

# OBEDIENCE TRAINING



**Bark Busters Home Dog Training**  
**Ann & Casey Heathman**  
Dog Trainers and Behavioral Therapists  
[www.barkbusters.com](http://www.barkbusters.com)  
(352) 753-4654

**Janice Cole Training**  
**AKC Evaluated Trainer**  
[spikeangcc@aol.com](mailto:spikeangcc@aol.com)  
(352) 801-5806

# NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE



This program helps establish the humans as leaders for dogs that are a little unclear about their role in the pack. Lots of people have been trained by their dogs to pet the dog on command, feed the dog on command, walk the dog on command, etc. – the “command” in this case is usually barking, whining or pawing. If the human responds each time, you can imagine the dog starts thinking he must be the leader of the pack. Behavior problems such as unruly behavior and aggression often are the result of this dynamic. You don’t have to be 100% with it, but do try to pay attention to who’s leading and who’s following.

The rules of the program:

- The dog should get nothing he wants for free. In other words, if he enjoys petting, you should ask him to sit or do a trick before you pet him. Before putting on the leash, ask him to lie down. Before he gets in the car, ask him to shake. You don’t need to use food as rewards here because the reward will be petting, a walk, or a car ride.
- Your biggest leverage point with your dog is food. When you feed your dog, ask him to lie down and leave the food alone until you release him (use a leash if you need to) and allow him to eat it.
- The dog must wait at doorways until you release him to go through. If he barges through, bring him back through the door and practice again. Do not let him get what he wants through pushiness.
- Any rude behavior that isn’t immediately ceased with a command from you earns the dog a time-out on a tether or in another room until he is quiet and calm again.

# Misunderstandings of puppy behavior



- **My puppy sleeps through the night, why can't she hold it while I'm at work?** At night, the metabolism of a puppy slows. She's not eating or drinking or playing, the way she does during the day. All of these activities cause the need for increased bathroom breaks.
- **My puppy doesn't make mistakes when we're home, but when we leave, she goes all over the house. Is she mad when we leave?** No. In all likelihood, the puppy has been punished for going to the bathroom inside. The puppy has now made the association that going to the bathroom when the owner is present is dangerous, but going when the owner is absent is safe.
- **My puppy is 3 months old, shouldn't she be housebroken?** Each pup has her own schedule for housetraining. Some dogs take a little bit longer to catch on. Pet-store puppies or puppies that were allowed to develop an incorrect substrate preference can be very difficult to housetrain.
- **My puppy pees every time I greet her. I whack her with a newspaper every time she does this, so why is it getting worse?** Peeing is part of a repertoire of submissive behaviors that indicate to older, more dominant dogs that the underling poses no threat. Puppies and submissive dogs sometimes exhibit this behavior when greeting their owners in order to properly demonstrate deference. The more this behavior is punished, the more submissive the dog attempts to be, and the problem significantly worsens.
- **When I get home, I put my puppy's nose next to the mess she's made and yell at her. Then I take her outside to do her business. Why isn't she getting it?** In order to be effective correction must be made within a couple **SECONDS** of the act itself. Correcting a puppy after a mess has been made will only confuse the dog.
- **My dog hangs her head and slinks around when I return if she's made a mess in the house. She knows she's done something wrong.** The likelihood is that she knows that she gets in trouble when you come home and there's a pile of poop in the middle of the floor. She doesn't necessarily implicate herself in the creation of that situation. If you punish her, you will be reinforcing her idea that the combination of you and poop in the same room is dangerous, but it's likely that she'll continue to poop in the house.

# BENEFITS OF EARLY PUPPY TRAINING



You have a new puppy. Is life as you know it over? Do you see an endless trail of shredded paper, frayed pant legs, and nocturnal trips to the backyard in your future? Are your hands and ankles crisscrossed with tiny teeth marks? Is “NO!” the most frequently used word in your vocabulary? If so, perhaps you should consider training classes for your puppy.

