

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the News Buoy. Thank you to our wonderful editors,

Margaret and Shannon for all of their efforts in bringing us interesting and informative editions. This edition of our Newsletter contains many helpful tips on training your Portuguese Water Dog and is dedicated to that subject.

Keystone's Supported Entry was held Saturday, April 27, 2024 at Lum's Pond State Park in Bear, DE. Although the weather was not ideal (cloudy and very cool) at least there was no rain. There was a short club meeting and luncheon and it appeared everyone had a nice time.

Also with the arrival of spring comes the thought of upcoming water training season. This year Keystone and Delmarva are going to host (pending approval by the PWDCA Water Trial Committee) a Junior-Apprentice workshop and trial. The plan is for the workshop to be held at our Water Trial location, Codorus State Park in Hanover, PA on Saturday July 27 and the trial to be held on Sunday, July 28, 2024. So if you are new to water or starting a new puppy/dog, mark your calendars

Happy Spring everyone.

—Judy Murray

Temperament: The Role of Socialization and Training

"Spirited disposition, self-willed (can be stubborn), brave, exceptionally intelligent, loyal companion, obedient" are qualities describing the Portuguese Water Dogs temperament as outlined in the American Kennel Club Temperament Guide (AKC, 2019). Temperament is a genetic predisposition to react in a certain way to a stimulus (Burch & Ljungren, 2019). Simply stated, temperament is a dog's personality and nature. (McConnell, 2010). Although temperament remains constant through life, behaviors related to temperament may be modified over time with exposures, experiences, and training (Burch & Ljungren, AKC ATT, 2019). Recognizing and understanding a dog's unique temperament is important in shaping behavior through training. With proper training, dogs can successfully navigate life obstacles by learning acceptable and effective responses to stimuli in their environment (Holman).



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Temperament: The Role of Socialization and Training

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Role of Socialization

The first four months of puppy development, also called “the sensitive period,” is the most critical time for socialization. During this period, it is important to expose puppies to various sounds, sights, and surfaces as well as a variety of positive interactions and experiences. A properly socialized puppy is more inclined to become a well-mannered, happy and confident dog and less likely to exhibit fear, anxiety, and aggression. The more experiences provided, the less bothered a puppy will be throughout life when confronted with new experiences and stimuli (Howell, et al., 2015).

Thoughts About Training

Training will not transform a dog’s temperament; however, providing training and experiences is pivotal in behavior development (Palika, 2018). Dogs who receive training have improved life outcomes, fewer behavioral concerns, enhanced bonding, reduced anxiety, and less aggression. Problem behaviors are one of the leading reasons why dogs are relinquished to breeders and shelters. Studies repeatedly document how training improves human-animal relationship and decreases the number of dogs placed into rescue (Kwan et al., 2013). To maximize your dog’s potential: start training early in life, recognize their strengths and limitations, use positive reinforcement training, be consistent with training cues, and make the experience enjoyable. Stay patient, and seek professional training support if needed. The personality a dog is born with cannot be changed but we can help bring out its best expression. For example, we can give a shy dog the tools (training, early socialization, confidence building measures) it needs to become more confident and self-assured to cope in almost any situation (AKC, 2024).

Let’s Play!

Play is a fun way to reinforce basic skills and keep dogs active, happy, and healthy. Playing with your dog can lower stress for both of you and strengthen your bond. Research has documented that providing 30 minutes of play after a training session significantly improves memory and training performance (Affenzeller et al., 2017). Introduce games like hide and seek, search and find, tug play, teaching “go to place,” and fetch.

Give Them a Job

Working breeds are born with a desire to perform jobs and enjoy keeping their mind and bodies exercised. Researchers at Purdue University state that providing working breeds mental enrichment activities helps counter boredom and release excess energy. Enrichment encourages thinking and problem solving while building confidence. Consider your dog’s daily routine and create an enrichment plan, taking into consideration energy level, interests, and working drive. Work can be more formal, such as attending obedience or performance classes, or focused play activities, like food puzzles, chew toys, hide-and-seek, or trick training.

Breeding Considerations

Responsible breeding is a complex process focused on improving the breed. Temperament should be carefully considered when exploring pedigrees while planning a breeding (Hedgepath, 2021). A dog with a questionable temperament should not be bred (AKC, Guide to Breeding Your Dog). Prior to breeding, breeders should carefully study multi-generational pedigrees to determine both desirable and undesirable traits produced in their lines.

Potential puppy owners should be thoughtful about the breed they select, choose a responsible breeder who socializes newborn puppies, and continue socialization once the puppy comes home. (Heckman, akc.org, 2024). By studying the standard and understanding breed traits, families can determine whether a specific dog will be able to adapt to the home, lifestyle, time commitment, and expectations (Klein, AKC.org 2024).

References: Affenzeller, N., Palme, R., & Zulch, H. (2017). Playful activity post-learning improves training performance in Labrador Retriever dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). *Physiology & Behavior*, 16862-73; Burch, M., & Ljungren, D. (n.d.). Att Overview Final AUG282019. <https://www.akc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ATT-OVERVIEW-FINAL-Aug-28-2019.pdf>; Hedgepath, S. (2021, March 9). *Dog behavior: Temperament, personality and soundness*. Showsight Magazine; <https://showsightmagazine.com/dog-behavior-temperament-personality-and-soundness/>; Howell, T. J., King, T., & Bennett, P. C. (2015, April 29). *Puppy parties and beyond: The role of early age socialization practices on adult dog behavior*. *Veterinary medicine* (Auckland, N.Z.). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6067676/>; Hunt, R., & Vaterlaws-Whiteside, H. (n.d.). *The effects of environmental enrichment on dog behaviour*. IAABC FOUNDATION JOURNAL. <https://journal.iaabcfoundation.org/the-effects-of-environmental-enrichment-on-dog-behaviour/>; Kerns, N. (2019, September 19). *Why play is important for dogs*. *Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/blog/why-play-is-important-for-dogs/>; Kwan, J. Y., & Bain, M. J. (n.d.). *Owner attachment and problem behaviors related to ...* *Animal and Society*. <https://www.animalsandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/kwan.pdf>; Liz Palika, C.-K. C.-K. (2018, October 2). *Training and temperament: What dog training can and cannot do*. Embrace Pet Insurance. <https://www.embracepetinsurance.com/waterbowl/article/training-and-temperament>; McConnell, P. (2020, August 10). *What training can do, and what it can't*. *The Other End of the Leash*. <https://www.patriciamccconnell.com/theotherendoftheleash/what-training-can-do-and-what-it-cant>; Staff (2024, February 2). *Does dog breed affect behavior? studies say yes*. American Kennel Club. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/does-dog-breed-affect-behavior/>

Understanding the Breed's TEMPERAMENT and the need for EARLY SOCIALIZATION

Meg DeFore

The standard of the Portuguese Water dog is important to understand if you plan to breed; take note this is a working breed. We should be supporting our standard and cherish that the breed is a spirited dog with exceptional intelligence resistant to fatigue and a self-willed worker.

Whether we place the puppy as a show potential dog, performance dog or family pet we should all look to the standard as a guide for breeding and express to the new owner a clear picture of what to expect from a PWD's temperament. It is our job as breeders to understand the temperaments of our puppies and which puppy in each litter fits best in each home.

Socialization plus everyday life experiences are the keystone in building a happy puppy. The experience starts immediately after birth without even realizing we are doing this by checking each puppy when they are born, weighing and cleaning the puppy. Early socialization includes daily handling and grooming, exposing them to different temperatures, textures and separation from the litter.

Early in a puppy's life they appear unaware of their littermates around them except for the need for warmth. Later they develop personalities, some more dominate than others. Larger pups may not always be suited to rough play with a smaller pup; two or more pups might gang up to pick on one. Temporary separation of groups of pups or time out or redirecting energy can be used to keep a restless group from developing bad manners.

As the puppy grows, expose them to new people, other animals, car rides. Express to the new owners the time you have spent *working* on their puppy's socialization needs. This will help them understand

how much time and effort they will have to spend when they first get their puppy:

A crate is a great tool for keeping the environment clean and begins teaching the pup the proper place to eliminate. Work this in short sessions to keep things positive. Teaching the pup early about crate training helps the new owner get through those first few nights when pups are likely to whine.

Whether a show, performance or pet home, insist on continued socialization and training preferably at training centers or clubs. With support and guidance these new owners are so pleased with their experience they often work toward Canine Good Citizen awards, obedience titles, become therapy dogs or get interested in agility. I like to stress the importance of training while interviewing, explaining the need for the new owner to focus the first two years of the dog's life working with the dog in group training classes. Owners who do training with their dogs are less likely to have behavioral problems, and if problems arise, are more likely to work through them.

There are studies proving that early physical and environmental socialization affect the puppy and can be difficult to rehabilitate later in life if there is a lack of socialization and stimuli. It is imperative that we as Portuguese Water Dog breeders understand that the development of our dogs and their temperaments is in our hands as we entrust them to new owners, we must continue our responsibility through proper mentoring and regular contact.

The article first appeared in *The Courier* Sept/Oct 2007 (issue 35, volume 5), p 30. A special thank you to Meg DeFore for granting permission to share her article with the KPWDC membership.

Any Dog Can Bite

Dog bites pose a serious health risk to our communities and society. More than 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year in the United States, and more than 800,000 receive medical attention for dog bites, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). At least half of those bitten are children. Here are more dog bite facts: Almost 1 in 5 people bitten by dogs require medical attention.

Children are the most common victims of dog bites and are far more likely to be severely injured.

Most dog bites affecting young children occur during everyday activities and while interacting with familiar dogs.

Any dog can bite: big or small, male or female, young or old. Even the cuddliest, fuzziest, sweetest pet can bite if provoked. Remember, it is not a dog's breed that determines whether it will bite, but rather the dog's individual history and behavior.

Most dog bites are preventable, and there are many things you can do at home and within your community to help prevent them.

Why do dogs bite?

Dogs bite for a variety of reasons, but most commonly as a reaction to something. If the dog finds itself in a stressful situation, it may bite to defend itself or its territory. Dogs can bite because they are scared or have been startled. They can bite because they feel threatened. They can bite to protect something that is valuable to them, like their puppies, their food or a toy.

Dogs might bite because they aren't feeling well. They could be sick or sore due to injury or illness and might want to be left alone. Dogs also might nip and bite during play. Even though nipping during play might be fun for the dog, it can be dangerous for people. It's a good idea to avoid wrestling or playing tug-of-war with your dog. These types of activities can make your dog overly excited, which may lead to a nip or a bite.

Excerpted from AVMA.org; <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/dog-bite-prevention>

Sudden changes in a dog's behavior require further investigation. Have your veterinarian rule out any medical concerns.

Boredom Busters

Working breeds require mental enrichment to help counter boredom and release excess energy. Consider your dog's daily routine and create an enrichment plan, taking into consideration energy level, interests, and working drive. Work can be more formal, such as attending obedience or performance classes, or focused play activities, like food puzzles, chew toys, hide-and-seek, or trick training.

Exercise that brain

Enroll in training classes, teach commands and tricks, play hide and seek or "find it," offer stuffed toys, provide puzzle toys, allow adequate sniffing on walks, explore a new walking route, and learn the names of toys.

Arouse the senses

Scent work, snuffle mat foraging, scented dog-friendly bubbles, food puzzles, chew toys, scent walks, playing classical music on low volume or using wind chimes, "people watching" from a window, hide and seek, rum-maging through a cardboard adventure box containing toilet paper rolls and toys with different scents, sounds, and textures.

Stay active and fit

Fetch, agility, swimming, scent walks ("Sniffari"), flirt pole, obstacle course, snow maze, or kiddie pool filled with textured toys and plastic balls.

Provide safe play and interactions with dogs and people

Short leash greetings, supervised play dates, visits to dog friendly stores or cafes, time at the park or beach, hide and seek, attending obedience classes.

Encourage instinctual foraging skills to find food

Hide food inside toys or treat dispensers, hiding food in puzzles or a maze bowl, snuffle mat, food stuffed toys or bowls, frozen lick mats, treat towel "burrito," treats in muffin pan hidden by tennis balls.

Give your dog a job

Professional training classes (obedience), water work, nose work, agility, fetch, and tricks.

Littermate Syndrome

Although bringing home two puppies may seem like a great idea, raising two littermates together can lead to long-term behavioral issues. Adding just one puppy at a time to your family can help avoid behavioral issues associated with “littermate syndrome.” Littermate syndrome refers to specific, undesirable behaviors occurring while raising two puppies together following weaning from the dam. The two puppies form an inseparable bond during one of the most important socialization stages, potentially hampering the puppy-owner bond (Erb, 2023).

When a puppy is between 3–12 weeks of age, their senses mature and encourage exploration in the environment and socialization with the other puppies and humans. During the period, puppies become aware of their relationship with humans. When a puppy bonds with its owner, they look to the owner for direction on how to react in new situations, either be praised for desirable behaviors or redirected away from inappropriate ones. Two closely bonded puppies tend look to one another on how to respond to new stimuli rather than their owner. This causes the puppies to “feed off” of each other’s fears and anxiety, which can develop into unhealthy behaviors. (Texas A&M, 2023).

