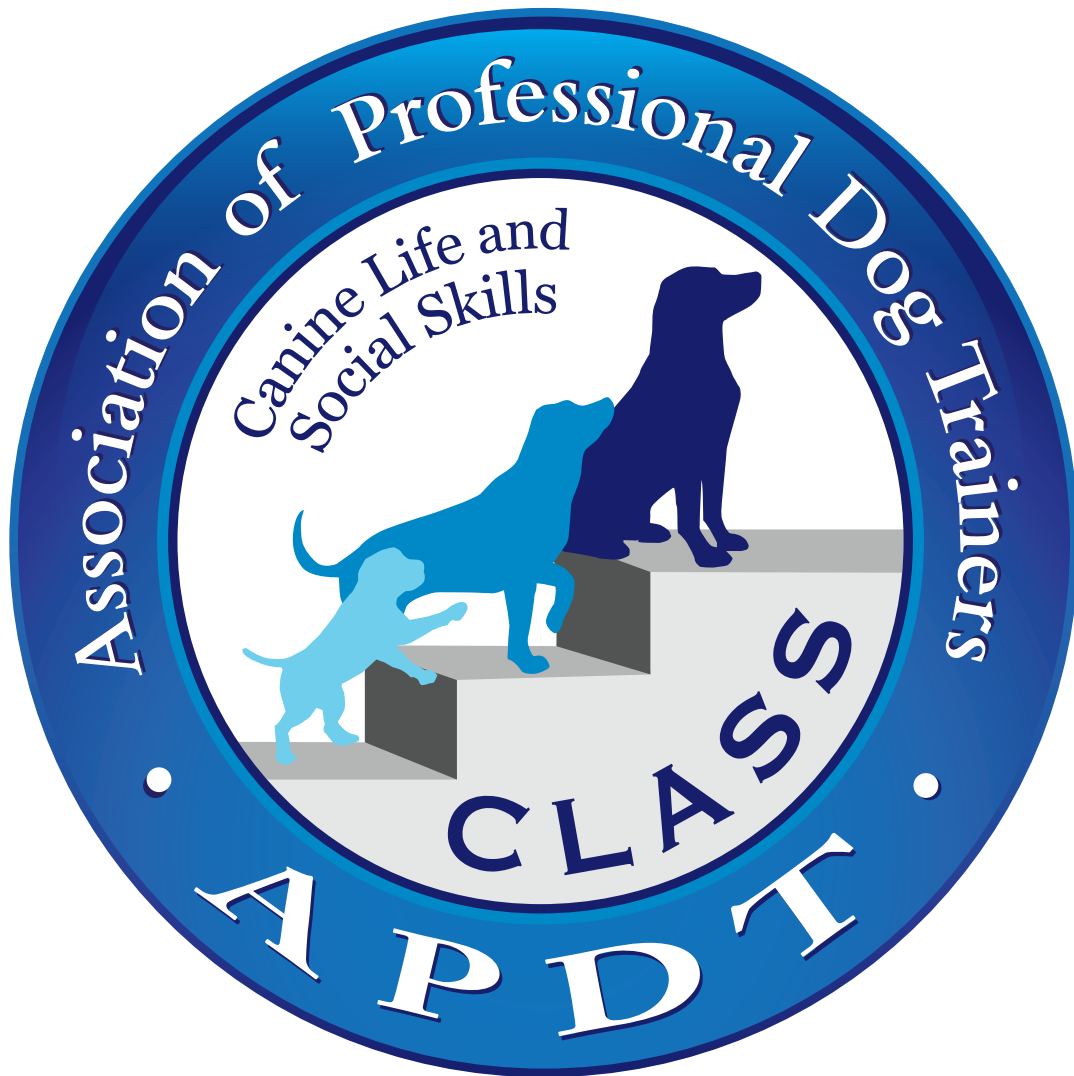
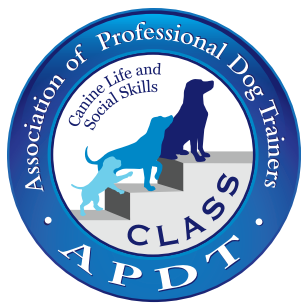