You have probably already made decisions about this new family member. You most likely gave lots of thought to whether to get a large or small dog, what food to feed, among other things. But did you consider obedience training?

Puppies leave their canine families to join their human ones at a time when their learning ability is great. Enrolling in a good puppy training class can help you harness your puppy’s seemingly boundless energy into positive actions. Rather than waiting until 6 months or a year, training can begin as soon as you bring your puppy home.

A puppy begins learning from you the very day you bring him home. It’s important what he learns are things that you want him to learn, rather than learning behaviors that become problems for you as the puppy grows up.



## **Getting Started on the Right Paw**

Left to their own devices, puppies will amuse themselves in ways humans are not likely to enjoy. Young puppies love to chew, dig, bark, and follow wherever their noses may lead them. This will almost certainly lead to trouble in their new homes because puppies aren’t born knowing the difference between things like their chew toy and the legs of the antique table.

Also, as far as the puppy is concerned, humans are the perfect littermates to wrestle with or totally ignore if something more exciting comes along. This is not behavior the

puppy will outgrow on his own. Without the intervention of early training, many of these normal puppy behaviors can become problems that are more difficult to resolve than prevent.

Early training will be valuable in other ways too. It can help you get your puppy used to his new leash and collar. A puppy who knows how to walk nicely on a leash is more likely to go on walks with the family than the one who acts like an untamed mustang.

You will learn how to teach him some basic exercises, like “sit”, “down”, “stay”, and “come”. You will also benefit from the instructor’s knowledge and the experiences of all the other members of your class. It’s comforting to know you are not alone in the trials of raising your puppy to be “man’s best friend” instead of a four-legged monster.

Puppy classes are designed under the premise that it is easier to prevent a bad habit in the first place than it is to correct it later. So you will learn how to redirect behavior, like inappropriate chewing in a teething puppy or the exuberant jumping of an excited one. Puppies are wonderful learners so they will quickly figure out that good manners, like sitting nicely at your feet will get them the petting, praise, and attention they want.

### **Social Puppies Make for Well-balanced Adults**



Another benefit of attending early training classes is that your puppy will be exposed to other people and their dogs during a critical period in his life. Puppies who are properly socialized from 7 to 14 weeks of age learn to easily tolerate situations late in life which other dogs, deprived of that early socialization, may find stressful.

# HOUSETRAINING

*Solve the Problem by Understanding the Process*

by Ian Dunbar, PhD, MRCVS



Understanding the problems associated with housetraining is a wonderful way for owners to understand other canine behavior problems. Some misguided folk still try to control behavior problems with punishment in a hopeless attempt to curtail the dog's behavior altogether. Punishment exacerbates many problems, since it forces the dog to misbehave at times when it cannot be punished, like when the owner is away. What is disturbing, though, is the lack of foresight-the sheer inhumane silliness-of inviting a dog to share our home and then punishing it for acting like a dog.

When it comes to house soiling, it must be obvious that one simply cannot say to a dog, "No more elimination." I mean, what's the dog to do? Elimination is a normal, natural and necessary canine behavior and, the solution is to teach the dog how to perform its toilet duties in a manner that is appropriate for domestic living.

## **A Spatial Problem**

Most people acknowledge that house soiling is a spatial problem: The dog is eliminating in the wrong place. So what's the problem? Just show the dog the right place to eliminate and reward it for doing so. In just three days to a week this adult dog is housetrained; moreover, it now wants to eliminate in its doggy toilet, since soiling the house does not have fringe benefits.

In addition to being a spatial problem, house soiling is also a temporal problem. The temporal nature of housetraining creates two common scenarios: 1 Either the dog is in the wrong place at the right time (the dog was left in the house with a filling bladder and/or rectum while the owner went to work, hence the dog was forced to soil the house), or 2 The dog is in the right place at the wrong time (the dog was taken to its doggy toilet or walked by the owner, but its bladder and rectum were empty because it had already eliminated in the living room when the owner was at work).