Common Behaviors Associated with Littermate Syndrome (Texas A&M, 2023)

- Separation anxiety when away from the other puppy
- Fear of new people, animals, objects, or experiences
- Fear aggression when a puppy encounters a new experience, feels threatened, and reacts by barking or biting
- Leash reactivity
- Fighting habits when reaching sexual maturity
- Aggression or nervousness in the more dominant puppy; shyness and withdrawal in the less dominant puppy

Navigating Littermate Syndrome

To avoid any potential behavioral concerns with raising two litter siblings, do not raise two puppies at the same time. If the owner already has two littermates, they can begin by crating the puppies separately, either in different rooms or providing some distance between the crates in the same room. Families can take each puppy on individual walks, provide one-on-one play, spend time playing with each puppy separately, socialize them separately, and enroll each puppy in separate

obedience classes. An older dog in the home can help teach the puppies boundaries and offer appropriate corrections (Texas A&M, 2023). Always seek the advice of the veterinarian before deciding to bring two puppies home.

Excerpted from Erb, H. (2023, December 7). *Littermate Syndrome: Why one puppy might be better than two*. American Kennel Club. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/puppy-information/littermate-syndrome/> ; Texas A&M University School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. (2023, September 28). *Understanding littermate syndrome in puppy pairs*. Texas A&M Today. <https://today.tamu.edu/2023/09/28/understanding-littermate-syndrome-in-puppy-pairs/> ; Pat Miller, C.-K. (2024, February 29). *What Is a Veterinary Behaviorist?*, *Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/behavior/what-is-a-veterinary-behaviorist/>

Let's Go Shopping!

Visiting a dog friendly stores can be a fun way to help socialize dogs. Here is a list of stores that welcome dogs:

Petco	Cabela's
Petsmart	Orvis
Pet Supplies Plus	Champs Sports
Concord Pet	Dick's Sporting Goods
L.L. Bean	Nordstrom
Home Depot	Macy's
Lowe's	TJ Maxx
Harbor Freight Tools	The Gap
Ace Hardware	Bass Pro Shops
Tractor Supply Company	

Keep in mind that even if a chain describes itself as pet-friendly, decisions to allow canine visitors vary by location. Store managers make final decisions about pet policies. Also, some pet-friendly stores are located in malls where pet policies may differ from the individual stores. Always call ahead to ask!

—Excerpted from: C. Puotinen. (Sept 22, 2023). “Dog-Friendly Stores,” *Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/lifestyle/dog-friendly-stores/>

Both nature and nurture have pivotal roles in behavioral development. “Nature” (hardwired genetics) is a dog’s potential, and “nurture” (experiences and training) allows the dog to reach their potential (AKC.org, 2024).

Puppy Socialization

Socialization is the process of safely introducing a young puppy to a variety of new experiences. During the first four months, it is critical to expose puppies to new people, environments, and stimuli and teach them necessary skills to safely and positively interact with their world. A properly socialized puppy is more inclined to become a well-mannered, happy and confident dog and less likely to exhibit fear, anxiety, aggression. The more experiences provided, the less bothered a puppy will be throughout life when confronted with new situations. Socialization is fun and encourages bonding with the family.

Three Keys:

Expose to positive and controlled situations
Provide an array of brief encounters
Introduce a variety of experiences

Periods of Socialization

0–2 weeks of age: taste and touch are the only developed senses. Puppies have limited mobility, cannot regulate their own temperature, and are completely dependent on the dam and breeder. At 2 weeks old, eyes are opening and puppies are beginning to walk. Safe toys with different textures, shapes, sounds, and smells should be added to the whelping box. Gentle, brief handling by a responsible breeder an early step towards socialization.

3–14 weeks of age: *the most critical period in socialization*, also referred to as “the sensitive period.”

3–5 weeks: puppies are vocalizing, exploring their surroundings, and showing interest in people. They are learning important behaviors from the dam and littermates, like social cues and bite inhibition.

5–8 weeks: puppies are weaning, walking, wagging, starting to bark, eliminating on own, and nipping with razor sharp teeth. They are curious and exploring their surroundings, regarding humans, playing with their littermates, practicing nipping behaviors, and starting to show fear. A responsible breeder should begin exposing the litter to new, safe experiences—enriching play opportunities both indoors and outside, meeting and be handled by a variety of people, going on brief car rides, introducing crate training, and exposing the litter to day-to-day household sounds (TV, phone, doorbell, vacuum). A puppy should remain with the dam and littermates until 8–10 weeks old.

8–14 weeks: puppies are heading to their forever homes

and require continued exposure opportunities. New owners should encourage their puppy to explore and introduce the puppy to as many new people, animals, stimuli and environments without causing overstimulation. Provide enrichment activities, take your puppy on car rides, visit a dog-friendly stores like Home Depot or Cabela’s. Avoid dog parks and pet stores at this age. The more positive interactions and experiences provided, the less fearful your puppy will become.

14 weeks–12 months: Puppies are becoming more independent and testing boundaries. Once your puppy has received their vaccinations, it is time to head to puppy obedience classes. Positive social interactions should continue throughout life.

Ways to Socialize Your Puppy

- Expose to different people, places, sounds, tastes, and textures.
- Keep things positive and give a lot of praise.
- Enrichment matters—providing daily mental and physical stimulation fosters a sense of control over the environment and reduces boredom and stress.
- Practice desensitization by touching your puppy’s feet and ears and teeth. Brush your puppy daily and clean teeth with a soft finger brush.
- Aim to expose your puppy to a variety of people by 4 months of age. Sit outdoors at a coffee shop and invite patrons to pet your dog and give a treat or sit on a park bench where people are walking by and children are playing.
- Do not introduce too many situations too quickly—introduce one stranger at a time instead of a large group setting; proceed at a pace comfortable for your puppy’s temperament.
- Once fully vaccinated, enroll your puppy in obedience classes with a professional trainer. Attending a positive training program is a fantastic way to socialize your puppy, help them learn boundaries, build their self-confidence, and strengthen your bond.
- Expose your puppy to a variety of surfaces (grass, wood, snow, mud, sand, tiles, stairs, linoleum, street, sidewalk).
- Take your puppy with you to do short errands around town.

References: L. Donovan. (2022). Puppy Socialization: Why, When, and How to Do it Right. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/puppy-socialization/> ; AKC Staff. (2021). Creativity & Critical Timing Are Key to Puppy Socialization. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/dog-breeding/creativity-and-timing-key-to-puppy-socialization/>; E. Adkins, et. al. UC Davis Veterinary Medicine. <https://healthtopics.sf.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk6721/files/inline-files/Puppy-Socialization.pdf>

Hey, That's Mine!!

Resource guarding, also referred to as possessive aggression, is a normal, instinctual behavior related to survival and can be found in any dog regardless of breeds, size, or age. The dog reacts to a perceived threat of what they think may be taken from their possession. The resulting behaviors, such as hard staring, stiff body, whale eye, growling, baring teeth, can be frightening to owners. The situation can quickly escalate if a dog is willing to fight (and bite!) to keep an item. Aggression around food, toys, or space can be especially worrisome in a home with children and elderly family.

Resource guarding can escalate and become a dangerous situation. The intensity of the resource guarding may be affected by contributing factors, such as:

- Fear and anxiety
- Stress
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of control and routine in the environment
- Inadequate exercise and mental stimulation
- Need to establish hierarchy with other dogs
- Actions of other dogs and persons in the home

Examples of Resource Guarding

- Food Guarding
- Object Guarding
- Location Guarding
- Owner Guarding
- Dog-directed (i.e., guarding food from another dog)

Contributing Factors

- Genetics
- Fear, anxiety, stress
- Resource Scarcity
- Presence of high value items
- Lack of exercise and/or enrichment
- Underlying medical concerns

Managing the home environment

- Do not disturb your dog while they are eating and enjoying a toy
- Do not leave items such as toys and shoes lying around

- Allow your dog eat in peace—consider feeding in a safe place like their crate
- Pick up food bowls between meals
- Do not give high-value treats or toys that have been problematic in past
- Do not allow your dog on furniture they typically guard

DO NOT:

- Do not exert dominance over the dog—no hitting, yelling, teasing, or hitting
- Do not disturb a dog while they are eating or enjoying a toy
- Do not pet or touch your dog when he is guarding an object, food, or space

DO:

- Schedule a vet appointment to rule out any contributing medical issues
- Consider hiring a qualified and credentialed behaviorist
- Trade the item being guarded with food when appropriate
- Teach your dog important obedience skills (drop it, leave it)
- Build a trusting relationship through training and experiences
- If possible, prevent access to specific items which cause resource guarding
- Engage in fun relationship-building games
- Learn body language and recognize warning signals

In some cases, resource guarding can lead to biting. When aggressive behavior develops around a dog's resources, it is time to seek professional help. With the help of your vet, consider consulting a certified behaviorist to help with impulse control and counter-conditioning training.

References: Donaldson, J. (2002). *Mine!: A practical guide to resource guarding in dogs*. Kinship Communications; Jones, M. (2022, December 28). *Resource guarding: Teach your dog to trade*. Resource Guarding | AKC Reunite. <https://www.akcreunite.org/resourceguarding/>; Karetnick, J. (2024, March 26). *Resource guarding in dogs: How to deal with this problematic behavior*. American Kennel Club. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/resource-guarding-in-dogs/>; Kerns, N. (2022, July 20). *On guard - what to do when your dog starts resource guarding*. Whole Dog Journal. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/editorial/on-guard-what-to-do-when-your-dog-starts-resource-guarding/>;

The energetic and athletic Portuguese Water Dog requires daily exercise and enjoys carrying out a job. If a working dog does not receive adequate mental stimulation or a "job," they may develop behavioral concerns such as anxiety, destructive behavior, and/or hyperactivity.

Why Do Dogs Urine Mark in the House?

It makes sense for your dog to leave their calling card outside where other dogs will encounter it. But why do they do it inside the house? Marking alters the smell in the house and can help a dog feel more comfortable in their surroundings. It can also be a sign of stress or anxiety. Some of the reasons dogs might mark in the house could be:

- Adding their smell to new objects or people in order to make them smell familiar
- Bringing a sense of odor familiarity to an environment that is new to the dog (such as when they enter a new home)
- Responding to a stressful life change, such as the loss of an owner
- Experiencing anxiety about a stressful event, such as loud noises or the addition of a new pet

What Causes Your Dog to Pee in the House?

Of course, your dog might be peeing in the house for a reason other than marking. For example, they pee regularly to empty their bladders, and if your dog is unable to get to their designated toilet spot, they might have to go wherever they can. Some of the common reasons dogs pee in the house include:

- Accidents: If your dog can't get outside in time, they will be forced to go inside
- Too much freedom: Don't give your puppy access to your entire house before they've fully learned the rules of potty training
- Health problems: Many illnesses, such as kidney disease or diabetes, cause increased urination in dogs, which may raise the probability of accidents in the house
- Urinary tract infections: UTIs make a dog feel like they need to go frequently and urgently
- Submissive urination: To communicate peaceful intention, dogs often roll on their backs, but some will even pee to show they come in peace
- Excitement: Puppies' bladder control is poorly developed, so overly enthusiastic playtime or greetings with puppies can sometimes lead to accidents
- Separation anxiety: Dogs who are stressed by being left alone will often soil in the house due to anxiety

How to Know if a Dog Is Urine Marking or Peeing in the House?

If you're struggling to tell marking apart from other types of peeing in the house, consider when, where, and how your dog is peeing. Marking usually starts in adolescence and continues through adulthood. Potty accidents usually happen with puppies, newly adopted dogs who don't yet understand their new routine and rules, and senior dogs who are experiencing bladder issues or cognitive decline.

Marking also usually involves small amounts of urine in multiple locations, while a dog emptying their bladder will leave more pee in a single spot. Finally, if you catch your dog in the act, marking usually takes a few seconds. In contrast, regular urinating in a healthy dog takes around 20 seconds.

How Can You Stop Your Dog From Urine Marking?

There are many ways you can stop your dog from urine marking. First, rule out health issues that can mimic marking. You can also consider neutering your male dog. A scientific study in the *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* found that neutering reduced marking in males by as much as 72%. Spaying didn't significantly change female marking frequency, but a dog in heat may cause males to mark, so spaying female dogs in a multi-dog household might bring some relief.

Other ways to reduce marking include:

- Manage your dog's behavior: Consider an exercise pen or dog crate when you can't supervise
- Distract/interrupt your dog when you see they are about to mark (excessive sniffing in one spot is a common cue). Then, ask them to do another behavior that you can reward, such as sitting or hand targeting.
- Feed your dog around the object they like to mark. This changes their association with the object.
- Clean urine with an enzymatic cleaner and use a UV light to ensure you didn't miss anything.
- Reduce your dog's anxiety: Discuss synthetic calming pheromones, calming dog treats or supplements, or medication with your veterinarian. Build your dog's confidence and consider behavior modification programs through desensitization and counterconditioning

Excerpted from: S. Gibeault. (Mar 14, 2024). Urine Marking vs. Peeing: How to Tell These Dog Behaviors Apart. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/markings-vs-peeing/>

Types of Behavioral Specialists

Nearly anyone can label themselves a dog trainer or animal behaviorist, regardless of training, credentials, or background. It is important to look for a behavioral specialist with proper education, certified by a respected organization, and have expertise in the field. If your dog is experiencing problem behaviors, first consult your vet to rule out potential medical concerns are related to the behavior. If behavioral concerns remain after medical issues are ruled out, the vet may refer your dog to a behavioral specialist. The techniques a trainer uses can strongly affect how you interact with your dog for years to come, so it is important to carefully explore your options.

