



## TRAINING HINTS & TIPS

Training is a positive process with a single goal in mind. Dogs learn best through positive reinforcement and repetition of the right things. Be the best teacher you can be, don't set your expectations too high and don't become angry. Simply be consistent and **P-A-T-I-E-N-T**.

### Training Tips

- Set rules immediately and stick to them.
- Avoid situations that promote inappropriate behavior.
- Supervise the new pet diligently through undivided individual attention and training. Restrict the pet's access to a limited area of the house until the training is complete.
- Encourage good behavior with praise and attention.
- Correct bad behavior by providing positive alternatives (substitute your shoe with a toy).
- Never physically punish or force compliance to commands. This may lead to fear biting or aggression. Don't play rough or encourage aggression or play biting.
- Expose your dog to people of all ages, various animals, and different environments.
- A good dog is a tired dog. Walk your dog daily. Play ball!
- It is useless to correct a dog for something already done. A dog must be "caught in the act." If a dog is corrected after the offense, he cannot associate the correction with the behavior. A dog will begin to think corrections are arbitrary and the owner cannot be trusted. The result is a poor relationship and a dog that does not associate corrections with bad behavior, even if they are then applied at the right time. Start off doing it right from the beginnings.
- Avoid forcing alpha-wolf rollovers onto the dog. An alpha-wolf rollover is making a dog roll onto his back showing his belly. This can be dangerous when done inappropriately or by inexperienced people. Strengthen your relationship with your dog first so he feels comfortable rolling over on his own to get a belly rub.
- If you are having trouble putting ear medications in your dog's ears, put the dog on a table and use treats to help. If the dog has an ear infection, he may be in pain. A dog's normal reaction to pain, stress, or fear may be to bite. Do not think of a muzzle as a bad thing; it is better to use a muzzle than to get bit.
- One command should equal one response. Give the dog only one command at a time. Repeating commands over and over causes the dog tune you out believing the first several spoken words are a bluff. "Sit, sit, sit, sit" is neither an efficient nor effective way to issue a command. One command/word "sit", lure your dog into the sit position, then praise and reward.
- As the dog becomes more comfortable in your home, you will see behaviors and personalities emerge. Some of these may be good, some not so good.
- Use your dog's name in a positive manner. Never use your dog's name in conjunction to reprimands or punishment. Your dog should trust that when he hears his name or is called to come to you, good things will happen.

- Many owners say their dogs are stubborn and refuse to listen to commands. Before blaming the dog when not responding to you, determine whether or not the dog knows what you want and how to comply; or is he not responding because of stress, fear, or confusion.
- Dogs repeat whatever behavior earns your attention. If you reward bad behavior, you will get Mr. or Miss Naughty Dog. Redirect negative behaviors into positive behaviors.
- Bad behavior? Interrupt, distract, command. Learn to anticipate your dog's behavior. If he routinely jumps on the counter to see if there is food to steal, interrupt the thought. Say "stop!" Next, distract with a treat or toy, give a command, such as "sit", then reward with the treat/toy.
- Yelling "NO!" every time the dog does something wrong confuses him. Instead, be specific with a one word command. If you don't want the dog to jump on you, don't say "no", tell him "sit". If you don't want the dog on the couch, tell him "off".
- Dogs do not experience guilt. They may look guilty, but not because they understand they did something wrong; they look guilty because they understand you are upset.

## House Training

- A dog is not considered potty trained until he is 100% accident-free for 12 consecutive weeks.
- It your responsibility to anticipate your dog's needs and help him learn where to go potty.
- A dog/puppy should inherently understand not to mess where he sleeps or eats. However, he may not understand he is expected to go all the way outside to eliminate. The living room may become his indoor backyard.
- Feed the dog on a consistent time schedule. This will prevent overeating and allow you to predict his elimination habits.
- Always feed a premium food. Better quality ingredients digest better and produce less waste.
- Your dog must be supervised at all times when inside. Use baby gates, close doors, or use your crate to manage your dog's activities. Whenever possible, keep the crate in an area frequented by the family so your dog will feel like a family member.
- Carry or put the dog on a leash when going outside to eliminate. Take the same route, go to the same door, to the same spot, and wait. Pick a phrase, such as "hurry up" or "go potty". When the dog eliminates, praise quietly.
- Don't send your dog outside unsupervised. How will you know if he went potty?
- Keep potty time and playtime separate.
- If your dog does not eliminate outside, bring him back in and either put him in a crate or make sure he is closely supervised. After 15 minutes, go back outside. Never use the crate as punishment for any behavior.
- Select a verbal cue to communicate with your dog, such as "outside?" or "potty?" Everyone in the home must use the same word. It is not very common for a dog to go to the door when he wants to go outside. In the beginning, it is best for us to initiate the activity rather instead of waiting for the dog to learn the behavior on his own.

- Help your dog communicate his need to go potty. Try using the doggie doorbell method. Ring a bell tied to the door that leads to the potty area. Consistently do this every time your dog goes out to potty. When your dog learns to ring the bell, you should appear instantly to let him out to potty.
- Pay attention to your dog's potty patterns. Give your dog all the time he needs to accomplish the activity. Some dogs will need to go more than once before being fully finished.
- Your dog WILL have accidents during the training process.
- Never hit your dog or rub their nose in the waste. This is unsanitary and does not teach the dog anything.
- If you find an accident, but do not catch the dog in the process of eliminating, clean up the accident and realize you, the human, made a mistake
- If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating in the house, distract the dog and immediately get him outside to finish.
- Watch your dog for behaviors that tell you he has to eliminate, such as sniffing, circling, or going to the door and be attentive to his actions by taking him outside.