Before getting angry with the dog (and, heaven forbid, punishing it when we arrive home), perhaps we should consider first, who exactly, is at fault, and second, why we don't just housetrain the dog? Then there will be no further cause for frustration and hypertension. The owner must take full responsibility for the dog's actions and train the dog.

Being in the wrong place at the right time may easily be prevented by confining the dog to an appropriate area when it is left alone for lengthy periods. When the dog is left at home alone, it would be smart to confine it to a small area, such as an outdoor run or a single room indoors (the kitchen or utility room), so that if the dog eliminates, it will do little damage and, therefore, not upset the owner.

For a doggy toilet, use sheets of newspaper or a litter box. However, if you want the dog to eliminate outside eventually, it is helpful to use outside items like soil in the litter box or a couple of concrete pavement slabs-perhaps even a roll of turf. This is passive training. By the time the pup is old enough to be walked outdoors, it will have already developed a strong substrate preference for eliminating on concrete and soil.



### **Confinement, Then Relief**

The primary purpose of long-term confinement is to confine the problem. The owner acknowledges the puppy/dog will probably need to eliminate sometime during the long period it is left alone, so it is best if feces and urine are deposited only in the doggy toilet of the long-term confinement area and not all over the house. (Obviously a dog crate is not a suitable place to confine an unhousetrained dog for long periods of time, otherwise it will be forced to soil its crate. Once the dog has developed the habit of crate-soiling, this messy problem will frequently recur and render the crate a useless housetraining tool).

If the owner only knew when the dog wanted to relieve itself, housetraining would be a non-problem. The owner would simply show the dog the appropriate spot and praise and reward the dog for using it. Unfortunately, most owners cannot predict the dog's needs and, consequently, waste a lot of time walking empty dogs. What novice dog owners need is a foolproof, time-efficient, user-friendly means to predict when the dog wants to eliminate. Simple. Closely confining the dog to a small space just large enough for it to comfortably lie down strongly inhibits the dog from eliminating, because it does not want to soil its bed. However, during this period of confinement, both bladder and rectum progressively fill, making it highly likely the dog will want to eliminate immediately upon release from confinement. Since the owner chooses when to release the dog, the owner is choosing when the dog will eliminate.

To implement the housetraining program, confine the dog to a small area, for example a dog crate, basket or bed, and every hour on the hour, take it to its toilet area and give it three minutes to eliminate. If it does, praise it enthusiastically and maybe offer a couple of food treats into the bargain. Since the dog is now empty, it may be allowed to have the run of the house-as long as someone is still keeping an eye on it so it does not get into other mischief. If the dog does not eliminate during the allotted three-minute toilet break, no big deal, just put it back in the crate for another hour, and so on.

The purposes of short-term, close confinement and long-term confinement are quite different. Long-term confinement in the owner's absence confines elimination to a small, protected area, and thus prevents mistakes in other parts of the house; close confinement temporarily inhibits elimination altogether, so that the dog will likely eliminate when released.

### **Compound Problems**

Occasionally, the two house-soiling problems are compounded. Not only does the dog soil the house, but it also refuses to eliminate on walks. This really annoys owners. It is not actually uncommon for a dog to fail to eliminate on a walk-regardless of the encouragement, pleading and prayers from its owner-but to do so immediately upon returning home. Basically, there are three reasons why the dog would do this. 1 The dog would much rather eliminate at home, in private; 2 The dog has learned that its walk will end as soon as its feces hit the ground; and 3 The dog dare not eliminate in the presence of the owner.

That many dogs develop an early preference for eliminating on carpets, indoors, underscores the importance of never letting the puppy/dog make a single mistake during its first two weeks at home. Just one mistake is the start of a habit-a bad habit. Within just one or two repetitions, young pups (or old dogs in a new home) quickly develop favorite locations and/or substrate preferences for eliminating. Instead, the dog must develop a spatial preference for eliminating outdoors and a substrate preference for dirt or grass.