Types of Specialists

Trainers

Dog trainers teach dogs *not* to do certain behaviors. The level of education and experience among this group varies widely. Most learn through apprenticeships with established trainers, volunteering at animal shelters, attending seminars on training and behavior, and training their own animals. Some trainers are certified through the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers or the International Association of Canine Professionals.

Animal Behaviorists

1. Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB) and Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (ACAAB)

Behaviorists are scientists, educators, or other animal specialists with advanced academic backgrounds in behavior. They are trained to recognize how and why the behavior is abnormal and instruct owners how to work with their pets. Behaviorists have expertise in (a) behavior modification, (b) in recognizing how and why the behavior is abnormal, and (c) teaching owners how to understand and work with your pet.

Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists (hold doctoral degrees) and Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists (hold master's degrees) received graduate or post-graduate training in animal behavior, biology, zoology at accredited universities. *To locate a CAAB or ACAAB, go to: animalbehaviorsociety.org/web/committees-applied-behavior-directory.php.*

2. Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC) and Certified Animal Behavior Consultant (CABC)

These behavioral specialists are experts in behavior modification and counsel owners how to interact with their pets. They are certified through the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) and specialize in resolving problem behaviors like aggression, biting, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders, fears and phobias, and incomplete house training. CDBCs must adopt the "Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA)" principles while working with companion animals. *To locate an IAABC credentialed specialist go to: <https://iaabc.org/certs/members>.*

Veterinary Behaviorists

Veterinary behaviorists are board certified in the specialty of veterinary behavior. These veterinarians have received specialized training in animal behavior. The candidate completes an internship, a residency in behavior, conducts research, and must pass Board examinations to become a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB). A veterinary behaviorist is also able to prescribe medication. The field of veterinary behavioral medicine is small—there are approximately 95 DACVBs throughout the world! Most of these specialists offer phone or video consultations with clients. *To locate a veterinary behaviorist, go to: dacvb.org/search/.*

Excerpted from: S. Gibeault. (2023, Mar 1). Who You Gonna Call? What to Know About Hiring an Animal Behaviorist. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/what-is-an-animal-behaviorist/>; P. Miller, C.-K. (2024, Feb 29). What Is a Veterinary Behaviorist?. *Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/behavior/what-is-a-veterinary-behaviorist/>

"It does not matter what the breed of dog is—it must be able to fit into modern society! As breeders, we must make sure that our pups are handled and socialized from the moment of birth. If we breed for good temperament, regardless of the breed, then our pups can go anywhere with anyone and live a long, happy life" (Hedgepath, Showsight Magazine, Mar 9, 2021).

A Reactive Journey

By Lisa Mullikin

Nine years ago Sky came in to our lives. Excited at the prospect of a new puppy, we were eager to welcome a fourth PWD into our home. Sky seemed no different than any of our other girls. She was a playful, happy, and energetic puppy. At the time we lived in a development, our neighbors were not terribly close and fencing surrounded our yard.

My previous three PWDs were totally chill, they rarely barked, played well, and took life in stride. Having only experienced this personality type I had no awareness about triggers and how they might impact Sky and change her life forever.

Our neighbors at the time had two dogs, an older Corgi and a younger Westie. As with all new puppies during the housebreaking period, Sky was outside frequently. Each time I took Sky out my neighbors would release their dogs to their yard. The Westie would charge to the fence, run back and forth and bark loudly and incessantly. I remember thinking what a bummer it was that she never got any peace while trying to go potty. This scene repeated itself every time I took Sky outside. As much as we tried to explain to our neighbors that this presented a problem, they seemed clueless as to how this might affect our dogs. As you could see through the fence, we even attached landscape cloth in an attempt to diminish the Westie's behavior.

Within six months we relocated to Massachusetts to a home that was in town, looking forward to the community experience. We lived walking distance to town, near the local school and a nearby beach. What we thought would be a dream became a nightmare. As luck would have it, our neighbors had a Westie. One day during one of our many walks we came upon my neighbor's dog. Sky had a strong reactive response, got very aroused and went after the dog. Although I was startled by her reaction I didn't think much of it.

Within a couple of weeks Sky began to react to all dogs, no matter the breed or the distance from her. We had a privacy fence surrounding our yard. Reactivity increased to include people walking by. Poor Sky would race from window to window, fence to fence, barking at the sound

of anyone or anything. Desperate for a change I took Sky to Boston for a behavioral evaluation.

The behavioral evaluation concluded that Sky's behavior was fear-based. The Westie had imprinted on her and the damage had been done. Working with both a behaviorist and a trainer we could give her some relief, though it would not necessarily solve her problem. Poor Sky. Avoiding other dogs was not the answer. We needed to help Sky with coping strategies that would help her if she came upon another dog. We tried a Prozac trial, but didn't like the effect it had on her; she lost her vitality and it seemed to numb her. We opted for a behavioral program which included counter-conditioning.

Stressful events (triggers) arouse dogs. Adrenaline is released and it builds on itself. It can take days for the dog to recover. During this time the dog can't "think" but can only react. The idea is to keep your dog under their arousal threshold. A dog gives you subtle signs that they are going down the arousal road; staring, ears pricked, tension in their body. You need to familiarize yourself with the signs that your dog gives you. The goal was to keep Sky under her arousal threshold while using counter-conditioning to gain some progress being around other dogs.

This is an example of a session with Sky:

- The distance between Sky and another dog is so far that she doesn't show sounds of arousal.
- Point to the dog in the distance.
- Name the trigger. A happy upbeat "see the doggie."
- When Sky turns back to me reward and treat.

She quickly learned that when she saw a dog, and then looked at me she would get rewarded. You pair seeing a dog with something positive.

Any arousal ends the session, you must keep your dog under arousal threshold.

This is a very slow process, requiring time and devotion from the owner and lots of patience. We initially spent many hours in the car outside pet supply stores and doggie daycares playing "see the doggie." That advanced to working with a trainer with dogs at a distance, then closer, then various breeds including small white dogs. At the beginning of her counter-conditioning program Sky would react to any dog that was a baseball field away. After months of training Sky could be near a small white

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dog and walk parallel to another dog a short distance at her side.

After months of counter-conditioning Sky was able to take part in obedience classes (although she always had to wait for the other dogs to enter before her, that doggie chute at the beginning of class was always tough). She did some water work, but I think it just wasn't a controlled enough environment for her so we passed on that. She did Nosework classes and loved it, it was perfect! You learn what your dog can tolerate and what they can't.

So is Sky fixed? No. Is she better? Definitely. Does she have times when she is around dogs that live outside our

home? For sure. She occasionally goes for hikes, but I make sure I step off the trail if I see another dog coming. "See the doggie" still helps. I am mindful of what Sky can tolerate. I try not to put her in situations where she will get triggered and aroused. We now live on 15 acres with no dogs in sight. It's good for Sky, her world is small but it is good life . . . except for those damn little white dogs.

If you have experienced reactive behaviors with your PWD and have question on how to manage the behaviors and where to seek help, feel free to reach out to me any time!



Separation Anxiety in Dogs

By Katelyn Romeo

Separation anxiety in dogs is one of the most common problems seen by behavioral specialists, accounting for 20–40% of their yearly caseload. It is most frequently characterized by excessive vocalization, destructive behaviors, or urination and defecation when the owner is not at home. However, dogs with separation anxiety may exhibit other behaviors when alone, such as drooling, vomiting, not eating or even self-mutilation.

Dogs with separation anxiety tend to have certain traits in common. They are *highly* attached to their owner, following them everywhere around the house and frequently seeking physical contact and attention. When their person is out of sight, even if she is only in another room, the dog may appear distressed. Upon the owner's return, the dog may greet her effusively for up to several minutes. When left alone for an extended time, the dog is unable to cope and panics.

If you recognize some of the behaviors described above in your dog, a very helpful way to understand how your dog deals with being alone is to video tape him. Many dogs start worrying as soon as their person walks out the door, and they reach their peak of anxiety by the first 30 minutes. This period is when they will do most of their destructive behavior. After 30 minutes have passed, some dogs will adapt to solitude and calm down until their person returns. However, some dogs will alternate between anxious and calm episodes, and some dogs may just stay nervous the entire time they are alone.

Fortunately, most dogs with separation anxiety are responsive to behavior modification. As with any good training, it is important to start at a level your dog can easily accomplish, then progress in easy-to-achieve steps. Ideally, you would never ask the dog to do something it was afraid of until it was comfortable with all the previous baby steps leading up to it. Below, some points for treating separation anxiety are listed and briefly discussed.

Encourage your dog to be more independent.

Find something engaging that your dog enjoys doing by himself, such as chewing on a special rawhide bone,

a Kong® filled with biscuits or frozen peanut butter, or playing with a Buster Cube®. Give him these things to work on when both you and he are relaxed so that he starts to associate them with quiet and calm, and take them away again once "quiet time" is over. Make sure he works on them by himself and not when he is in your lap! Once he has the idea, you can start including these special treats for him to work on when you are in another part of the house or when you leave him for brief periods.

Give yourself some alone-time in the house.

Instead of allowing him to follow you from room to room, start encouraging him to stay by himself for short periods. For dogs that get stressed even when you are behind a closed door, try setting up baby-gates between rooms so that he can still see you but is separate from you. In the beginning, be sure to "go away" for very short periods, and return before he goes into panic mode. As he improves, start slowly increasing the amount of time you are "alone" in the house.

Make leaving and returning an unexciting activity.

Instead of trying to comfort him when you leave, make it a non-issue. The more reinforcement you provide, whether positive or negative, the more it will feed his behavior. Likewise, when you return, ignore him until he is relaxed and quiet. If you are calm and peaceful, he'll eventually start acting calmer as well.

Do not use punishment!

If you come home to find that your dog has urinated or defecated inappropriately, chewed up the couch or dug a nice hole in the carpet, do whatever you must to avoid yelling at, glaring at or otherwise punishing your dog. This destruction was not an evil plot to spite you, but an attempt to alleviate anxiety that had no other outlet. If he looks guilty, it is most likely because you have yelled at him for something under similar circumstances before. Punishing him for being nervous is only going to stress him more and make it harder to correct the behavior!

Disassociate cues that indicate you are leaving.

If your dog gets nervous when you pick up your keys or put on your coat, these cues are acting as a trigger for his anxiety. To disassociate them, pick up your keys and carry them with you as you continue to work around the house.

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Put your coat on, then go sit and read on the couch. Once he has relaxed again, you can put your coat away or put your keys back. Doing this several times a day will eventually remove that trigger for his anxiety. Remember, since most dogs with separation anxiety are most anxious for the first 30 minutes you are away, the longer he is calm into that 30 minute period, the more likely he is to remain calm.

Teach your dog that you will return.

Initially, you should only leave for as long as your dog is able to remain relaxed, and you should return before he starts to panic. As he develops confidence that you will return, slowly extend the amount of time you are gone for. You would ideally never leave for longer than your dog can tolerate; however, for most people this is unrealistic. Instead, try leaving him in a different part of the house (ideally the place where you practice "quiet time" with him) when you are able to work on training him, so that he will start to think of it as a safe place. When you must leave for long periods during the day, put him where he has always been kept. Other alternatives include doggy day care or hiring a pet sitter to stay with him until you have trained up to enough time for you to be gone for a full day.

Consider talking with your vet about anti-anxiety medications.

If the separation anxiety is severe enough to have a really negative effect on either of your lives, using medical treatment as an adjunctive therapy might help make the behavior modification easier to learn for the dog. Just as with people, it is very hard to learn anything new when you are really stressed! There are now safe and effective medications approved for treating separation anxiety in dogs. While these medications do not replace behavior modification training, they can be very helpful in improving separation anxiety more quickly. Be sure to see your veterinarian to learn more about these medications.

For more information, or to find a behavior specialist in your area, contact: the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (<https://www.dacvb.org/>)

This article was first published in *The Courier*, May/June 2005 [33(3), 105] when Katelyn Romeo Carney was a veterinary student at Cornell University. This article has been reprinted with written permission from Dr. Katelyn R. Carney, DVM, DACVIM (LAIM), Lecturer/New York State Veterinary Conference Program Chair, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Velcro Dogs

Working dog breeds enjoy side-by-side companionship with their humans; it is a trait bred into their genetic history (Meyers, 2023). It is not uncommon for Portuguese Water Dogs to attach closely to their owners. Companions who follow us everywhere, attached at our side, are commonly referred to as "Velcro" dogs. Clinginess can be a breed trait, influenced by age or developmental stage, related to fear or household change, or a sign of separation anxiety (Aloi, 2024).

A dog who destroys household items, has potty accidents, or injures themselves while their owner is away may be experiencing separation anxiety (Aloi, 2024). "The big difference between separation anxiety and being a Velcro dog is *anxiety itself*. While Velcro dogs prefer to be glued to their owners, dogs with true separation anxiety actually panic when they're away from their owners" (Meyers, 2023). Dogs who suddenly become overly attached to their owners may be sick and are seeking comfort. It is important to consult the veterinarian to rule-out any medical concerns which may be contributing to clinginess (Aloi, 2024).