Canine Life and Social Skills®



Program Handbook for Dog Trainers



Canine Life and Social Skills[®]

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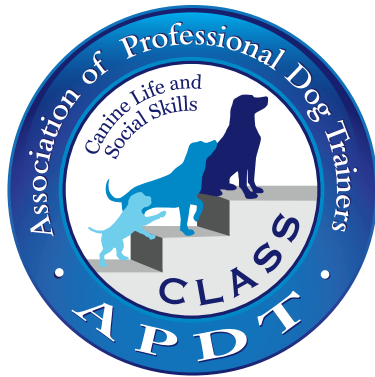
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What is C.L.A.S.S.?

Dog behavior is a complicated mix of environmental, mental and physical factors that can change depending on the circumstances. The goal of the C.L.A.S.S. program is to instill a goal on the part of pet parents to continuously work with their dogs to create well-behaved, well-socialized companions.

C.L.A.S.S.®, Canine Life And Social Skills®, is a four-level group class curricula for pet parents to test real-life skills with their canine companions. All four curricula can easily be used to start or enhance current group class offerings for any dog training business, regardless if taught in a building or outdoors.



The four levels of the program are named after high school and university degree programs: the H.S. (High School Level) B.A. (Bachelor's Level), the M.A. (Master's Level) and the Ph.D. (Doctorate Level). Each C.L.A.S.S. level is designed with several goals:

- Develop a strong group class business that will increase student retention with multiple levels and real-life relevance.
- Teach and encourage students to properly manage so-called "unruly" dog behaviors so that dogs are welcome in more social situations.
- Generate a mindset among pet parents to incorporate skills that they learn in dog training classes into daily living with their dogs.
- Raise the bar in pet dog training and manners using a high standard curriculum with four levels of achievement.
- Improve relationships between dogs and pet parents through education and promotion of positive reinforcement and ongoing training.
- Reinforce responsible pet parenthood by teaching puppy, basic, intermediate and advanced manners.
- Provide dog pet parents with opportunities to hone their dogs' real-life skills and to receive feedback on developing those skills with their dogs.
- Provide real-life tools so that pet parents can include their dogs fully in their lives; this is much easier when the dogs are given boundaries and skills with real-life relevance. Increase awareness for pet parents of additional training resources available, including helping to find the right professional dog trainer for their needs.
- High school curriculum meets the requirements of AKC's STAR Puppy program.
- B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. curricula can be used as an AKC CGC prep course.
- B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. curricula can be used for reactive or aggression classes, if the dog trainer has the required skills and sets up the area with visual barriers and additional safety measures.



As C.L.A.S.S. expands, it is the vision of the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT) that there will be more well-trained, socialized pets in society, and opportunities for increased benefits and acceptance in communities.

Marketing Benefits of C.L.A.S.S.

C.L.A.S.S. was developed to benefit dog pet parents, APDT dog training instructor members, shelters, rescues, veterinarians and communities. Here are some reasons and marketing tips for this program:

For Pet Parents

C.L.A.S.S. shows dog pet parents how to teach these skills using effective, reward-based methods, and how to teach skills with reliability. Reward-based training methods minimize the use of punishment and are fun for both pet parent and dog. Because training gives dogs more acceptable outlets for their energy, there is an increase in the odds that the dogs will stay in their families for their lifetimes rather than be given up due to behavior issues. Also, with its four levels, C.L.A.S.S. offers goals for pet parents to continue training beyond basic skills and to maintain those skills.

For Dog Training Instructors

Dog trainers, whether teaching group classes, levels class or private lessons, can use the C.L.A.S.S. curricula, games and exercises, and class tips as teaching tools. By incorporating the C.L.A.S.S. program, pet parent self-assessments and homework sheets into their training businesses, trainers can guide students toward their concrete goals and help returning students to prepare for advanced C.L.A.S.S. levels. Furthermore, C.L.A.S.S. helps spread the awareness of using positive reinforcement, which is good for everyone.

For APDT Members

APDT members, at the professional and premium professional level, have the distinct benefit of being eligible to purchase the CLASS curricula, which offers games, handbook, homework sheets and curricula to their dog training business.