### **Fear of Elimination**

Why do you think the dog does not want to eliminate with the owner around? Is it shy? No. During the early stages of the housetraining fiasco, the little dog was peacefully relieving itself in a corner of the living room when suddenly the owner screamed and grabbed the defenseless critter in mid-poop. This reprimand was not what one would call instructive. Rather than learning that it should not eliminate in the living room, the dog learned that it would be foolish to eliminate at all in the owner's presence. The dog must eliminate; if it dares not do it while the owner is there, it will wait until the owner is gone.



# ESCHEW CHEWING CATASTROPHES

Ian Dunbar, Ph.D., MRCVS



## Home Alone

Teaching a dog how to entertain itself and while away the long hours when left at home alone is one of the most important ingredients of domestic education.

Dogs chew out of necessity, boredom, anxiety or enjoyment. Puppies especially have a strong urge to chew. Not only do they chew to relieve the irritation and inflammation of teething but also, pups characteristically investigate the environment with jaws and paws. Moreover, regular chewing is essential for maintaining the health of the dog's teeth, jaws and gums. Thus, chewing is a perfectly normal, natural and necessary canine behavior.

The problem is not that the dog chews but rather, what the dog chews. Consequently, prevention and treatment of wanton house destruction should focus on redirecting the dog's chewing proclivities exclusively to articles that the owner considers to be both appropriate and acceptable chew toys.

If we try to look at things from the dog's point of view, there are only so many things a dog can do when left at home alone for long periods of time. When left alone, the dog's choices of recreational activities are severely limited; really all the poor dog can do is chew, dig, bark or snooze. Many chewing extravaganzas are the result of boredom - simply a result of the dog's relentless quest for some way to pass the time of day.

It is vitally important to foster confidence and independence by actively teaching a companion dog how to enjoy the peace and quiet of its own company, and specifically how to amuse itself and pass the time of day when its human companion is not at home. Otherwise, the dog will focus on the owner's absence and fret, panic and pine for the absent owner.

Thus, when at home it is a sound policy to periodically confine the dog for short periods with chew toys for amusement. Not only will the dog become accustomed to confinement but also, the owner may monitor the dog's behavior when confined.



Whatever the cause of chewing - animal nature, boredom, anxiety or fun- the solution entails redirecting the dog's chewing tendencies to appropriate chew toys. Chew toys should be both indestructible and non-consumable.

The choice of chew toy depends on the strength and compulsive nature of the dog's chewing. For some dogs, just putting down a few chew toys is sufficient to successfully redirect chewing activities. However, most owners must actively train their dogs to enjoy chew toys. One way to do this is by lure-coursing stuffed chew toys along the kitchen floor on the end of a string. Both Kongs and bones are hollow and may therefore be stuffed with goodies to heighten the dog's interest and entice it to chew them exclusively. Use kibble or biscuits to cork the end of each bone or toy so the dog may quickly bite off the protruding part of the treat and then extricate the rest only after worrying at the toy for several minutes.

### **Instant Gratification**

On returning home, instruct the dog to fetch its chew toys and pull the biscuits from the Kongs and use a pencil to poke out the tasty treats from the bones. Human manual dexterity and tool use never fail to impress the canine mind, making the dog more inclined to search for chew toys when it wakes from its afternoon nap in expectations of the owner's return.

### **Passive Training**

Apart from using treats to increase the value of chew toys and actively training dogs to enjoy chewing chew toys, passive training techniques offer a sure-fire way to cement the dog's chew toy habit. Passive training simply involves setting up the training scenario. When away from home, confine the dog to a room that contains nothing for the dog to destroy. Obviously, if confined to the kitchen the dog cannot destroy living room furniture. Also, if confined to the kitchen with ought for company but half a dozen stuffed chew toys, the dog will quickly develop a chew toy habit.

