

Obedience Training Made Easy



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SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

- **Always Practice While Your Dog is Hungry** - We'll be using treats during our exercises and your dog will do best when he's hungry.

Practice the exercise before your dog eats. If you're worried that your dog will gain weight, you can even use his dinner as his rewards.

- **Use phrases such as "Good Sit" and "Good Down"** - Use these "specific" phrases rather than just saying "Good Dog." She doesn't know our "vocabulary" and we need to teach her what the commands actually mean.
- **Use the word "Off" instead of "Down"** - If you don't you may be confusing your dog. If you tell your dog "down" when you want her to "lay down" and "down" when your dog "jumps," then you probably are confusing her.

To minimize confusion, use the word "Off" when your dog jumps.

- **Don't Use "NO" Too Often** - Be specific! We use "No" for so many things that your dog may think it's his name!

Use phrases like "No Bark" and "No Bite" to help your dog understand.

- **Never Punish Your Dog for running from You** - This is very important and can potentially save your dogs life.

Dogs love to be chased and this can be very frustrating to humans when they are trying to catch them. After running three blocks to catch your dog it's human nature to be angry.

NEVER GET ANGRY at your dog in this situation. If you do, your dog will know that he's going to be punished and you'll have a harder time getting him to return.

If you live near a busy street this can be VERY DANGEROUS. When I was six I had had a dog hit by a car that never stopped and you don't want this to happen to your dog.

DOGS LOVE TO CHASE YOU! If the above situation arises, run in the OPPOSITE DIRECTION and PLAYFULLY CALL YOUR DOG. 99% of the time your dog will turn right around and come barreling after you.

Once he gets near you stop and put him on a leash, run into your house, or whatever you can to get him into a safe environment.

IMPORTANT: Praise and even reward your dog for coming and eventually he'll come every time you call.

- **More Time Rewarding Than Punishing** - 90% of your training should focus on rewarding good behavior while only 10% should focus on punishing bad behavior.

- **No Harsh Methods** - There are many training styles that focus mainly on punishment. This can have long lasting psychological effects on your dog.

Example: using severe corrections with a choke collar to keep your dog from jumping on children can potentially lead to aggression.

The dog can actually associate the pain with the children and end up building hostility towards children.

- **Always Reward Good Behavior** - If your dog is behaving properly, be sure to let her know. Even if you didn't tell her to be good. You don't have to save rewards for training sessions.

Exercise 1 - Look At Me

This is the simplest and probably the most important exercise. I suggest that you practice this exercise first since it helps gain your dog's attention, which is crucial for proper training.

To perform this exercise:

1. Have a treat or toy in your hand.
2. Place it somewhere in front of your dog so his head is facing up and looking towards your face.
3. Say "Look At Me."
4. When your dog makes eye contact, say "good girl" and give her the treat.



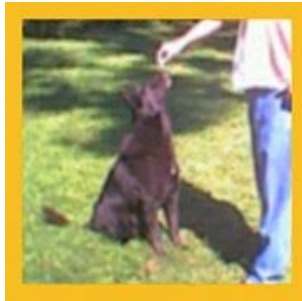
Exercise 2 - The Sit

Getting your dog to sit is very important and should be practiced in many different situations. Make him sit when someone comes to the door. Make your dog sit when he greets you. Make him sit when he meets small children.

Starting early can help prevent "jumping problems" and "safely" establish your "rank" within the household.

To perform this exercise:

1. Have a treat or toy in your hand.
2. Place it directly in front of your dog's nose.
3. Slowly move the treat slightly up and behind your dog, with his head following.
4. His head should go up and his butt down into a sitting position.
5. Say, "Good Sit" and reward.



Note:

- If your dog moves back rather than sitting down, start over.
- If you feel your dog just isn't getting it or getting frustrated, break the exercise down into smaller parts. For example: reward him just for moving his head back. Remember that dog training takes patience and commitment.

Exercise 3 - The Down

To perform this exercise:

1. Place your dog in a sit.
2. Holding a treat or toy in front of your dog's nose, slowly lower it from her "nose to her toes." (Her head should follow as you go)
3. Once your dog's head is near her toes, slowly pull the treat away from her feet (at ground level) until she automatically lays down.
4. Tell her "Good Down" and reward.



Note:

- Again if your dog is having trouble or is feeling frustrated break the exercise into smaller pieces.
- Remember to use the word "Off" when your dog jumps so that she won't be confused about the meaning of "Down."

Exercise 4 - The Stay

To perform this exercise:

1. Place your dog in a "sit" and stand on his right side.
2. Grasp the leash at about half way and hold above the dog's head so there is a "slight pressure".
3. Take "one" step in front of your dog, so that you're facing him.
4. Say "Stay" while hold your palm outwards and up.
5. Return to original position. Say "Good Stay" and reward.



Note:

- If your dog doesn't stay, start over and keep practicing. Eventually your dog will learn.
- Once you can take one step, take another and so on. (You only need to hold the leash above your dog's head until he understands what you want him to do when you tell him to "Stay")
- Please always practice on a leash when outside.