For Animal Shelters/Rescues

C.L.A.S.S. is of particular benefit to shelters, as the training of C.L.A.S.S. skills provides shelter dogs with mental and physical enrichment, reduces kennel stress and behavioral problems, increases the adoptability of shelter dogs by teaching them basic obedience skills, and enhances the ability of a dog to adapt to his new home. C.L.A.S.S. can also provide a framework of a volunteer program for shelters, whether the shelter is just starting a volunteer training program or has one in place that needs updating.

For Veterinarians

C.L.A.S.S. skills help ensure encounters with veterinarians are more pleasant since dogs trained in C.L.A.S.S. are well-mannered and able to be managed without force. In addition, the C.L.A.S.S. program encourages dog pet parents to have their dogs in the routine care of a veterinarian.

For Communities

C.L.A.S.S. promotes responsible dog pet parenthood, including management of nuisance behavior, adherence to leash laws and cleaning up after pets. Dogs that complete C.L.A.S.S. courses are ambassadors for well-trained, socialized dogs, and educated dog pet parents are role models – they help train the younger generations in responsible dog pet parenthood and setting a positive training foundation. C.L.A.S.S. is about teaching and appreciating real-life, practical canine skills and using those skills in everyday situations, so dogs are well-behaved members of households and a welcome part of society. Ripple effects throughout the community can occur as dog pet parents and dogs reach their potential through training. More well-trained dogs may increase opportunities, such as animal-assisted therapy and other animal-assisted benefits.



History of C.L.A.S.S.

C.L.A.S.S. was officially launched in March 2011 by APDT. The early framework for the idea was an incentive program for pet parents to do more real-life training with their dogs and showcase their dogs' skills to the community, coupled with a message promoting positive reinforcement training. In 2009, the APDT Board of Directors tasked the Member Relations and Communications Committee with developing the idea further, and the potential for such a program quickly led to the formation of the C.L.A.S.S. Task Force. The program was refined based on input from dog pet parents and non-dog pet parents, professional dog trainers, shelter staff, rescue organizations, and fosters.

In the spring of 2010, the staff of Dogtown at Best Friends Animal Society hosted the C.L.A.S.S. Task Force for three days, during which the curriculum was tested with a wide variety of dogs, helping to shape a program that worked well both for dogs in homes and for shelter dogs. In 2018, the APDT Board of Directors voted to offer C.L.A.S.S. curricula as a member benefit. The 2018 C.L.A.S.S. committee rebuilt the C.L.A.S.S. structure, which consisted of adding an additional curriculum focused on puppy training. Now, C.L.A.S.S. is a tool to assist dog trainers in driving their group class business regardless of their business model.

The following past and previous APDT members have contributed to C.L.A.S.S.: Cathy Bruce, Mira Jones, Kelli Knowles, Heddie Leger, Gloria Shipman, Barbara Shumannfang, Carolyn Vanderhorst, Ann Allums, Mychelle Blake, Ali Brown, Gail Fisher, Janine Pierce, Virginia Huxley, Robin Nutall, Kathy Echolos, Grisha Stewart, Nikki Finn, Maribeth Lazich, Joann Rechline and Fanna Easter.

Purpose of this Handbook

The *C.L.A.S.S. Program Handbook* is for APDT members interested in the C.L.A.S.S. program. This handbook describes in detail the class items, criteria for passing each level and marketing tips.

C.L.A.S.S. Participants

Students

Anyone with a dog is encouraged to participate in the C.L.A.S.S. program.

Junior Students

Younger dog handlers are encouraged to participate in the C.L.A.S.S. program with their dogs. Junior students (12 to 17 years old) should have a parent or adult mentor present during class.

Using C.L.A.S.S. for Reactive Dogs

Most any dog would benefit from C.L.A.S.S. training, though various students may have different reasons for participating in C.L.A.S.S. and may meet their goals at different times. Some teams are fine-tuning their training skills to move on to other activities, such as Animal-Assisted Therapy or AKC's S.T.A.R. Puppy or Canine Good Citizen, while others are working on improving behavior issues and how to better manage their dogs through C.L.A.S.S. Even if dogs are reactive or

aggressive, C.L.A.S.S. can benefit these dogs in a controlled environment. Maintaining a small class size, and with dogs behind barriers, each dog should practice select behaviors. Towards the end of class, each dog could practice these behaviors in the classroom, while other dogs are rewarded behind barriers. Even reactive and aggressive dogs need to learn polite manners.