Excerpted from L. Aloi. (2024). The Velcro Dog. *Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/behavior/the-velcro-dog/>; H. Meyers. (2023). Why Does My Dog Follow Me Everywhere? AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/advice/why-does-my-dog-follow-me-everywhere/>



Credit: The New Yorker

Body Language: Reading Their Mood

Dogs communicate through a combination of vocalizations, eye and facial expression, and body postures. Dog language convey emotions and intentions. Sometimes when a dog is feeling stressed, the initial signs can be very subtle. Canine body language can tell us when our dog is happy, confident, stressed, or fearful. Since dogs are not able to tell us how they feel, we need to understand and “read” what their body language is telling us. Understanding canine body language can help us better advocate for our dog in potentially stressful scenarios, such as going to the vet, meeting new people, or greeting other dogs.

Read the Mood!

I am calm and happy: ears and eyes are relaxed, mouth is slightly open, posture is relaxed and not tense, tail is held in a neutral position and slowly wagging from side to side. When I am excited to see you, my entire body bounces, zooms, and wiggles with glee.

I am stressed: whining, shaking, pacing, yawning, shedding, drooling, panting, lip licking, cowering, poor eye contact, and resting most of the bodyweight on hind legs.

I am afraid: licking lips, yawning, cowering shaking, holding tail between back legs, or avoiding eye contact. Other signs may include “whale eye, flattened ears, lowered head, and submissive urination.

I am not feeling well: flattened ears, crying, whimpering, howling, growling, panting, limping, shaking, fatigue, poor appetite, hunched posture, limping, frequent licking and grooming, or disinterest in usual activities. Dogs may hide in their crate or under a chair when sick, an instinct that hides them from predators in the wild.

I want to play with you: body posture involving a raised back end with front legs and chest to the ground. Other signs may include floppy or relaxed ears, open mouth, protruding or visible tongue, almond-shaped eyes, and relaxed body posture.

I am feeling angry and aggressive: stiff tail, erect ears, stiff posture, growling, snapping, barking, showing teeth, nipping, or lunging without making contact can all be signs of aggression.

Zoomies do not always indicate a happy dog! A dog can “blow off” excessive stress by doing zoomies. It may appear that your dog is having a great time running erratically through the house, but what he may be trying to communicate is feeling overwhelmed and stressed.

Remember: All dogs can bite! Worried and stressed body language is a dog’s way of saying, “No thank you!!”

Always supervise children around dogs, and be mindful of interactions and body language. Aggressive behavior in dogs can be a serious threat to humans or other animals. Ignoring warning signals can lead to your dog lunging, snapping or biting. Contact your breeder and vet if experiencing behavioral issues in your dog. After the vet rules out any medical concerns, you may be referred to behavioral specialist.

References: *Aggression in dogs: VCA Animal Hospital: VCA Animal Hospitals.* VCA. <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/fear-vs-aggression>; *Dog bite prevention.* American Veterinary Medical Association. <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/dog-bite-prevention#:~:text=If%20the%20dog%20won't,you%20understand%20the%20pet's%20mood.>; Stephanie Gibeault, Ms. (2023, June 22). *Understanding dog body language: Decipher dogs' signs & signals.* American Kennel Club. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/advice/how-to-read-dog-body-language/>



**“WHAT obedience school did you say
you sent him to?!”**

CartoonStock.com



Dog Parks: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

photo: Shutterstock

by Trish King, CPDT, CDBC with Terry Long, CPDT

They're called dog parks or dog runs. Sometimes they're official, sometimes they're formed by a group of people who want their dogs to play together. Some dog parks are large—acres or miles of paths—but most are less than an acre in size, and some are tiny. Some are flat gravel or dirt, while others have picnic tables, trees, and other objects. What all dog parks have in common is the reason for their existence. Dogs (and their owners) need a place where they can run free, sans leashes, and do “doggie” things.

Many of their owners have no yards and the dogs would otherwise spend their entire outdoor lives on leash. The fact that we even need dog parks is a reflection on American society, which is fragmented, with many people living solitary lives. Dogs and other pets are sometimes the only family an owner has.

At the same time, municipal laws have been inexorably pushing dogs further and further away from acceptance in our culture. Thus, they're seen as nuisances by half the population, and as family by the other. In a perfect world, dog parks would not have to exist. Well-behaved dogs would have the privilege of being off leash (and well mannered!) in many different areas. However, the world is not perfect, and so we must make the best of what we have.

Advantages of Dog Parks

The advantages are simple and powerful. Dog parks provide a safe space in which people can exercise their dogs, and watch them play (something I love to do!). Our culture is becoming less and less tolerant of our canine companions, and often they are not welcome elsewhere. At their best, dog parks can facilitate socialization with a variety of breeds and

breed types. They can be a wonderful resource for adolescent dogs that have too much energy and no place to put it. Many also function as a social center—a place where people gather to chat, to exchange news, and to commiserate with one another's problems.

For many, it replaces family conversation and for some, it is their only contact with fellow human beings. This is probably why, when I recommend that a client not visit dog parks, some cannot bring themselves to do it. They miss the camaraderie too much.

Disadvantages of Dog Parks

The disadvantages are not so simple, but can be even more powerful, depending on the dog and its owner. Some of these are exacerbated by the layout of parks (see sidebar, "Keys to Successful Dog Park Design"). The real problems, both short and long-term, are behavioral. And often, owners unwittingly contribute to these problems because they don't recognize—or don't interpret correctly—what their dogs are actually doing and learning.

Some of the problems cause difficulties only when dogs are meeting and interacting with other dogs. Others can cause future behavior to deteriorate. And still others directly impact dog/owner relationships.

Defensive Aggression

Dogs are social animals, but they—like us—tend to like familiar faces. Just as we do not routinely meet and chat with everyone we meet on the street, dogs do not need to meet with all other dogs. It often takes some time for one dog to feel comfortable with another and they need that time to decide how they should react.

As we know, time is not always available in a dog park situation. Thus, even friendly dogs that feel uncomfortable can give people the impression that they are "aggressive," especially when they meet a dog for the first time.

If an overly exuberant Labrador Retriever, for instance, approaches a herding mix, the latter dog may snarl or air bite to make the Labrador retreat. After that, as far as the herding dog is concerned, they can meet nicely. However, people are likely to label the herding dog "aggressive," and punish her (or at least ostracize the owner!). This is a bad learning experience all around.

The Labrador hasn't learned to inhibit his greeting style—which he would have if he hadn't been interrupted by overreacting humans—and the herding

dog has learned that a) normal warnings don't work; and b) her owner won't back her up.

Learned Disobedience

When owners are not careful, dog park play quickly teaches a dog that the owner has no control over him. I'm sure we've all seen an owner following her dog, calling vainly as the animal stays just out of range, looks at her from afar, or just totally ignores her. And this is after the dog has learned to bark hysterically in the car all the way to the dog park, followed by pulling the owner through the parking lot, and then bolting away from her as soon as the leash is off.

Owner Helplessness

Dogs learn that their owners cannot keep them safe from harm when owners stand by and allow other dogs to play overly roughly, and to body slam and roll them over. When discussing this point, it's important to understand that the dog's perception of safety matters even more than the human's. This can be difficult for owners, who may dismiss their dog's obvious fear as unwarranted, since they "know" the other dog(s) mean no harm. A dog that is chased or bullied by another dog is not only learning to avoid other dogs, he is also learning that his owner is completely ineffective. This can have a serious impact on the human-dog relationship.

Problematic Play Styles

Dog play styles can be radically different, and sometimes they are not compatible with each other's. This can cause misunderstandings, or even fights, and it can also exacerbate certain play styles. Dogs that tend to be very physical in play often overwhelm other dogs.

No one is inhibiting their play style. In fact, owners often laugh at concerns with "don't worry, he's only playing." Playing he may be, but he is also learning, and what he's learning is not necessarily what we want to be teaching.

When bully type dogs play with similar dogs, the only unwanted outcome is that they don't learn how to be polite with other dogs. If they bully weaker dogs—which often happens—they learn that they can overpower other dogs, and they tend to repeat the behavior.

The weaker dogs learn that cut-off or appeasement signals do not work, and they learn to be afraid of other dogs... sometimes all other dogs, sometimes just dogs that look like the bullies.



Dog play styles can be radically different, and sometimes they are not compatible with each other.

This can cause misunderstandings, or even fights, and it can also exacerbate certain play styles.

Resource Guarding

Resource guarding can become very problematic in a park, where resources are often few and far between. Some dogs will guard their own toys, some will try to take items from other dogs. Some keep the items, others just want to taunt the dog who “owns” the toy. Squabbles over resources, including humans sitting at a picnic table or on a bench, can easily erupt into nasty fights.

Frustration Aggression

Interestingly enough, leash frustration—a canine temper tantrum—is sometimes an offshoot of dog park experiences. There are a couple of reasons for this. Leash frustration often begins when a dog is so excited at the prospect of playing that he pulls his owner all the way to the park, lunging and barking—sometimes for blocks. His agitated owner pulls back and yells at the dog, thus increasing the arousal. By the time the dog gets to the park, he’s all fired up for something very physical—like a fight.

Leash frustration also occurs because dogs that frequent parks mistakenly believe that they can meet any other dog they see. Once again, when thwarted, they tend to pull on the leash, and the owner yanks back. As the frustration builds, the dog appears to be aggressive, thus causing other owners to pull their dogs back in fear. Eventually, leash frustration can lead to real aggression. Often, owners of these dogs will be very confused because their dogs are so good off leash, and holy terrors on leash.

Facilitated Aggression

Many dogs are very attached to their owners and will hang around near them. Often these dogs are wor-

ried about, or afraid of, other dogs, and will growl or display their teeth when they’re approached.

The owners unwittingly “facilitate” this behavior by remaining next to their dog, who then counts on them to help if a fight ensues. If this behavior is repeated often enough—if they feel threatened by a variety of dogs—they may default to that behavior. Another form of facilitated aggression occurs when two or more dogs in a family visit the dog park. The two may well gang up on a third dog, possibly frightening him or her—or worse.

Age

While many dogs enjoy playing with others throughout their life, a substantial number do not, once they have reached social maturity. These dogs will slowly lose interest in other dogs and may signal them to go away. Some dogs become very reluctant to go into dog parks, which—as we have noted—can be out of control. Others will snarl or snap to indicate their displeasure.

Arousal

Dogs playing in parks sometimes are unable to calm down, and some can get into a state of sustained arousal that gets them into trouble. A dog that has been involved in an incident in which the excitement level is very high, might inappropriately and uncharacteristically start other incidents, often with unwanted outcomes.

Trauma

Finally, a traumatic experience can make an impact on a young dog that cannot be fully understood nor erased. A puppy or adolescent who is attacked may

well show aggressive behaviors that begin after that incident. Sometimes a young dog can be traumatized by what the owners think are minor events. I liken that kind of trauma to that suffered by a child who is traumatized, perhaps by getting stuck in an elevator. After the first experience, all elevators are bad—even though she knows intellectually that all elevators are not bad. Pity the poor puppy who doesn't have the reasoning to know that what occurred once does not always happen again.

The Power of Knowledge

Owners, of course, play an important role in dog parks, and often don't accept the responsibility they should. Many don't pay attention to their dog, and many have no idea what constitutes proper behavior, or what a dog may be signaling to another dog. Some defend their dogs when the animal exhibits poor or inappropriate behavior. Some overreact to a normal interaction, in which one dog discourages the attention of another.

Occasionally, some owners use parks as babysitters, even leaving their dogs unattended while they shop. And most owners have far less control over their dogs than they believe!

Educating owners is a tough job. Many believe firmly that they are socializing their dogs in the proper

way, and don't like suggestions that they limit dog park time or monitor their dog and others. Teaching them what good play looks like is a first step, and empowering them to actually interrupt poor interactions is a necessary second step. Often, people don't want to offend other dog owners, so they allow poor behavior to continue.

Trainers can help them learn by describing what appropriate interactions look like, possibly by narrating what the dogs are doing as two dogs play. I've found that owners really enjoy learning what good play manners are like—they appreciate the same kinds of descriptions that they hear from sports announcers during games.

Finally, some dogs should not go to dog parks. They can be too shy, too bold, too defensive, or have tendencies to guard toys and balls. Often, when consulting with clients, I ask them to consider giving parks a pass and concentrating on walks or runs, either alone or maybe with some special friends. I'm occasionally surprised by the relief these people feel when they find out dog park play is not mandatory! They thought they had to do it.

Behavioral Tips For Dog Park Attendees

DO

- Check out the entrance before entering to make sure dogs aren't congregating there.
- Pay close attention to their dog's play style, interrupting play if necessary to calm their dog down.
- Move around the park so that their dog needs to keep an eye on them.
- Remove their dog if the dog appears afraid.
- Remove their dog if it is bullying others.
- Respect their dog's wish to leave.
- Leave special toys at home to avoid resource guarding problems.

DON'T

- Allow your dog to enter the park if there is a "gang" right next to the entrance.
- Believe that dogs can "work it out" if you just let them do so.
- Congregate at a picnic table or other area and chat with dog owners without watching their own dog.
- Let their frightened dog remain in the park and hope things get better.
- Listen to other attendees in the park, who may not understand their dog's needs.
- Assume a dog is aggressive when it is only trying to communicate its discomfort.

