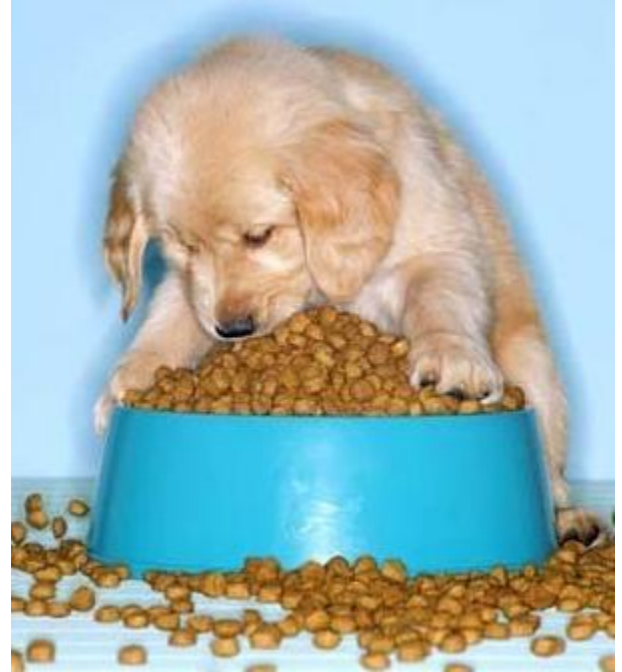
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Showing off your dog in front of friends and family is something that I personally love to do. Having an obedient, happy slab of lab is like having an obedient happy child. Have you ever been in a supermarket only to come across a screaming baby and a blushing parent? I know I have, and my first reaction is to get as far away from the disturbing scene as possible. I have also been in the undesirable situation of being in public with an un-obedient dog and I can say, I feel the pain of the frantic parent!

The term, "A happy dog is an obedient dog" is one that I really believe holds a lot of merit due to its simplicity. If you have a relatively well behaved dog, that interacts well with the family, it is fair to say that rarely will you or anyone else in that family be angry or even worse abusive towards your pet. On the other hand if your dog is not obedient to a satisfactory level, and does not interact well with the family, one can say that members of that family will have a hard time coping with the pet and this trend can only escalate only leading to the eventual departure of the pet from the family.

When teaching your dog basic obedience, it is wise to make sure that you first have an understanding of the art yourself. Like people, dogs have unique personalities none of which are the same, and it is a good trainer that will take the time to figure out the dog before trying to figure out how to best approach introducing basic obedience. Furthermore, there are many external resources out there for you to take advantage of in order to help you understand the art of training. Books, articles, Obedience Instructors, and the internet, are all viable sources that you should take advantage of when seeking advice, or just experiences from others in your situation.



Below I have listed my top ten components to keep in mind when working with your dog. I did not rank them, as they are all very important to keep in mind as they will only aid you in bonding, understanding, and interacting positively with your four-legged friend:

Know what you're doing - Before commencing on any type of training, do your research first! Too often, pet owners try to do all the work their way, get frustrated and take out their frustrations on their pet. Having an understanding of the methodology behind the many types of training, will benefit you to know end.

Consistency - Being consistent with your approach is very important when dealing with your dog in any aspect of life. When working with your dog try to use the same approach each time. Changing training methods mid-session for example will only confuse your dog even more than he/she already is. Furthermore, set up training time at least twice a day, and keep to these times. Training time is important, the more sessions you set up the more productivity you can expect in the long run.

Keep your sessions short - The attention span of a dog is frail at the best of times, thus it is crucial to keep the sessions short. Remember keep the sessions short but do not sacrifice content. Rome was not built in a day.

Keep training sessions fun - Dogs as do people, like to have fun, and why shouldn't they? Training can be fun for you and your pet! Be lively, treat good behavior, praise your dog to no end, make him feel like he is the best dog in the world, even if he's not!

Never punish your pet for what they don't know! - Too often, I have seen people talk to their pet with the understanding that their beloved dog is a master of the English language, only to punish them when the desired response is not carried out. This really bothers me because it shows me that that person would rather bully their pet into submitting than taking the time to research, develop and implicate an approach to help the dog learn the desired response to certain words or phrases.

Train to your dog's strength - As stated above every dog has its own unique personality; therefore we must identify characteristics of our pets in order to take advantage of them in our training sessions. If your pet is very lively, take advantage of that! During training sessions, be lively yourself! Match your dog's enthusiasm, when you're happy, your pet will be happy and your pet will be very happy come training time.

If your dog has a laid back shy personality, take this into account when training. Still be lively and upbeat as this will spark the interest of your dog, however keep in mind that due to his/her personality, displaying comprehension may take longer due to the shy nature of your dog. It is really important to make a shy laid back dog feel super great during training sessions as this can only improve your chances of continuing successful training.

Incorporate training into your everyday routine - It can be very beneficial to perform individual obedience exercises throughout the day. Simply by performing the sit exercise while you brush him; or having the dog sit while you attach his leash can help to imprint the sitting position. Keep little things like this in mind as they can only aid you and your pet.

Be patient - Remember you are trying to teach your dog! Your dog is a non-English speaking individual, lacking house manners, behavioral skills, and courtesy, do I need to continue? Take your time, play to your dog's strength, praise, respect, keep sessions short and compact, and have fun!

Empathize with your dog - The best example I can think of for this suggestion, is going to a foreign country and trying to comprehend what people are saying. Somebody will come up to you and starts rambling on in a foreign tongue and you have no clue what they are saying. Your dog is in the same predicament with you. When you start training your dog, he-she has no clue on earth what you are saying. How is he-she supposed to respond if he-she doesn't know what you want? As in the above example, the more time you spend in the foreign country, the more familiar you become with the language. You can apply the same principle with your dog. More training leads to more comprehension, leading to the end result, an obedient dog.

Reward good behavior - The best way to reinforce good behavior is to reward it. Others may disagree with this statement, but through my experience with my own dog and others around me, I have found that rewarding good behavior can only aid in maintaining that behavior. In my opinion, the best way of rewarding good behavior is through offering toys or treats. Praise is also worthy but would you rather have an ice cream cone, or a good handshake? I personally love ice cream and would pick that over a handshake any day. Your dog is driven by his belly in most cases, and you can achieve astonishing success by baiting your dog with the occasional rustle of the treat bag

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Your pets deserve understanding and kindness, EVERY DAY!