The dog trainer must work to ensure that all dogs are safely managed by the student day-to-day to prevent the enacting of dog-to-dog aggressive behavior, and the dog is steadily improving through ongoing training. In this case, as long as the dog does not pose a direct threat during class, and the dog trainer has the experience and skills to successfully work with an aggressive dog, a dog trainer may allow a dog with aggressive behavior issues to be eligible for a C.L.A.S.S. group class. The dog trainer also takes into consideration the fact that even if a student manages the dog's behavior well, that does not guarantee there will not be "accidents."



Equipment for C.L.A.S.S.

Students will need to bring the following items to class:

- Leash (4' to 6' made of leather, nylon or rope, non-retractable)
- Collar and/or harness
- Treat pouch
- Treats (a variety of at least 100 pea-sized treats)
- Mat for the dog's comfort
- Chew item or food-stuffed toy

The instructor may choose to have a few spare leashes, collars, food-stuffed toys and/or harnesses available if needed. Choke, pinch and shock collars should not be used.

Training Terminology

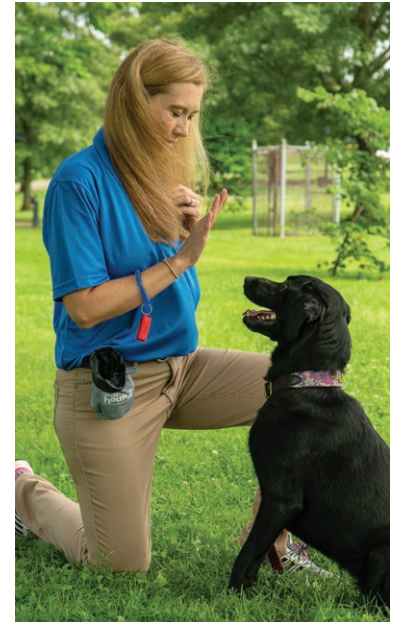
Cues

Cues are words or gestures that prompt a dog to perform a behavior. Cues can be verbal, that is, a spoken word or sound. For example, the words "sit" and "down" may be verbal cues you have taught your dog. Cues can also be visual, such as a hand signal, body movement or body blocking (using your body to take up space) without physical contact. A verbal and

visual cue may be given simultaneously. Reliability of cue response means that the dog responds to each cue and does so in a timely manner (within one to three seconds).

"Cue" versus "Command"

In general, the word "cue" is used instead of "command" throughout the C.L.A.S.S. curricula and when speaking of reward-based training. A "cue" implies getting cooperation from a dog, while a "command" tends to connote a demand that a dog must do it, "or else" (with the "or else" usually being something unpleasant or forcing the dog to do something.) Dogs, like us, learn from consequences. Consequences do not need to be harmful to be effective. By rewarding dogs for doing what we ask, they are generally happier and healthier than dogs who are corrected in physical ways for doing undesirable behavior.



Repeat Cueing

Repeat cueing is when the student repeats the same cue multiple times (e.g., 'sit', 'sit', 'sit', 'sit'), often when the dog is not responding. Repeat cueing is also defined as giving an additional yet different cue intended to elicit the desired behavior (for example, saying "sit," [clearing of the throat], then saying "excuse me," if the dog doesn't sit.) Another form of repeat cueing is a steady visual signal that lasts more than five seconds (e.g., a finger held up continuously for an attention cue.) Training should be clear, effective and pleasant for the dog. Repeating the cue word, like nagging, can be an undesirable habit, and cues need not be repeated if the dog has been trained and understands to perform the behavior on one cue.

If a cue does not result in a reliable response, that may be a sign that the student/dog team needs more work on that particular cue. Either the dog has not been taught the behavior reliably, has not been rewarded generously enough to create a habit or is distracted by something else.