Keys to Successful Dog Park Design

- **Entrance and/or exit:** Double gates for safety; visually shielded from dogs that are already in the park to avoid. Two or three entrances are preferable. Dogs tend to gather at entrances and exits, arousal goes up, and incidents can easily occur.
- **Size:** As large as possible. At least an acre, preferably not a square piece of land, but one that is oddly shaped. Ponds or lakes are preferable (at least from the play point of view, if not from the owners'!)
- **Contour/topography:** Hillocks or trees to block dogs from racing towards each other and body slamming or muzzle bumping each other.
- **Structures:** Tough obstacle equipment, hiding places for frightened dogs, other view-blocking structures if hills and trees aren't available.



A common mistake seen frequently at dog parks are owners who fail to supervise their dog's play.

In this photo, the owners are attentive to their dog at play.

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★ BRAGS ★

LAYLA

Sea Angels You've Got Me On My Knees at Sweetbay "Layla" achieved a 5-point major at the Celtic Classic in Harrisburg.

—Lisa Mullikin



LACY

So proud of my girl Lacy (Oakhill and Wiccabay's Sand Sailorette) being selected Best of Breed for a 5-point major on March 14, 2024 in York, PA.

Thanks to Judge Fankhauser for recognizing this pretty girl, Lakeside Handling and Celeste Morelli for expert grooming and handling. Lacy is owned and loved by Louann Tracy



MILO

Milo, our very first Portuguese Water Dog (PWD), he has gracefully waltzed into our lives, leaving paw prints of joy on every corner of our hearts. Milo's presence, every day is a delightful adventure!

Milo isn't just a pet; he's family. Our home wouldn't be complete without his wagging tail, his wet-nosed greetings, and the warmth he brings to our hearts. So here's to Milo—the one who turns ordinary days into extraordinary memories, the one who reminds us that love comes in furry packages. Cheers to our spirited water-loving companion!

—Sandy E. Matos



★ BRAGS ★

SOPHIE, NIKO, AND GRACE

GCH CH Freestyle's Sunshine Daydream OA, AXJ, CGC TKN, (*Sophie*), bred by Jane Freeman earned her AKC Open Agility Title (OA), Excellent Agility Jumper Title (AXJ), Canine Good Citizen Title (CGC) and Trick Dog Novice Title (TKN).

Sophie is currently working toward her Agility Excellent Title, (AX) and Master Excellent Jumper Title, (MXJ). She is also thinking about dipping her 'paws' in the water this summer since Junior is now an official PWDCA Water Title and she may return to the conformation ring to compete in the Veteran's class.

CH Paragon-Hytyd's Wait 'Til The Midnight Hour WWD, AX, AXJ, CGC, TKN (*Niko*), bred by Carol and Dave Wichterman earned his AKC Excellent Agility Title, (AX), Excellent Agility Jumper, (AXJ), Canine Good Citizen Title (CGC) and Trick Dog Novice Title (TKN). Niko is currently working toward his Time 2 Beat (T2B) Title, Master Agility Excellent Title (MX), and Master Excellent Jumper Title (MXJ), while earning Double Q's. He is looking forward to getting back in the water in hopes of achieving a PWDCA Courier Title after being sidelined last summer due to a shoulder injury.

GCH CH Biddlebrook's Amazing Grace AWD NA NAJ CGC, TKN, (*Grace*) bred by Janice Cohen earned her Apprentice Water Dog Title, (AWD), Novice Agility Title, (NA), Novice Agility Jumper Title (NAJ), Canine Good Citizen Title (CGC) and Trick Dog Novice Title (TKN).

Grace is working on her third 'Q' for both her Open Agility Title (OA), and Open Agility Jumper Title (OAJ), and then move up to the Excellent Classes. She is extremely eager for the 2024 Water Season to begin so she can pursue her Working Water Dog Title.



Sophie, Niko and Grace are owned and dearly loved by Sandra and Robert Caruso. We are so very proud and feel so blessed to own all three of these talented, amazing and beautiful Portuguese Water Dogs. We want to thank Sophie's, Niko's and Grace's breeders for entrusting one of their puppies to us to love and be a very special part of our lives.

Dogs who participate in enrichment experience less stress, frustration, and anxiety and have greater confidence. Daily enrichment improves interactions between people and other animals and promotes a stronger bond with the owner.

—Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine

★ BRAGS ★

WOODFORD

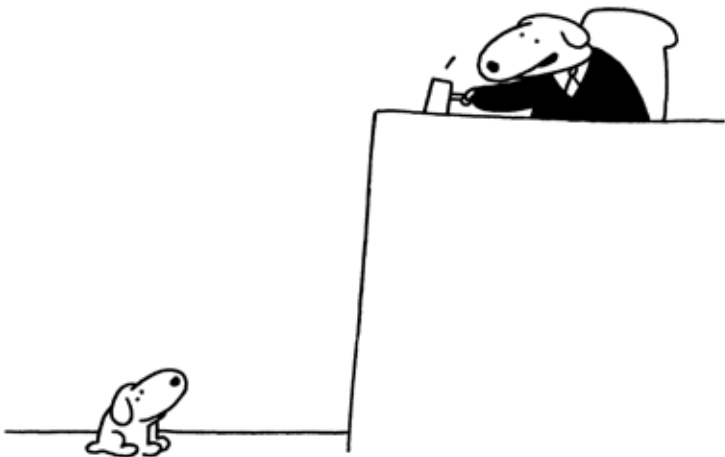
Congratulations to Classea's Woodford Wonderdog of Western Waters for qualifying for his FETCH Novice title. Woodford's owner, Louann Tracy loved his enthusiasm showing his skill in throwing the bumper up in the air and catching it before returning to her for the Q. What a character!!!

—Louann Tracy



ELLEY

New Champion! CH PARAGON-HYTIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. Owned and loved by Dave Wichterman and Carol Bronowicz-Wichterman. Bred by Rick and Kelly Jones and Dave Wichterman (www.Paragonpwd.Com). Expertly presented by Michael and Michelle Scott.



Charles Barsotti

"Not guilty, because puppies do these things."

CartoonStock.com



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IN MEMORIAM

Rico
2019 - 2024

In April of 2019, Flo and I brought Rico into our family. He was such a blessing from day one. He loved doing water work, agility and just being with us. Sadly, while on an evening walk in our neighborhood, he was viciously attacked by an aggressive pit bull on Thursday evening. We took him to an emergency animal hospital for treatment and picked him up Friday afternoon. Saturday morning it became apparent that he was not responding as expected, so he was re-admitted to the hospital. At first we were hopeful that he would recover, but on Tuesday we were told that he took a step backwards and so we made the decision to end his suffering. It's hard to put into words the sadness our family had and still has. He was the best dog we ever had, and were privileged to have him in our lives, even if only for five short years. Rest well Rico. We love you still.

—Harry and Flo Saltzer



"What a bunch of control freaks!"

CartoonStock.com



Let's Heel!

Heeling is walking your dog with a controlled (no pulling) stride on your left side. It is a training tool which promotes safer walking and helps strengthen the bond between a dog and owner. A dog who heels has better focus on walks and is less likely to chase other animals, run into traffic, or ingest something harmful.

Gather a leash, a dog collar or harness, and a handful of high-value treats. Let's go!!

- Attach a lead to your dog's collar and walk to a distraction-free area, such as the backyard, driveway, or indoor hallway.
- Have your dog sit on your left side. Praise with "GOOD SIT" and then promptly give a treat.
- Hold a treat at your left side, close to your body, and say your dog's name along with heel (ex. "Jessie HEEL")
- Slowly step forward with your left foot first. The treat will help guide your dog to follow close to your side. Every few steps, PRAISE your dog ("GOOD HEEL!"). Continue to keep the treat in your left hand close to your body.
- If you turn, always turn to the right.
- End with your dog sitting on your left side, excitedly praise your dog ("GOOD HEEL, GOOD GIRL!!"), and give a treat.

- Briefly practice each day to reinforce sitting and heeling. If your dog loses focus while heeling, stop, and say "SIT." When your dog sits and is focused, say "HEEL" and restart the process.
- After a week or two of successful practice with heeling, increase the length of your walks and add some distractions.
- As your dog becomes more experienced with heeling, use treats more sparingly and rely on verbal praise. You can eventually train your dog to heel off lead in a safe, confined area.



"It's always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never
'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself.'"

SAVE THE DATES

Keystone Annual Picnic
and Membership Meeting
will be held at
Core Creek Park

Sunday, October 20, 2024
12:00 pm

Pavilion #11
Langhorne, PA

Further details to follow!

KPWDC and PWDCA
will hold a
Supported Entry

November 16, 2024

at the
Philadelphia Kennel Club
National Dog Show
Oaks Exhibition Center
Oaks, PA

Further details to follow!

What to Expect When Working with a Trainer or Attending a Group Class

Once you've done your homework and found a trainer that you like, what happens next?

There are some preparations that will be common to both private training sessions and group classes such as:

- You will probably be asked to complete and sign an enrollment and waiver form that includes specifying what your goals are (i.e. a well-mannered dog, competitive obedience, therapy work and so forth.)
- You may also be required to provide proof of vaccinations for your pet.
- Payment arrangements and fees should be reviewed in detail.

Helpful Hints for Training Sessions:

- Have your pet wear the type of collar and leash specified by your trainer.
- Use high-quality training treats. Typically dogs prefer soft & chewy treats over crunchy treats.
- Wear comfortable, flat, close toed shoes. Don't wear shoes like sandals, mules, or high heels.
- Wear comfortable clothes that you can easily move in but that don't get in your way.
- Make sure your pet has eliminated before class or your private session so they won't feel the need to go during the training time.
- You may want to forgo feeding or only feed a very light meal before training.

Group Classes

In a group setting, you will be working in the same area and possibly side-by-side with other pet owners. Class sizes can range from only a few people to ten or more. Part of the value of working in a group is that there are lots of sights and sounds to act as distractions. Your pet will learn how to focus on your directions beyond the class distractions. Don't be embarrassed if you have difficulty at first with getting your pet's attention. Practice will help.

Your instructor may review the entire course content on the first day and will introduce the materials to

be covered at each session. You will be expected to practice what you have learned during the period before the next class as "homework." Many instructors provide hand-outs to help you review the information covered in class.

Private Training

If you are working with a private trainer, your session may either be at the trainer's location or at your home. Private sessions can involve providing a detailed history of the pet's behavior, particularly if you have consulted with the trainer for a specific problem.

Your trainer should provide an "action plan" of what you will cover at each session. Written plans will help keep you on track, although the beauty of private training is that you can modify the pace of the instruction to suit your needs. Since your dog is being trained individually, the goals can be also customized for your pet.

Practice Makes Perfect

Whether you decide to train privately or in a class, make sure that you practice on your own in short daily sessions to keep your dog's interest. Practicing what you have learned in your training sessions is extremely important and will help you and your pet make progress.

Most training sessions begin with a quick review of what was learned the prior week before moving into new material that builds upon prior learning. Make sure that you understand each exercise and task that is performed. Failing to ask questions might mean having to retrain your dog later. Don't be afraid to ask questions about why an exercise is effective or what the logic is behind the training method. You probably aren't the only one with the question.

Finally, you should expect that both group and private lessons will help you achieve a closer bond with your pet and will build a more confident relationship through training.

—Article reprinted with permission from the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT). <https://apdt.com/resource-center/expect-working-trainer-attending-group-class/>

Crate Training

When tired and overstimulated, dogs naturally prefer to retreat to a quiet and protective “den.” A crate is an effective training tool and provides a safe space for your puppy to relax. Introducing your puppy to a crate should not be viewed as cruel. Think of it as providing his own cozy room!

Selecting a Crate

- Pick a crate large enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and lie down.
- Make the crate as comfortable as possible. Line with a durable mat and blanket. Add some quiet chew toys.
- Cover the crate with a lightweight blanket or sheet to mimic a den environment, but be sure the space is well ventilated and not too warm.
- Use a removable divider so the den can “grow” with your puppy.
- A metal crate is a better choice than mesh because it is well ventilated, easier to clean, and less likely to be destroyed by chewing.
- Consider keeping one crate in the common area of your home and one in your bedroom.

Introducing the Crate

- Begin at naptime while you are home; start with 10 minute increments and gradually stretch to longer periods.
- Training should always be a positive experience. Do not force your puppy into the crate.
- Praise and reward your puppy each time they go into the crate. Offer food stuffed toys to keep them occupied.
- The first couple days away from the dam and litter will be stressful. Provide a blanket to the breeder to keep with the litter before bringing your pup home. The scent of the litter will help ease the transition in a new home.
- Keep a crate in your bedroom so your puppy can be near you each night. Your puppy may cry for the first several nights—this is expected as your puppy adjusts to a new home without the litter.
- Resist the urge to remove your puppy from the crate with every cry. The behavior will be reinforced and your puppy will learn how to receive your full attention.