Exercise 5 - The Heel

To perform this exercise:

1. Have a pocket or fanny pack full of treats.
2. While walking, hold a treat directly in front of you so that she is on your left side without pulling.
3. While walking give her treats and praise her by saying "Good Heel." You can even let her nibble pieces of the treat while you're walking.
4. Be sure to keep on saying "Good Heel" so she can learn the command.



Common Obedience Problems

Jumping

To prevent your dog from jumping, everyone who interacts with your dog must send a consistent message. If one person allows your dog to jump, your dog is going to have a hard time understanding how he's supposed to behave.

The best way to stop jumping (which can be tough if you have a big dog) is to simply turn your back and ignore him. Once he stops jumping, slowly pet him and give him attention. Your dog will eventually learn that you won't interact with him when he jumps.

You also should have your dog sit every time you interact with him. Dogs naturally jump during greetings, so you really need to be consistent if you want him to greet you another way. You can easily teach your dog to sit when he greets you as long as you send him a consistent message.

Greeting Guests

Just as you should have your dog sit when she greets you, he should also have her sit when others come to the door.

Keep some treats near the door so that you can reward her, which will reinforce this good behavior. It also might be a good idea to have your guest give her dog a treat, while she greets him with a sit.

Having a leash handy will physically prevent your dog from jumping on people at the door. Stand on the leash so there is only enough room to sit. If she gets up, have her sit again and reward the proper behavior.

Chewing

Chewing is a difficult problem to fix, since it is natural and "necessary" for puppies to chew. Dogs do not have hands like we do to investigate new and mysterious things. The only way they can examine new objects is by smelling them and putting them in their mouth!

Plus, just like human children, puppies lose their "baby teeth" and grow new adult ones. They need to chew during this time and there is no way to really stop them.

The best thing to do is to get your dog acceptable toys that she can chew on. I recommend Kongs, Nylabones and similar toys. They are very durable and when "baited" they can draw your dog's attention for a long time. Both can be found at any PetCo or PetSmart.

The Kong has a hole in the center, which can be filled with your dog's favorite treats, dog food, and even peanut butter. Some dogs spend hours chewing on this toy, trying to get the food out.

Nylabones and Gumbabones now come in different flavors like beef, chicken and liver. The plain ones can also be boiled in broth to make them more palatable.

Whenever your dog is chewing something she shouldn't be, tell her "No" and give her an acceptable toy.

Also be sure to play with your dog and her chew toys at the same time. This will make them more likely to play with them instead of your favorite chair! Most importantly, "Reward" her when she is playing with the correct toys.

Digging

Most dogs dig out of boredom. Often tiring your dog out with a good game of fetch will "prevent" your dog from digging and partaking in other destructive behavior.

Hint: Play fetch with two balls. If your dog won't drop the ball you just threw, show him the second ball and he'll usually drop the first one.

Some dogs dig holes to stay cool on warm days. Make sure your dog has plenty of shade to rest in when he is outside. He should have plenty of cool water and, if it's too hot, bring him inside.

Some dogs like Dachshunds were bred to dig. It is very hard to stop a dog with this type of instinct from digging.

The easiest way to deal with a persistent digger is to create a special digging area. It is much easier to teach your dog to dig in an inconspicuous spot than it is to teach him not to dig at all, especially with dogs that were bred to dig.

Create a special part of your yard just for digging and make it desirable to dig there. Actually dig with your dog to show him it's okay. Bury desirable objects like balls etc... for your dog to find.

If you see your dog digging in the wrong area, tell him "No" and bring him to the designated digging area. Show him again that it is okay to dig in that area and reward him with treats and praise when he digs there.

Housebreaking

Probably the biggest mistake an owner can make when housebreaking a dog is reprimanding her after the fact. Unless you catch her in the act, she is unlikely to know what she is being punished for. Plus, it often doesn't stop the dog from going in the house, it just makes her do it in less noticeable areas.

If you catch her in the middle of the act, tell her "no" and take her right outside. Wait till she goes and praise her.

You also should keep in mind that a young dog doesn't have a fully developed bladder and can not physically hold it in for eight hours while we're out. If this sounds like your situation, you might want to consider hiring someone or asking a friend to let your dog out while you're gone.

Another consideration is that a dog normally has to eliminate about an hour after eating. So you probably should feed her early before you go out, allowing enough time for the food to digest and to take her out.

It is very important to praise your dog when she goes where you want her.

When you're housetraining your dog, you'll want to keep your dog confined to one room (like the kitchen) or in a crate where she has enough room to turn around. Make the crate fun by giving her treats, toys and even feeding her in it.

Once your dog has gone to the bathroom outside you can allow her free roam of the house for about 20 minutes, or you can keep her on the leash so you can pull her quickly outside if she starts to go in the house.

When home try to take her out every hour or so and really reward her when she goes outside.

About The Author



John Karnish is an ABTA Certified Obedience Trainer and currently offers private lessons in NJ. He has an intimate knowledge of dogs, not just from traditional study but also from hands on experience with hundreds of dogs in the dog daycare and shelter environment.

John is founder of "[Canines Specialties](#)," which focuses on high quality supplies for dogs. He is more than happy to answer any question about dog training or just talk dogs.

John is also available for private training sessions in the Monmouth County area of New Jersey. Visit: <http://www.perfectpup.com> for more information.

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