Release

A "release" is a word or gesture that signals to the dog that the behavior is completed. Just as a student should give clear cues for a dog to perform a behavior, a student should also pay attention to clearly communicate to the dog when the dog no longer has to maintain the behavior. This means that after cueing a dog to sit, a release would be needed to signal the dog when he no longer has to perform the sit. For example, after cueing the dog to wait, the student should release the dog from the wait to go through a door, move to the food bowl, be free to do what the dog wants to do, etc. Typical release words are "release," "okay," "free," "all done," "that's all," "break," "thank you" and "bingo." A release gesture could be holding both palms out toward the dog as in a "no more" gesture.



Rewards

Rewards are used to reinforce desired behavior in positive-reinforcement training. In reward-based training, rewards can be anything the dog desires: treats, toys, petting, praise, attention, access to desired resources and more.

Training Techniques Not Recommended

Equipment and techniques that try to modify or produce behavior through fear, pain or threats are not recommended for C.L.A.S.S., as fear and anxiety are not the basis for building a mutually rewarding relationship. Therefore, to foster a positive focus, effective training and pleasant atmosphere, the following are not recommended in a C.L.A.S.S. training environment.

Equipment

Aversive gear includes choke chains, prong collars and shock collars.

Physical Prompting

Physical prompting is touching a dog or using leash pressure to get the dog to perform a behavior. Some examples include touching a dog's rear as a cue to sit, or tugging on the leash to get the dog's attention. Physical prompting can create pressure or anxiety for dogs, even if no physical pressure is used. This is not recommended in a C.L.A.S.S. training environment.

Physical Force

Physical force includes pushing a dog into a sit or down and pulling a dog with the leash, and can signify that more training is needed for the dog to choose to do the behavior voluntarily. This is not recommended in a C.L.A.S.S. training environment.

Harsh Corrections

Any action that frightens or hurts a dog when he performs an undesirable behavior is unnecessary and harmful to the relationship and the training process. This includes:

- Harsh tones (for example, yelling at or intimidating a dog with voice tone)
- Harsh startle corrections (for example, shake cans or air horns)
- Physical corrections (for example, grabbing, hitting, pinching, muzzle popping and finger jabs)
- Leash corrections (for example, leash jerks and leash pops)

Special Situations in Group Class

Group class instructors should have experience working with people and their dogs, in addition to having dog training experience and being familiar with canine body language. Group classes are about training the human students just as much, if not more, than the dogs.

"Unruly" Dog Behavior

Jumping up, barking, chewing, mouthing, peeing, pooping, digging, chasing and tugging are all normal dog behaviors. Be prepared to teach and encourage students how to properly manage and/or change the dog's motivation for the so-called "unruly" dog behaviors when appropriate. Although there could be different reasons why these behaviors may occur, dogs basically engage in these activities because it is what they naturally know and it works for them.

Stress in Dogs

Some dogs may experience stress in a group class environment. Some signs of excessive stress include shutting down, tail tucked between legs, trembling, whining, excessive barking, cowering, excessive chewing of the leash, pacing, excessive drooling, excessive panting, and trying to escape or hide. There are different intensities of these stress signs. Some ways to help a dog feel more comfortable include allowing the dog to move around the environment to check it out, offering treats or chews, anxiety-reducing clothing (e.g., Thundershirts™ or Anxiety Wraps), and perhaps other natural products such as lavender essential oil and pheromones. Coach the student to be patient and go at the dog's pace, focusing more on the dog's emotional health than training behaviors (which can be done when the dog is comfortable).

Threatening Dog Behavior

Dogs that exhibit unmanageable aggressive or threatening behavior inappropriately toward people or dogs in a group class environment may benefit more from private lessons or Reactive Dog classes if visual barriers do not reduce the behavior. Consider the safety of all students and dogs, including the anxiety experienced by the threatening dog.

Extra Time in Class

If time allows, tricks such as paw, spin, rollover, fetch and speak can be incorporated into your class. These extra items can make class more fun and enriching. Instructors may also choose to allow each student to demonstrate a trick they have taught their dog.

C.L.A.S.S. Self-Assessment

The C.L.A.S.S. Self-Assessment (SA) process provides students with the opportunity to test the skills introduced through C.L.A.S.S. During an SA, students accompany their dogs through a series of stations to perform real-life activities that they score themselves on a rating scale provided by the instructor. The SA for each level is available in the C.L.A.S.S. curricula.