Training Steps

- (1) After your puppy is comfortable going inside the crate for treats, begin feeding all meals inside the crate. Start closing door while your puppy is eating, but open it before they are done.
- (2) Leave the door closed for longer increments of time, building slowly. Never open door while your puppy is whining or scratching, only open it when he is quiet. If there is continuous whining, the puppy has been closed in too long; go back to an amount of time tolerated, and increase the time more slowly.
- (3) Start crating at other times besides meals. To entice your puppy to go into the crate, offer treats, food-filled toys, etc.
- (4) Stay in the room with your crated puppy and begin leaving the room for short increments of time, building very slowly.
- (5) Once your puppy adjusts to be in the crate, begin leaving the house for short periods of time and slowly increase the length of time.

The length of time it takes for a puppy feel comfortable and accept the crate differs for each dog. Patience is the key for success! (Owens et al.)



Creating a Schedule

By maintaining a consistent routine, your puppy will be happier and adjust to their new home and family. Below is sample puppy routine—feel free to adapt to suit your household needs.

Wake up: Let your puppy out of the crate to go outside to potty.

Breakfast: Feed your puppy. Leave the food down for no longer than 15 minutes; pick up the bowl and do not give more food until lunch (except for small training treats). Always provide plenty of fresh water.

After breakfast: Back outside to potty and enjoy some playing and training. Go for a brief walk and allow for another potty opportunity.

Mid-morning: Naptime in the crate. Even if you're home during the day, your puppy should spend time in a crate or pen; this will help your puppy learn to be alone when necessary. It is impossible to know what a puppy will get into when you turn away for a moment the crate provides a safe spot when you cannot directly supervise. If your puppy will be home alone for more hours than he can control his bladder or bowels, you will need to hire a pet sitter to take your puppy outside and provide water.

Lunch: Back outside to potty. Enjoy playing and training. Don't forget another potty break before the afternoon nap!

Mid-afternoon: Naptime in the crate. When your puppy wakes up, it is time to go out to potty and play. If you are home, your puppy can hang out with the family before dinner.

Dinner: If you arrange the puppy's mealtimes around yours, it will become natural to feed him either while you're preparing dinner or while the household is eating. After eating, it is time for another potty break. Before the family sits down to dinner, consider giving your puppy a *chew toy* to enjoy in his crate.

Evening: Another potty break! Early evening is a good time for playtime with the family before settling down for the night. Take brief walk.

Bedtime: A consistent bedtime routine will make your puppy's house training easier for everyone. Go outside for another potty break right before bedtime in the crate. Dim the lights, and keep the house quiet.

Night: If your puppy needs to get up in the middle of the night, take him out for a quick and boring potty break. Then back to the crate until morning.

Safety Considerations

Never leave a puppy in his crate all day! If you will not be home for an extended period, hire a pet sitter to let your puppy out of the crate. Maintain a consistent schedule for potty breaks, play time, sips of fresh water, meals, and bonding with your family. Remember: if there is an accident in the crate, it is not because your puppy has misbehaved! General rule of thumb for crating puppies: 1 hour for every month of your dog's age (e.g., a 4-month old puppy should never be crated more than 4 hours). If you are having issues with crate training, consult your veterinarian. Your veterinarian may have some solutions or be able to refer you to a behaviorist or trainer for further support.

References: An Owner's Manual: Crate Training. The American Kennel Club. http://images.akc.org/pdf/ebook/Crate_Training.pdf; P. Leigh. (2015). Crates Are Forever – Not Just for Puppies. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/canine-partners/crates-are-forever-not-just-for-puppies/>; Owens, M., & Wetherell, J. (n.d.-b). Crate training your puppy. https://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk491/files/inline-files/Crate_Training_Your_Puppy.pdf; S. Parrets. (2021). What to Look for When Choosing a Crate. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/what-to-look-for-when-choosing-a-dog-crate/>; S. Sharpe. (2021). How to Crate Train Your Dog in Nine Easy Steps. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/how-to-crate-train-your-dog-in-9-easy-steps/>

American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) Position Statement on Humane Dog Training

Based on current scientific evidence, the AVSAB recommends that only reward-based training methods are used for all dog training, including the treatment of behavior problems.

Full AVSAB statement can be read here: <https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AVSAB-Humane-Dog-Training-Position-Statement-2021.pdf>

How Do I Train My Dog NOT To Jump Up?

April 25th, 2019

Blog Post By Susan Garrett

Initially, the title of this blog post was “how do I stop my dog jumping?” ... then I changed it to “how do I train my dog not to jump?” ... then I added “up” to the end. The changes were made because for agility, we DO want our dogs to jump, and I write about agility frequently.

But this post is about dogs jumping on people, and you guessed it, the question about how to teach a dog to NOT jump on people is one we see frequently. I know that many of you will be reading this thinking, “Susan, I’ve seen your dogs jump on you” ... and you would be absolutely correct! My dogs jump up by invitation, and it also has a strategic purpose. More on that below.

Dogs Don’t Understand DON’T

When I was interviewed by Tim Ferriss for his podcast... and if you like podcasts, I’d certainly recommend you check out the Tim Ferriss Show... we covered the topic of jumping up. I told the story of training a group of dogs in a B&B we were staying at when on vacation in Ireland to not jump on me, and how it did not take very long at all to change that behaviour.

Anyone can teach this, you don’t have to be a professional dog trainer; you just have to know what you want your dog to DO. The thing is that most people try to train from the world of “don’t”. Don’t jump on me, don’t bite, don’t bark. Dogs don’t understand don’t, because don’t is a concept. Dogs understand DO. They understand behaviours.

What you have to do, is look at what you don’t want, and create a behaviour that you DO want, so that your dog can be right and you’re setting him up for reinforcement. This makes for a much better relationship for you and your dog, and for anybody else who comes in contact with your dog. Reinforcement builds behaviour, and what is reinforced will be repeated.

There are many reasons a dog will jump up, but the main reason is that we teach dogs to jump up with reinforcement. The behaviour continues as our dogs grow up because it is very rewarding. When our dog is fully grown, we decide we don’t like the behaviour because it’s annoying, and it suddenly becomes a problem. The good news is that you can help your dog and have fast results if you know what you want your dog to DO.



Remove the Reinforcement for Jumping Up

We let our dog know that jumping up when uninvited is not appropriate by removing our attention. It is also essential to also reinforce the dog’s good decisions not to jump up. If your dog jumps up without being invited to do so, turn around so he can’t see your face. Turning away removes the reinforcement of your attention. As soon as your dog chooses another behaviour, give him a treat that he loves.

When your dog starts to understand what will earn him reinforcement, you can reward him for all four feet on the ground with your attention, you don’t always have to give him cookies for not jumping up. When we take the reinforcement away for jumping up by consistently turning, our dog is not going to want to jump up as there is reinforcement for alternate behaviour. The dog is going to start to offer the behaviour that has the most reinforcement for him, which is “four on the floor”.

The dogs in Ireland you hear about in my chat with Tim Ferriss. Turning away removes the reinforcement of your attention. As soon as your dog chooses another behaviour, reinforce that!

The dogs in Ireland you hear about in my chat with Tim Ferriss. Turning away removes the reinforcement of your attention. As soon as your dog chooses another behaviour, reinforce that!

Embrace Opportunities to Reward Appropriate Behaviour

Look for all opportunities to reward your dog when his feet are on the ground. Reinforcement will show your dog



what it is you DO want. By teaching our dogs what we do want, we are empowering the dog to be in control of the 'good things', be it a cookie, or our attention, by offering the behaviour we want to see.

Start to notice the good choices your dog makes and be quick to reward those good choices! Be conscious of where you are in your training and what it is you want your dog to DO. This may need considered effort on your part initially, but looking for good choices will soon become a natural part of your life with your dog.

Put Jumping Up on Cue

You might not want your dog to jump on you at all, and if that is the case, ensure you heavily reward all your dog's good choices for "all four feet on the ground" and be consistent in removing reinforcement by turning away if he does jump up. Empower your dog to make good choices. If you don't mind your dog jumping up, you can train it as a behaviour.

Putting "jumping up" on cue will help our dogs understand how we would like to be greeted. It is usually easy to teach a dog to jump up on cue. Pat your leg, and when your dog jumps up on you, give him a treat. When you know your dog will reliably jump up on you when you pat your leg, introduce a verbal cue. Give your verbal cue just

before you pat your leg, and reward your dog with a treat when he jumps up. Soon you will be able to fade patting your leg and your dog will jump up on your verbal cue. You now have a physical cue (patting your leg) and are introducing a verbal cue (e.g. "paws up") to let your dog know when jumping up is appropriate.

The Advantages of "Paws Up"

As I said at the start, my dogs jump up on me. They do so when invited with a verbal cue "paws up" and the way I present my body. As well as being something my dogs and I enjoy, jumping up can be used for balance breaks, as a good trigger, and to make sure you have optimal "desire" (the D in my D.A.S.H. acronym) when you and your dog are working together. Remember that work = play and play = work.

If you are training with food rewards, having your dog jump up on you to be rewarded with a treat is far more dynamic and engaging to keep enthusiasm up and to maintain your connection, rather than just mindlessly feeding him a cookie. We always want reinforcement to be a celebration with us.

—Article reprinted with permission from Susan Garrett's Dog Training Blog: <https://susangarrettdogagility.com/2019/04/train-my-dog-not-to-jump-up/>





Be a Good Citizen

The AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) program teaches dogs and owners to learn and master 10 skills which are helpful at home and while interacting with the world. The program emphasizes responsible ownership and basic manners for dogs.

CGC testing is open to ALL dogs and will be offered at the Keystone Annual Picnic in October. During testing, the owner must handle their dog in a variety of situations while the dog shows good manners. Dogs who pass the CGC test are eligible to receive a certificate from AKC. Dogs with an AKC registration number can add CGC as a title.

CGC certification can be a stepping stone for dogs to participate in obedience and performance events. Some dogs may go on to become therapy dogs.

Recall: Teaching Your Dog to Return to You

Recall is a lifesaving training tool which allows you to take control and safely remove your dog from potential danger. Each time we call our dog, we are asking them to stop everything and turn away from other stimuli. Your dog has to trust that returning to you will be worth his effort—a huge fuss and plenty of treats! Consistency, patience, and positive reinforcement are key when teaching recall.

- Before starting, your dog should already know their name and make eye contact when they hear it.
- Find an enclosed, low-distraction practice area.
- Call your dog ("Lula, COME!") as you walk backwards. As your dog comes to you, PRAISE and give a treat. End with your dog sitting and facing you.
- ALWAYS reward your dog for coming to you! Use high value treats (string cheese, jerky, or small pieces of chicken) combined with verbal praise.
- As your dog consistently comes when called, gradually increase the distance between you and your dog and add distractions.
- Stay calm if your dog ignores the cue. Gently guide your dog back to the starting point, and try again.
- Practice recall daily.

NEVER punish your dog for coming to you, even if they are slow or have misbehaved. Never call your dog to do something unpleasant. Do not chase your dog. Keep your

dog on a lead in dangerous areas, near streets, around other dogs, and in heavy pedestrian traffic.

References: Dog's Trust. Teaching Your Dog to Come Back When Called. <https://www.dogstrust.ie/help-advice/advice-for-owners/recall%202021.pdf>; S. Colman. (2021). "Daily Practice Makes for Perfect Dog Recall Training," *Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/training/daily-practice-makes-for-perfect-dog-recalls/>; G. Bassin et. al. Recall Training in Dogs. UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Clinical Behavior Animal Science. https://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk491/files/inline-files/Recall_Training_in_Dogs.pdf.



Keystone and Delmarva Clubs Water Work Training

**July 27 & 28, 2024
Cordorus State Park**

Mark your calendar for a special opportunity for those training for Junior and Apprentice level water work.

It will be a day of training and practice followed by an official trial. Judy Murray will provide training on Saturday and then judge teams for the trial on Sunday. The premium with complete details will be available soon.

Being Consistent in the Use of Commands Can Be the Key to Success

By Judy Murray

To be able to use multiple commands and signals while competing in the water is definitely a plus, but you need to be sure to use this to your benefit, not to your detriment!!

As the tasks become more difficult with each successive level, the more important it becomes for the handler to be consistent with the terminology used to direct and help the dog complete each job. **Your commands should be as consistent as possible.** For example, telling the dog to “get it” one time and “take it” another time is not necessarily being consistent, and in all likelihood, could confuse the dog as to what is expected. Before you start to train each exercise, decide what command you want to use and stick to it.

When first training Danielle for the courier pouch exchange I decided to clip the pouch onto her harness and tell her “go to the boat” where my steward was to exchange the pouches. So far so good!!! Danielle jumped off the boat, swam across to my steward—no problem. Then my steward told her to “take it” to the boat and pointed to me. Well, poor Danielle swam in circles. Puzzled, since the first part the task went so well, we just couldn’t figure out what the problem was. Over lunch, I realized the PROBLEM was that Jan (my steward) was

pointing toward me and telling her “take it.” She was swimming in circles trying to see WHAT she was supposed to take as “take it” was her command for retrieving an object. Since she couldn’t see what Jan wanted her to take (the pouch was attached to her back) she just swam in circles looking for something. As soon as Jan told her “go to the boat” off she swam toward me.

We both learned a very valuable lesson about the importance of consistency. It seemed like a silly mistake, but one I learned not to repeat. I have also learned that most of the time the dogs are listening to us and watching us more closely than we ever thought. And this was the case with Danielle and her courier pouch. She was doing (at least in her mind) exactly what she thought she was being told, looking for something to “take.”