### *When to Take the Dog Outside*

Be consistent by taking him out after every activity below:

- 1<sup>st</sup> thing in the morning,
- After meals,
- After drinking,
- During and/or after playtime,
- Before bedtime,
- After naps,
- Any other time your dog is circling, sniffing, or exhibiting a behavior that says he needs to eliminate, and
- If necessary, in the middle of the night.

### *Common Problems*

- A dog's schedule is unpredictable. He doesn't know when he will be allowed to eliminate again.
- Physical limitations may not allow the dog to wait until he is taken out.
- Dogs do not naturally understand they must eliminate outdoors.
- Stress, age, visitors, changes in family structure, and changes in schedule can all interfere with potty training
- Changes in diet can cause stomach upset and potty training challenges.
- If your dog suddenly starts to have frequent accidents, he may be suffering from a urinary tract infection. Consult your veterinarian.

### **Jumping**

- Jumping, leaping, and bouncing are ways your dog shows affection and receives attention. This behavior is often learned as a puppy.

- Reprimanding a dog for jumping does not work, e.g., kneeling him in the chest, shaking a can, stepping on back paws. A better solution is to teach your dog to sit and stay. A dog cannot jump and sit/stay at the same time. When your dog is sitting, kneel down and pet him. Practice is essential, and praise is critical.
- Another solution is to turn your back on a jumping dog. Do not say anything or touch the dog in any manner. When his paws are on the floor, quietly praise your dog.
- Consistency is required. You cannot ever allow your dog to jump on you or others if you expect him to understand that jumping is not acceptable.

## Barking

- Dogs bark for a number of reasons: something is amiss in their home or yard, they want something, they are playing, or they are bored.
- Never, ever use a muzzle or shock collar to manage barking.
- Dogs will have different pitches to their barks, and you should be able to determine what they are barking at by the tone of the bark. The “ball is under the bed” bark will be different than the “intruder in my yard” bark.
- If your dog is outside and barking, bring him inside. Yelling at him to stop barking is not effective because it is like you are barking back at your dog; he will think barking is okay.
- When your dog is barking at a window because there are distractions outside, distract your dog and redirect his attention. Rattle the biscuit jar and see how quickly he pays attention. When he stops barking, praise your dog.
- Ignore your dog if he is barking in the crate. Most dogs will not bark more than 15 to 20 minutes. Do not yell “no”, spray water or bang on the crate. These actions only give attention to the dog - the very reason he is barking.
- Covering the crate can help eliminate barking at night.
- Leave a television or radio on when you leave your dog.
- Put a Kong or toy in the crate with your dog.
- Place your dog’s crate where you sleep. Cocker Spaniels are social by nature and sleep time is an important bonding experience. If you don’t allow your dog to sleep where you sleep, you are ostracizing him from an important social ritual.
- Your dog will not stop his barking habit unless he has something better to do.

## Introductions to Other Dogs

- Introduce the dogs in a neutral setting, such as a parking lot or park. Initial introduction should always be done with both dogs on a leash.
- Stay calm. Try to have a loose leash. A tight leash is a sign of tension. If the dog is insecure, and senses your tension, your dog will become more nervous.
- Body and vocal bluffing is normal dog behavior. Try not to interfere. Interact with the dogs when the initial tension has subsided.
- Always feed dogs separately, keeping a great amount of distance between them.
- Leave a leash on the new dog for the first few days. This allows you to have control, especially if there is a dog fight.
- Do not put two dogs “getting to know” each other in the same crate.

## Submissive Urination

- Dogs have several behaviors designed to reduce violence between them. When challenged, a submissive dog must display some or all of his behavior to demonstrate its lower status and prevent an attack. Submissive urination is most commonly offered in this type of greeting. By wetting, a dog is merely acknowledging that you or another dog's is superior.
- Direct eye contact with a dog is considered a challenge. For a submissive dog, even a moment of eye contact can be unbearable and could cause urination.
- A person towering over a dog could cause submissive urination.
- Another signal that dogs can perceive as threatening is bending over and touching the dog's head, neck, or shoulders. When a human pats a dog on the head, a submissive dog perceives it as a display of dominance.
- Avoid all situations that might threaten a dog that submissively urinates. Advise guests and visitors what not to do in order to help your dog not urinate.
- Help your dog not urinate by ignoring him for the first few minutes. Then very calmly greet the dog and add physical contact over the next few minutes. If the dog does not urinate, praise and give a treat.
- Use treats to achieve successful greetings and introductions. Physical petting may trigger the behavior, so using food instead is a logical solution. It is also difficult for a dog to eat and urinate at the same time. The desire to eat competes with the urge to urinate and strengthens to correct the behavior.
- A barrier, such as a baby gate separating the guest and the dog, can help the dog get used to the guest before actually greeting them.

## Crating

- Dog crates should be a safe haven for dogs - a place where they do not have to defend their territory.
- A crate will help you to manage your dog's behavior, but is not a substitute for training him.
- The crate should be large enough for your dog to stand and turn around.
- A puppy should not remain in the crate for more than 3 hours at a time.
- An adult dog should not spend more than 8 hours a day in a crate.
- No dog should ever be forced to remain in a soiled crate. You must rearrange the time he spends in the crate to prevent this from happening.
- Not all dogs will need constant crating and can be weaned off a crate once they get older and you can trust them in the house.
- Don't ever use the crate for punishment.
- Use a treat or a toy to lure the dog into the crate; a Kong with a treat inside works great.