Similarly, when at home the dog may be safely and profitably left for variable periods in its long-term confinement area when the owner is unable to supervise the dog. Not only will this encourage the dog to chew toys but also, it will help the dog adjust to confinement when left at home alone. Alternatively, the owner may confine the dog for short periods to a smaller area, such as the dog's bed or crate, with nothing within reach apart from a couple of stuffed chew toys.

# JUMPING FOR JOY



For dogs that jump-up to greet owners and visitors at home or strangers in the street, a variety of dog training texts recommend the owner shout at the dog, squirt him in the face with water, swat him on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper, or yank on the dog's leash. Surely this is all pretty crazy for a dog that's only trying to say hello. Indeed, why not just train the dog to sit, or lie down, when greeting people?

## Reasons Why

Dogs jump-up for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, most dogs have been unintentionally trained to jump-up ever since puppyhood. When the young pup licked and pawed, and jumped up to say hello, many people reinforced the puppy's behavior by patting the pup on the head or scratching him behind the ear, because they were too lazy to bend down to puppy level and greet the pup with four paws on the floor. All goes well until one day the dog jumps-up to say hello and out of the blue, the owner punishes the dog. And the dog's only crime? He grew!

Pawing, licking and jumping-up are all friendly appeasement gestures — the dog's way of saying "Welcome home. Pleased to see you!" And so what does the person do? — Punish the dog for jumping up. Now of course, the dog has two reasons to show deference — the initial reason and the fact that he now has to appease the angry owner. And how does he try to appease the owner? By pawing, licking and jumping-up! This is one of the many paradoxes in training — the more one punishes the dog, the more the behaviors increase in frequency.

## Counterconditioning

Rather than trying to extinguish normal, natural and necessary social behaviors with punishment, it is much easier to teach your dog to perform an alternative and acceptable greeting behavior — one that is mutually exclusive to the problem behavior. A simple solution

would be to teach the dog to sit-stay when greeting people. The dog cannot sit and jump-up at the same time. If the dog sits and stays, the owner may praise the dog for not jumping-up. If the dog jumps-up however, the owner has yet to train the dog to sit-stay properly and so ... back to the drawing board!

Counterconditioning measures sound like the symphony of simplicity. And they are — in theory. However, it can be a little more challenging to put theory to practice. Many dogs are so excited and distracted, that they fail to acknowledge the owner's very existence, let alone respond obediently to a request to "sit".

## Troubleshooting

Initially, it can be extremely difficult to train a dog during the course of everyday living, for example when returning home from a heavy and harried day at work. At such times, the owner is hurried and can pay only marginal attention to the dog. The solution is to set aside a specific time to teach the dog how he is expected to act when greeting people.

First teach your dog to sit-on-cue using a lure-reward training method and then proof the command, especially in the front hallway and in places where the dog normally greets people. Indoors, the dog may be additionally trained to sit in a specific place, e.g., on a mat in the front hall. As you watch and praise your dog as he sits on his mat (and on-leash for safety), have a friend periodically open and close the front door and repeatedly ring the doorbell. If we are going to expect the dog to sit when greeting people, we must make sure that the dog at least knows how to sit-stay in similar but less distracting circumstances.



## Owner's Return

On returning home, instruct your dog to sit (or lie down) on his mat and delay greeting the dog until he does so. If he sits, praise him to excess. If he does not sit, keep trying and do whatever it takes — but do not give up until the dog complies. Whatever you do, *do not give up*. Do not greet your dog until he sits. Don't worry the first time is always the hardest.

Reprimands and punishments are neither necessary nor advisable. Your dog will soon learn that he has to sit *before* you will deign to say hello. Indeed, as soon as the dog sits, immediately greet him with gentle pets, pats, profuse praise and a couple of food treats.

Now comes the easy part. Once the dog's exuberance has waned, slip out of the house by the back door and then return home once more through the front door, and ask your dog to sit on his mat. This time, however, you will find that it is much easier to get your dog to sit. The dog is not nearly as excited by your return because you had only just left. After greeting your dog the second time, leave and repeat the procedure for a third time, and then once more and so on. Your dog's performance will improve considerably with each repetition. Once your dog's performance is impeccable, repeat the departure/arrival sequence another half a dozen or so times in order to leave an utterly indelible impression on your dog's brain — that you are so thoroughly overjoyed with your dog's newly learned social etiquette and mannerly greetings.