Summary of C.L.A.S.S. Skills

There are four C.L.A.S.S. levels: H.S. (High School Level), B.A. (Bachelor's Level), M.A. (Master's Level) and Ph.D. (Doctorate Level) Students progress to higher levels as they graduate from each level.

H.S. Skills

- Sit & Down
- Come & Collar Grab
- Off-Leash Heel
- Basic Stay
- Confidence Course
- Name Game
- Comfort Around Food Bowl
- Meeting Strangers
- Body Handling

B.A. Skills

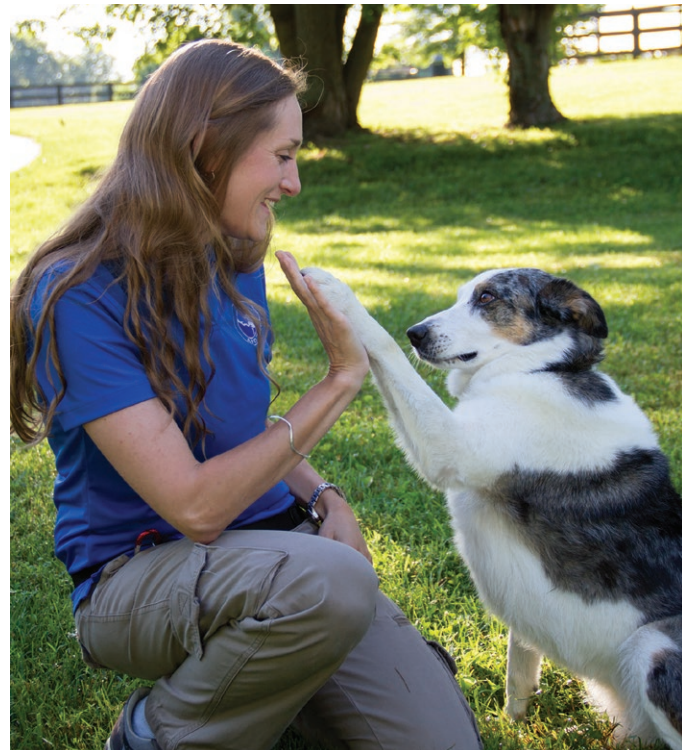
- Wait at the Door
- Come & Leashing-Up Manners
- Loose-Leash Walking & Attention
- Meet & Greet
- Leave It
- Wait for the Food Bowl
- Stay
- Settle
- Give & Take

M.A. Skills

- Wait in the Car
- Calmly Pass by Other Dogs
- Wait at the Door with Distraction
- Come & Leashing-Up Manners with Distraction
- Sit, Down & Stand
- Body Handling
- Loose-Leash Walking & Leave It (Figure 8 Configuration)
- Stay with Distraction & Distance
- Out of Sight, Out of Mind (with Hand Targeting)

Ph.D. Skills

- Advanced Loose-Leash Walking
- Back Up
- Advanced Stay
- Advanced Come & Leashing-Up Manners
- Meet & Greet with Body Handling
- Attention During High Distraction
- Table Manners
- Do You Really Know Sit?



Measuring Success

C.L.A.S.S. is intended to encourage the teaching of real-life skills to dogs, so that dogs have healthy “Canine Life” and “Social Skills.” Therefore, these items in each level purposely reflect regular and important goals for dog pet parents to achieve by the end of class. Of course, each team should be evaluated on their personal goals too, using self-assessments and homework sheets.

During the course or on the last day, reward students with inexpensive gifts, certificates, candy, stickers or dog treats when they reach a real-life skill goal. Positively rewarding the client is just as important as positively rewarding the dog. Plus, giving rewards when goals are met build bonds between dogs and their pet parents. If goals are designed to be obtained outside of a class environment, explain how to meet these goals successfully and provide the client with a self-assessment to document attained goals.

Marketing Tips for C.L.A.S.S.

As noted earlier, C.L.A.S.S. is more than an assessment of real-life skills. Here is an explanation of additional components and objectives of C.L.A.S.S., through which dog trainers, students and dogs can benefit.