The moral of this story is pick a command for each task and stick to it. Alert your steward to your commands so if they are called upon to give direction to your dog, it will be understood by your dog

Original article was published in the January/February 2002 of The Courier (Volume 30, Issue 1, p13). Permission to reprint article granted by Judy Murray, President, Keystone Portuguese Water Dog Club.



“Give your pup the minimal training needed to become a Canine Good Citizen, and add to the richness of our working day for all those you serve. Breeders can ask potential owners to plan to train their dog for the world of work and volunteering, and can make these matches a priority as they plan for future breeding variations in temperament.” —Judith Coche, PhD, ABPP, The Courier, Jul/Aug 2005.

Building Confidence in a Shy Dog

Although you may not be able to turn your shy dog into a social butterfly, here are some suggestions to help lower stress and boost confidence:

- Know your dog's personality and allow them to build trust in you
- Help your dog gain confidence and respect their body language
- Establish a safe place, such as a crate
- Slowly and carefully introduce new exposures in the environment
- Establish an everyday, predictable routine
- Provide positive reinforcement only (PRAISE, treats)—**never** punish
- Offer both physical and mental enrichment activities
- Practice and reinforce simple training at home for 5 minutes a day
- Try to remove as many scary triggers as possible
- Continue to socialize your dog in quiet, less threatening environments

References: Callahan, K. (2023). "How to build confidence in a fearful dog." *The Whole Dog Journal*. <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/behavior/how-to-build-confidence-in-a-fearful-dog/>; Gibeault, S. (2024, March 26). *Confident puppy: How do you raise a secure young dog*. American Kennel Club. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/how-do-you-raise-a-confident-puppy/>



Why does my dog continually paw at me? Your dog is trying to communicate with you! The message they may be sending is please pet me, I feel anxious, I am hungry, or I need to go out.

How to Use Clicker Training to Communicate With Your Dog

Dogs repeat behaviors that get them what they want. That's why positive reinforcement dog training focuses on rewarding your dog for the behaviors you want to see. If you give your dog a treat for giving you a paw, for example, your dog will be more likely to give you a paw in the future.

But where do clickers and markers fit in? You may have heard of clicker training, also known as mark and reward training. Is it an unnecessary gimmick? Quite the opposite. A clicker (or marker) is a tool that can make positive reinforcement training more efficient. After being repeatedly associated with a treat or reward, a clicker becomes a conditioned reinforcer. Learn how clicker training can help you better and more effectively communicate with your dog during training sessions.

What Is Clicker Training?

Clicker training is the same as positive reinforcement training, with the added benefit of a clicker. A clicker is simply a small mechanical noisemaker. The techniques are based on the science of animal learning, which says that behaviors that are rewarded are more likely to be repeated in the future. So rather than focusing on what your dog is doing wrong, and taking good behavior for granted, clicker training flips the script and concentrates on what your dog is doing right. By telling your dog what to do, instead of what not to do, you can have an incredible effect on how your dog chooses to behave.

The value of the clicker is that it tells your dog exactly which behavior you're rewarding. By clicking at the right time, you can "mark" the moment your dog did what you wanted. So rather than having to guess what you liked, the click tells your dog precisely what they did correctly. For example, if you're training your dog to sit, you would click at the moment your dog's butt hit the ground.

What Is the Meaning of the Click?

The clicker is merely a way to mark a moment. There is nothing magical about that specific noise, except that you

likely never make it around your dog outside of training. Therefore, you can substitute anything as a marker as long as it's distinct from other ways you communicate with your dog. For example, you could snap your fingers, blow a whistle, or cluck your tongue. Many people use a marker word, like "Yes" or "Good." For a hearing-impaired dog, you could use a light or a gentle tap on the shoulder.

Of course, the click or other marker itself is meaningless until it's paired with a reward. The click simply indicates a reward is on the way. Although edible treats are the best incentive for most dogs, a reward is anything your dog values. So if your pup would rather work for a game of tug-of-war than a chunk of chicken, play that instead. The important part is timing and consistency. The click must mark the correct moment and every click must be followed by a reward.

How Does Clicker Training Help?

In positive reinforcement training, a dog is rewarded after performing a desirable behavior. Without the use of a clicker or other marker, it might be obvious to the trainer what is being rewarded, but is it obvious to the dog? For example, when teaching a dog to lie down, how do you make it clear you are rewarding the belly on the ground? You have to make sure the reward is given while the dog is lying down rather than the dog getting up to get it. Otherwise, the dog might think the reward is for standing up or walking toward you. That's easy with food treats, but impossible if the reward is a round of fetch or tug.



What about dogs who pop up from a down as soon they touch the floor? You can't possibly get the reward to them fast enough. Or, what about more challenging behaviors like those performed at a distance? How do you get your dog a reward for jumping through a hoop at the exact moment they pass through the hoop? That's where the power of the click or other marker comes in. The click marks the moment you are going to reward, then bridges the gap in time until the reward arrives. Your dog knows exactly what action was correct.

But couldn't you just use praise in the same way? You could, but it's not nearly as clear. You communicate with your dog using praise all the time. In fact, it's a wonderful part of rewarding your dog. Plus, there is nothing about praise that is specific to the training situation, nor would you want that to be the case. Gushing over your dog is part of the joy of dog ownership. Using a clicker or other training-specific marker prevents confusion about the reward to come.

On top of the benefit of clarity, clicker-trained dogs tend to love learning. They want to train and work hard to earn a click. From your dog's point of view, mark and reward training makes teaching new behaviors a game. It takes the pressure off the trainer too. Looking for clickable moments means you focus on your dog's good choices, rather than dwelling on mistakes. Like any form of positive reinforcement training, clicker training boosts your communication, builds your bond with your dog, and makes training fun.

Excerpted from: S. Gibeault. (Jul 19, 2023). How to Use Clicker Training to Communicate With Your Dog . AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/clicker-training-your-dog-mark-and-reward/>

"Dogs guard resources because they fear losing them. Sometimes the fear is learned through experience; someone has been taking valuable resources away from the dog. Some silly humans seem to think they have an absolute right to take anything away from their dogs at any time, and their dogs should let them, without protest. That's a terrific way to create a resource-guarding behavior."

*—Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA,
Whole Dog Journal.*

Teach Targeting to Your Dog

By Sassafra Lowrey, AKC

Targeting involves teaching your dog to touch an object with their paw or nose, a very useful skill. Targeting behaviors can build your dog's foundation skills for sports and help them navigate stressful situations. You can even teach it to them at home with a limited amount of equipment. So how do you go about teaching your dog targeting?

What Is Targeting?

Targeting will allow your dog to touch something on command with part of their body, generally their nose, front leg, or hind leg. Some are more complicated to teach, but there are reasons to try them all. Nose targeting is a good way to help guide your dog through crowded areas or stressful situations. Reactive or anxious dogs might also find this method helpful, allowing them to refocus on you and away from reactivity triggers.

Paw targeting involves teaching your dog to put their front two paws onto an object when cued. This skill is helpful for working your dog's core muscles and balance, and can be used for sports like Agility and AKC Trick Dog. To train this skill, you'll want to work with a low and stable object, like a book, solid box, or training platform such as the KLIMB training platform (without the legs attached). Rear-foot targeting is an advanced skill to teach your dog. Unless and until they are taught otherwise, most dogs are front-wheel drive, meaning that where their front feet go, their rear feet will follow. Working with your dog on rear-foot targeting can help build confidence, as well as overall coordination, which can be beneficial for dog sports.

Below, you'll find the steps to teaching your dog each type of targeting. With a little patience and lots of practice, they'll be targeting pros before you know it!

Teaching Your Dog Nose Targeting

Step 1

Hold your flat palm out close to your dog's face and wait for your dog to engage. When your dog goes to sniff,

verbally mark by saying "yes" or click (if you're clicker training) as their nose touches your hand. Immediately treat your dog.

If your dog doesn't sniff at your hand, you can start by having a treat between two fingers. Hold your hand with the treat out to your dog. When they sniff at the treat, verbally mark or click. Once your dog is consistently touching your hand with the treat, you can try without the treat.

Step 2

Repeat Step 1. When your dog is constantly touching your hand, you can introduce a verbal cue of choice, like "touch" or "target."

Step 3

When your dog is eagerly targeting your outstretched hand with their nose, you can now begin to increase the difficulty. Ask your dog to target from further away and with your hand in different positions.

Step 4

Once your dog is confidently targeting with your hand in different positions, it's time to add distractions. Begin asking your dog for the hand target behavior while you are playing and out on walks. Start incorporating this behavior in areas with few distractions first. Then, build up to working in busier and more distracting environments.

Teaching Your Dog Front-Paw Targeting

Step 1

Put your training platform on the floor in front of your dog. Start by marking and rewarding your dog for looking at the platform. Then, mark and reward your dog for sniffing or engaging with the platform in any way. The goal is to help your dog get comfortable with the presence of the training platform.

Step 2

Take a treat and use it to lure or guide your dog toward the object where you want them to target their front paws. Then, once you have your dog's attention, slowly raise the treat in the air, above the object, and over the platform.

Step 3

As your dog's nose follows the treat up, their front feet will go up onto the object. When your dog's front paws are on the object, say "yes" or click (if you're clicker training). Immediately treat your dog while they still have their paws up on the object.

If your dog is nervous, start by rewarding your dog for approaching the platform or for putting just one paw on. With practice, your dog will get more comfortable and be ready to put two paws on the object.

Step 4

Repeat Step 2 several times until your dog is consistently putting their paws up onto the object as you lure. At this point, you can start to introduce a verbal cue of your choice (like “paws up” or “paws”) as your dog’s feet touch the platform. Praise and treat your dog when their paws touch the object.

Step 5

After a few repetitions, you can stop luring your dog up, and just give the verbal cue. Then, praise or click and treat your dog when their paws touch the platform.

Step 6

Once your dog is confident with paw targeting, you can start to ask your dog to target their front paws onto different objects, including flat targets and unstable platforms like exercise or balance discs. You can even begin asking for this behavior while out walking, as you find natural objects (like rocks and logs) that your dog can target onto.

Teaching Your Dog Rear-Foot Targeting

Step 1

Pick a low, solid platform like a large book, training platform (without the legs attached), firm pillow, or short, sturdy box that can hold your dog’s weight. For teaching rear-foot targeting, it’s helpful to have a wide platform to help dogs be more successful.

Step 2

Take a treat and lure your dog, so they walk forward and up onto the platform and then off, until only their back feet are on the platform. Then, use a verbal marker like a “yes” or click (if you’re clicker training) and treat your dog. Dogs don’t naturally know where their rear feet are, so teaching your dog to target with their back feet can take a little practice.

Another more advanced option—if your dog already has a strong “back-up” cue, you can use that cue or lure your dog backward until their rear feet are touching the platform. Then, verbally mark with a “yes” or click, then treat your dog. You can also slowly lure your dog backward with a treat until they touch the platform.

Some dogs will get startled and balk or try to move out of the way when their back feet hit the platform. This is why it’s helpful to use a wide platform that your dog can’t move around. If your dog is struggling with backing up onto the platform, experiment with lower platforms, such as a folded towel or a target mat.

Step 3

Repeat Step 2 until your dog is constantly following the treat lure to place their rear feet onto the platform, either by getting up and levering their rear feet onto the platform, or backing up onto the platform.

At this point, you can introduce the verbal cue of your choice, such as “feet” or “contact.” Make sure whatever verbal cue you choose is different from the one you use for front-foot targeting.

Step 4

After many repetitions, you’ll be able to fade out the physical cue, and just give your dog a verbal cue to foot target. Note this is a more advanced skill and takes a lot of practice.

Step 5

Once your dog has a solid understanding of rear-foot targeting, you can diversify the objects you ask them to rear-foot target onto. The surfaces can include flat targets or unstable but safe target objects like balance discs.

Excerpted from: S. Lowrey. (March 14, 2024). Teaching Targeting to Your Dog. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/teaching-targeting-to-your-dog/>

“Portuguese Water Dogs present the “canine triple threat” to their owners—power, brains, and spirit. The pre-determined genetic package is ours to influence, and we do so even when we don’t intend to - life with such a powerful and spirited dog is a constant exercise in alert observation and ready response. By our care of the breed and our work with it, we become a major component of how temperament interacts with environment and whether the resultant behaviors are desirable or undesirable.” —Maryanne Murray, The Courier, May/June 2007.

Go to Your Place!

Tired of your dog jumping on guests, begging at the dinner table, barking at the sound of the doorbell? Teaching your dog to “go to their place” is a useful skill to settle dogs in a designated area for a short period of time. The same method can also be used to train dogs to enter a crate when needed.

Steps to help train your dog to go to their place:

1. Show your dog the mat and click and reward any attention toward it, such as sniffing or standing on it. Toss a treat or toy onto the mat or bed and encourage the dog to investigate.
2. Click and reward with a treat when the dog places at least one paw on the mat. This will help build a positive association between the treat and the mat.
3. Continue to shape the behavior until all four paws are placed on the mat.
4. When your dog is on the mat, lure them into a down position before you click and reward.
5. Once your dog is contently lying on the mat, start adding distance to the behavior. Send your dog to the mat from farther and farther away.
6. Add your release word. Say the release word and lure the dog off the mat, using a treat or toy.
7. When your dog fully understands the “go to place” behavior, you can add a verbal cue such as “bed” or “place.”
8. If your dog is struggling with a training step, go back a step and practice. Train in different areas of the house to help generalize the behavior.
9. Practice for brief periods each day, adding distractions.