### **Visitors in the Home**

Invite a number of friends over for a dog training party. When the first guest (let's call him Patrick) arrives you may direct your total attention towards your dog because there is no hurry to open the door. It doesn't matter how long it takes to get your dog to sit, or lie-down, take encouragement that the first time will be the hardest. Once your dog is sitting (or lying) on his mat, instruct the guest to enter. Continually praise the dog all the time that he remains sitting on the mat. Your guest may offer his hand for the dog to sniff and a food reward before sitting down in the living room. Then instruct your dog to say hello. After sitting, your dog may then perform the customary nose-scan of all the olfactory goodies that normally reside on visitors' clothing and on the under-soles of their shoes.

Once the dog has settled down and got used to Pat's presence, Pat should make an exit through the back door and then ring the front doorbell again. Since the dog is calmer, he is more easily and quickly controlled. Pat enters, gives Rover a treat and then sits down to allow the dog a cursory olfactory investigation. This time your dog will not be quite as intent on nose-vacuuming Pat's pants and soles. Instead, the dog will settle down much more quickly than on the previous greeting. Now, exit Pat stage right, only to ring the doorbell once more. A rapid rush by Rover, but then... those familiar footsteps, the rhythm of the ring, a quick sniff at the bottom of the door and the sober realization — "It's Pat again!"

Now Pat's presence is no more distracting than shed shepherd hair. Consequently, it is easy to control your dog and to get him to sit-stay on the mat. Your dog gets it right and so, your dog gets rewarded and therefore, will be more likely to get it right in the future. Now it's time for the owner to call Susan. The entire multiple-entry program should be repeated with Susan, and then Tammie, and then Stacie, until the whole crew is assembled. Within just a single session of

concentrated training, your dog learns how to greet visitors at the front door and you learn, how to control your dog.

If your dog's behavior starts to slide and he fails to greet visitors in the appropriate manner, politely ask the visitors to leave and ring the doorbell again. And your dog's improved behavior will be self-explanatory.



## Strangers on the Street

It is difficult to train a dog effectively when rushing to post a letter and so, you need to troubleshoot the problem and teach your dog how to appropriately greet strangers on the street. Supply all your visitors with a bag of food rewards (for your dog) and have the people set off at intervals walking clockwise around the block while you and the dog walk counterclockwise. When meeting each person, request your dog to sit and praise him when he does so. The ersatz strangers have been instructed to gently praise the dog and give him a food reward if he sits. If the dog jumps up, simply re-instruct him to sit but don't give him a food reward.

The first lap around the block can be pretty wild, with the dog trying to high-five (or high-four) each person he encounters. However, by only the third or fourth lap, the dog begins to get the idea of how to greet people and by the fifth or sixth lap, the dog is now picture-perfect. Try this exercise with a couple of groups of people. In this fashion it is possible to practice a hundred or so street encounters within the hour. The dog has been given the opportunity to master the required domestic social graces when meeting strangers, such that when on the way to post a letter, you will have better control when meeting a *bona fide* stranger.

## Give Us A Hug!

Now, I am one of those people who thoroughly enjoy a big dog to jump up for a hug. Most dogs enjoy greeting people in this fashion. However, it would be quite unfair to reinforce a behavior at one time only to punish the dog for the same behavior at other times. We must be consistent or the dog will be punished for jumping on the wrong people, or for jumping on the right people at the wrong times. The solution is really quite simple. Teach your dog that "sitting" is the default setting for greeting people. Then teach your dog that it is acceptable and desirable to jump-up when requested to "Give us a Hug!"

# CRATE TRAINING

*How and why to use this effective training tool*

by Ian Dunbar, Ph.D.