Excerpt: Stephanie Gibeault, Ms. (2023b, August 31). How to teach a dog “place”: Teaching your dog to go to place. American Kennel Club. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/teaching-go-to-your-place/>

Research shows that dogs who experience separation anxiety often suffer from other fears and phobias, most notably thunderstorm and noise sensitivities. Almost half of dogs with separation anxiety have noise phobia.
—Journal of the Veterinary Medical Association, 2001;219(4).

Additional Resources

Books

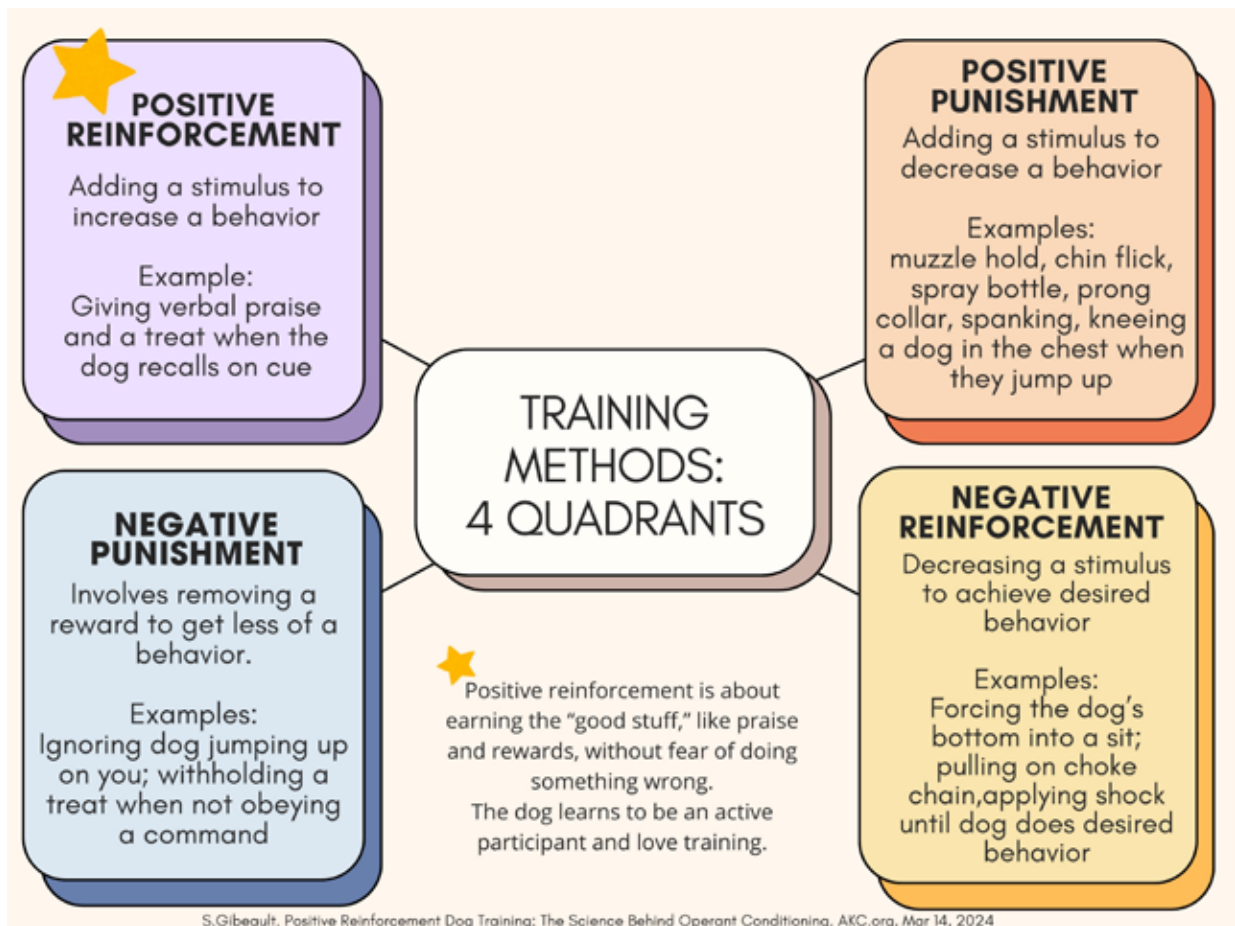
- Canine Good Citizen: The Official AKC Guide*, 2nd Edition
by Mary Burch
- Mine! A Practical Guide to Resource Guarding in Dogs* by Jean Donaldson
- The Portuguese Water Dog: A Guide for the New Owner*
by Verne K. Foster (out of print)
- Feisty Fido: Help for the Leash-Reactive Dog* by PB McConnell & KB London
- Control Unleashed: Creating a Focused and Confident Dog* by Leslie McDevitt
- Mother Knows Best: The Natural Way to Train Your Dog*
by Carol Lea Benjamin
- Enrichment Games for High-Energy Dogs* by Barbara Buchmayer
- The New Complete Portuguese Water Dog* by Kathryn Braund
- The Other End of the Leash* by Patricia McConnell
- Mission Control: How to Train the High Drive Dog* by Jane Ardern

Websites

- American Kennel Club (<https://www.akc.org>)
- Portuguese Water Dog Club of America (<https://www.pwdca.org>)
- American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (<https://avsab.org>)
- Whole Dog Journal* (<https://www.whole-dog-journal.com>)
- “Happy Dogs. Happy Owners. Mind to Mind” with Sue Alisby (<https://sue-eh.ca>)
- “Portuguese Water Dogs—Advice, Antics, Education” (Facebook)

Podcasts

- Bad Dog Agility—hosted by Sarah, Jennifer and Esteban
- DogsThat podcast—hosted by Susan Garrett
- Drinking from the Toilet—hosted by Hannah Branigan
- Cog Dog Radio—hosted by Sarah Stremming
- Fenzi Dog Sports Academy—hosted by Denise Fenzi
- Madcap Radio (Puppy Culture)



DRIVE

The term "drive" is loosely defined as a dog's focused and intense desire to work under a range of circumstances or conditions in pursuit of a goal. High drive dogs are able to focus despite distractions and will place their job above other interests. While playing fetch with your dog, do you tire long before your dog stops wanting to play? You may have a high-drive dog! High drive dogs are an exhilarating sight but can be exhausting for owners. Providing an outlet to channel energy, like enrichment and performance work, will help combat boredom and possible destruction of household items.

Excerpt: D. Fenzi. (Oct 7, 2019). "Drive." DeniseFenzi.com. <https://denise-fenzi.com/2019/10/drive>; D. Fenzi. Drive vs. Arousal in Dogs. Pure Dog Talk podcast, episode #507; S. Garrett. DogsThat podcast, episode #110.



"I, for one, refuse to just sit at the door pining for his return."

Cartoon by Frank Cotham

Expert Tips: How to Stop Your Dog From Pulling on the Leash

By Stephanie Gibeault, AKC

It's not only against the law to let your dog off-leash in most public areas, but it can also be unsafe. Your dog could get into a scrap with another dog or run away from you. Keeping your dog leashed allows you greater control over who they interact with and what they get into. But how do you teach your dog to walk politely on a leash? Nobody wants to be dragged down the street, and with a larger dog, you can even suffer injuries if they pull hard enough.

Although leash pulling is a common issue for dogs, there are simple techniques to teach your dog appropriate leash behavior. Plus, adjusting your behavior during walks can make a big difference too. If you follow these 10 tips, instead of your dog walking you, soon you and your dog will be walking together.

1. Always Reward Good Leash Behavior

Never take your dog's good behavior for granted, and that goes for walking politely on the leash as well. Dogs repeat behaviors that are rewarding, whether that reward is a treat, praise, or a chance to sniff a fire hydrant. If you only focus on what your dog is doing wrong and take good behavior for granted, chances are your pet will replace their good behavior with other less appropriate ways to get what they want.

Whenever your dog is walking politely on a leash, be sure to reinforce that with some sort of reward. Take treats with you on walks or be ready with pets and praise. Don't be stingy. Let your dog know you appreciate the behavior they have chosen to exhibit. In the beginning, reward heavily and frequently. Then, as your dog's skills improve, you can slowly start to reduce the treats and substitute them with the chance to sniff a tree trunk or say hello to another dog.

2. Never Let Your Dog Walk When They Are Pulling

Your dog wants to walk—that's why they're pulling you in the first place. So, if you let them walk while they're pulling, you're giving them the very reward they seek. And as dogs repeat behaviors that earn rewards, you will only make the leash pulling worse in the long run. Therefore,

never walk when your dog is pulling on the leash. As soon as your dog pulls, stop, plant your feet, and wait for your dog to either return to you or loosen the tension on the leash.

3. Wait for a Loose Leash Before You Walk

If you stop walking when your dog pulls, how do you know when you can start moving again? Wait for a slack leash—it should be hanging in a J-shape—and for your dog to turn their attention back to you. It might take quite a while in the beginning, but eventually your dog will look or walk back to see what's holding you up. At that moment, praise and reward your dog with a treat at your side, then continue the walk. You might have to stop and start every step or two at first, but your dog will soon figure out that pulling makes the walk stop and walking politely allows it to continue.

4. Incorporate Life Rewards on Your Walk

Walks should be an enriching experience for your dog. Rather than just a chance to go to the bathroom, your dog should be getting physical exercise and mental stimulation. But when you're training your dog to not pull on the leash, it can seem like none of those things are happening. One way to boost your training while enhancing your dog's walks is to incorporate life rewards for following the rules. Life rewards are day-to-day things your dog enjoys like the chance to sniff a shrub or greet a stranger. For example, if your dog walks 10 feet without pulling, release them to sniff for a few minutes. Bonus rewards like that will truly convince your dog that walking politely pays off.

5. Walk at a Good Pace

Most of the time, humans walk at far too leisurely a pace for dogs. Even toy breeds will get those little legs pumping faster than you might want to go. And that's part of the reason dogs pull—they want to get moving. To help your dog feel more engaged in the walk, choose a pace that's comfortable for both of you. Of course, you can teach your dog to match your speed, but while you're training,

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a quicker pace can make it easier for them to learn not to leash pull.

6. Be Consistent With Your No-Pulling Rule

It can be tempting to let your dog pull when you're in a hurry. Perhaps you're late for work, or it's freezing cold outside, and you just want to give them a chance to go to the bathroom. But you need to be consistent with your no-pulling rule regardless of the situation. Anytime you allow your dog to pull on the leash, you will set your training back to square one. Until you can get more than a few feet at a time, let your dog do their business in the yard or at the curb and save the walking for when you have time to train.

7. Keep Training Sessions Short and Fun

It can be frustrating to work with a determined leash puller. In the beginning, you might get no further than the end of your driveway. Rather than pushing your dog until you're both feeling cranky with lack of progress, keep your training sessions short and upbeat. Puppies in particular have tiny attention spans, and asking for too much too soon is not going to get you positive results. Remember, your goal isn't to make it a certain distance, it's to walk with a loose leash even if that's just to the house next door.

8. Be Interesting and Engaging on Walks

The world is an exciting place for dogs, full of new sights, sounds, and especially smells. That means there are a lot of things competing for your dog's attention and enticing them to drag you down the sidewalk. If you're on your phone or otherwise ignoring your dog, there's little reason for them to pay attention to you. But if you're interesting and worth watching, your dog will be more likely to follow your lead. Talk to your dog, take quick training breaks, stop for a game, and so on, so your dog is always waiting to see what you will do next.

9. Stay Calm

Whether it's seeing their favorite neighbor at the end of the block or the approach of a barking dog, you can encounter a lot of emotional situations on a walk with your dog. Whether it's exciting or frightening for your dog

(and you), you need to control your emotions. Dogs are experts at reading human emotions, so your mood can transmit down the leash and impact your dog, ramping them up further or intensifying their anxiety. To keep your dog calm, stay calm yourself and show your dog there is nothing to be excited about because the more relaxed your dog is, the more likely they can listen to you and behave appropriately.

10. Engage Your Dog In Distracting Situations

When you encounter distractions like other dogs or squirrels, it's easy for your dog to forget the rules and start leash pulling. The same is true for things your dog finds suspicious. Maybe strangers make your dog nervous. Your dog might pull to approach or pull to run in the other direction. Either way, leash manners can go out the window. To help your dog cope with distractions, get them focused on you instead. Calmly offer them treats or play a game. For example, ask for a sit or a hand target. These exercises are simple for your dog to do and will keep them engaged as the distraction passes. You can also teach your dog to make eye contact with you using the "watch me" cue so you can control where they're looking. But be proactive. Grab your dog's attention before they see the distraction, and hopefully they won't even notice it at all.

Excerpted from: S Gibeault. (Mar 14, 2024). Expert Tips: How to Stop Your Dog From Pulling on the Leash. AKC.org. <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/expert-tips-dog-leash-issues/>

The American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB) stands against training methods that cause short or long lasting pain, discomfort or fear. Aversive training methods can be dangerous to people as well as animals and pose a threat to animal welfare by inhibiting learning, increasing behaviors related to fear and distress, and causing direct injury (davcb.org).