The dog crate is a wonderful training tool. Apart from its obvious uses for transporting dogs by car or plane, the crate may be used for short-term confinement-to keep the dog out of mischief at times when the owner is not able to supervise. Confining the dog to the crate prevents it from developing bad habits. In addition, the crate may be used specifically to create good household habits: to housetrain the dogs, to establish a chew toy habit, and to reduce hyperactivity and barking. However, sometimes crate training backfires, and misuse of the crate by novice owners may produce a dog that is more difficult to housetrain, more active and unruly, more vocal and destructive, and maybe aggressive!

The ubiquitous acceptance of the crate within the dog fancy makes its use almost second nature. However, what may be routine and accepted practice for a breeder or trainer may be unpleasant or difficult for novice owners. Explaining that a crate is the dog's den is all fine and dandy. More convincing though, is for the prospective owner to see a young pup run happily into his crate and settle down for a nap.

## **Misuse = Abuse**

Crate training problems usually arise because owners fail to teach the dog to like the crate, and leave untrained dogs confined for too long. If the owner has not accustomed the dog to the crate, it will not enjoy confinement, and might run from the owners when called and/or resist and resent being manhandled into the crate. Once confined, the dog might bark out of frustration and try to destroy the crate in an attempt to escape. If confined for too long, the dog will soil the crate.

Whether or not an adult dog likes its crate depends on WHEN the crate was initially introduced and HOW. If the dog was taught to enjoy the crate during puppyhood, it will

prefer resting in it's doggy den as an adult (this is easily tested by leaving the crate door open).

However, an adolescent dog, allowed complete freedom of house and garden since puppyhood, might object to lengthy confinement unless previously trained to enjoy the crate.



## **Introducing the Crate**

No matter how much the dog enjoys its crate, there will be occasions when the owner wants to confine the dog but the dog does not want to be confined. Therefore, never call the dog and put it in the crate, or else it will soon become wary of approaching its owner when called. Instead, use a place command; "go to your crate." It is possible to enforce a place command without ruining the dog's recall.

Tell the puppy/dog "Go to your crate," lure it towards the crate with a food treat (kibble from dinner), and give the lure as a reward when the pup settles down inside. Place pieces of kibble in the crate so the pup will develop the habit of visiting the crate on it's own. And whenever it does, praise the pup and offer especially tasty food treats, ignoring the pup when it leaves. The pup will soon learn it gets lots of attention, affection and goodies inside the crate, but very little outside.

Now accustom the pup to short confinement. Throw a treat in the crate and close the door long enough to give the pup two or three tasty treats through the gate, then open the crate. Repeat this many times over. It is important that the pup learns confinement does not necessarily mean 'for the duration.'" but, rather, for a short time - and a good time.

## **Place Training**

A dog crate is a marvelous place to send the dog when the house gets busy or when the owner just wants a little peace and quiet. It is important to familiarize the dog with the crate as early on as possible so that controlled, quiet periods set the precedent for adult life. Learning to 'turn the dog off' to frequently instruct the pup to settle down and shush is a priority obedience exercise for pet owners.

The length of time a dog may be confined to a crate depends on whether it enjoys the crate and whether it is housetrained. To confine an unhouse-trained dog to a crate for lengthy periods is courting disaster. If the dog is forced to soil in it's sleeping area, the crate may no longer be affective in inhibiting elimination, and therefore cannot be used as a predicting tool in housetraining.



# PUPPY TRAINING

*THE FUN AND EASY WAY TO GET A LOT OF LEARNING DONE*



When watching puppy training classes, it is so easy to be seduced by the sight of individual pups happily and obediently responding to off-leash verbal requests and hand signals to come, sit, heel and down-stay, that one tends to forget the major reasons for holding puppy classes and using food in training. A comprehensive puppy program comprises both behavior training and temperament training in addition to the trainer's choice of obedience work.

## **TEMPERAMENT TRAINING**

The most vital ingredient is temperament training – providing an educational forum for pups to learn social skills and develop the confidence for friendly interaction with older dogs and people. Pups must be allowed to play with other puppies and dogs and to enjoy numerous positive interactions with a wide variety of people, especially children and men. Socialization should always be the prime directive of any puppy program, whether the class entails a circle of owners with pups having a right old time playing in the center, or fancy obedience skills performed off-leash in the middle of an on-going play session. Obedience training is necessary for owners to control their dogs' body position, location and activity. Certainly, all aspects of obedience training may be effectively accomplished at any time in the dog's life, but it just happens to be easier, quicker and more enjoyable to train the dog as a pup. By employing lure-reward training techniques, food treats (dry kibble from the dog's daily diet) become a virtual panacea for most potential puppy problems.

## **BEHAVIOR TRAINING**

It is better to nip behavior problems in the bud; to modify the dog's behavior before potential or incipient problems become full-blown. The dog must be taught appropriate and acceptable alternatives for its normal doggy behaviors: what to chew, where to eliminate, where to dig, when to bark or when to jump up. Otherwise, inappropriate expression of these activities will become an integral part of the dog's routine. And the behaviors become bad habits. For example, getting a dog to relinquish a ten-year barking habit is equivalent to convincing a person to quit smoking. It makes more sense to educate the dog as a pup, so that excessive barking does not become habitual. Food treats are essential during behavior modification because the majority of owners are incapable of convincingly praising their dog for exemplary behavior. Also, the positive approach of using food treats helps offset the negative side effects generated by our human foible of ignoring a dog's many good behaviors but repeatedly punishing it for making mistakes. Sadly, "training" is not much fun for many dogs and owners.



## **DO IT WHILE THEY'RE YOUNG**

Temperament training must be accomplished during puppyhood and must be viewed in a developmental context. Preventative measures are easy, effective, virtually effortless and even enjoyable. If there were ever a time for food lures and rewards to be mandatory, the routing prevention of dog biting, fighting and fearfulness by dog owners (especially children and men), is it. Whereas punishment may modify a dog's biting behavior, for example, repeated punishments hardly engender trust and warmth towards people. Quite the contrary, punishment may inhibit some behaviors but only at the great expense of exacerbating the underlying temperament problem. A puppy's temperament may be improved in the right hands just as easily as it may be ruined in the wrong hands: so much depends on the owner. It is impossible to breed a dog with a perfect temperament. Certainly good breeding is essential, but by itself it is not sufficient.

### **THE OBVIOUS REWARDS**

If owners allow their pups sufficient opportunities to play with other puppies and dogs, most potential dog-dog problems take care of themselves. The pups virtually train themselves to be friendly and outgoing. A socialized dog would much rather play with other dogs than hide or fight, though even well-socialized adult dogs will have occasional scraps. In this respect they are not much different from people, very few of whom can honestly say that they have never lost their temper. On the other hand, few people have seriously harmed another person. Similarly, it is absolutely realistic to expect dogs to know how to resolve their differences without drawing blood. Moreover, these social skills must be acquired early in puppyhood: The primary reason for puppy plays is to learn to inhibit the force of the bite before the jaws develop the power to inflict serious damage. Puppies do, however, require considerable guidance to prevent the development of fearfulness and aggressiveness towards people. Puppy classes are essential to instruct owners how to desensitize their pups to potentially threatening situations, such as around food bowls and bones, with strangers and children, during friendly (but unwanted) petting and hugging or aversive handling and restraint.

### **A TRULY DOMESTICATED DOG**

People tend to forget that a domestic dog is not domesticated until it has been adequately trained and socialized. If the dog is not socialized and has not learned to inhibit biting, then the so-called domestic dog (of any breed) is much more dangerous than a wild animal. Puppy programs that promote early socialization, an enriched social environment and temperament training with the liberal use of food and other lures and rewards in training, are the only workable solution for temperament problems.

*By Ian Dunbar*