C.L.A.S.S. is an Educational Tool

At its core, C.L.A.S.S. is an educational tool, providing resources that promote understanding in dog training methods that focus on using positive reinforcement. Canine Life And Social Skills is not just about training dogs; it is about training people too. Education is essential, as dog behavior is often misunderstood, and myths have been perpetuated regarding their behavior. Dogs are not furry little people, and problems can arise when humans apply human characteristics to explain dog behavior. Dogs should be studied and understood as a distinct species.

The more we understand dogs, the better the relationship we can have with our dog. For instance, most dogs are not behaving “badly” in a dog sense; they are just using normal dog behaviors to get their needs met or to resolve conflict. They use those behaviors because it is what they know, and in dog culture, they usually work. Dogs do not feel guilty in the human sense of the word since dogs do not think in terms of right and wrong, but in terms of what works and what does not work for them. Dog behavior is driven by doggie needs, not human emotion or judgments.

Through the C.L.A.S.S. program, students can find resources for learning about dog behavior, including locating training professionals dedicated to advocating dog-friendly techniques.

Why Choose You as Their Dog Trainer?

APDT premium professional and professional dog training members are educated and experienced in scientific training methods, dog behavior, body language and problem solving, and can patiently help pet parents understand and train their dogs effectively without the use of aversive techniques. APDT premium professional and professional trainers are passionate about working with dogs, maintain their skills through continuing education and provide expert guidance.



It can be confusing for a dog pet parent to figure out how to hire a dog trainer. To make an informed decision, pet parents are strongly encouraged to understand the various training methodologies in dog training today. Please refer to the guidelines at www.apdt.com/resource-center/how-to-choose-a-dog-trainer.

RESOURCE CENTER



Articles for Pet Parents

On the APDT website, under the Resource Center tab, there is an array of free educational articles for pet parents, as well as for the veterinary community, general public, shelters and dog trainers. Some of the topics include:

- Tips for Common Dog Behavior Issues (e.g., barking, chewing, housetraining, crate training)
- Common Myths about Dog Training
- Socialization
- Pet Safety
- Why Dog Trainers Recommend Food When Training
- Dog Park Information

- Training Equipment Options
- Understanding Trainer Certifications (not all certifications are the same)
- Dominance Myths and Dog Training Realities
- Recommended Book List for Pet Dog Pet Parents

National Train Your Dog Month

National Train Your Dog Month, another program of the APDT, is designed to promote the importance of training dogs. Visit www.trainyourdogmonth.com for more training tips and ideas to promote training.



Promote Positive Reinforcement Training

C.L.A.S.S., through its curriculum and training resources, advocates the use of reward-based training. Positive, reward-based training minimizes the use of punishment and is fun for you and your dog. C.L.A.S.S. promotes healthy relationship-based training, training in which the communication is two-way, the mutual trust is strong and the student (i.e., dog pet parent) gets to know the dog as an individual to help him reach his potential. Reward-based training is instructive, telling the dog, without anger or force, what we would like the dog to do.

The human tendency is to notice and react when a dog (or person) is doing something we don't like. Yet we would have much better relationships if we rewarded the dog (and person!) for doing things we *do* like. Help set the dog up for success by giving feedback and rewards for behavior you like, and by arranging the learning environment to make it easy for the dog to do the appropriate behavior as well as *not* to do the behavior you dislike.

Positive, reward-based training does not mean that your training is indulgent or without restraint. Clear boundaries and rules still need to be set for our canine companions. For one, dogs feel more secure with clear boundaries, because they know what is expected of them. Two, boundaries are necessary to maintain harmony in the human household. With reward-based training methods, those rules and boundaries can be established without creating a confrontational atmosphere.



Does Positive, Reward-Based Training Work?

Positive reinforcement – rewarding a desired behavior – is an effective and reliable method of teaching new behaviors or changing current behaviors in any physically and mentally healthy animal. Dogs are more likely to repeat behaviors that get rewarded, which is why positive reinforcement works.

Furthermore, learning occurs readily in a reward-based training program in which the dog feels safe and relaxed. Training that relies on the use of physical and emotional punishment creates stress, hinders the learning process and can harm the relationship.

Positive reinforcement training is not based on using only food as a reward; it is about understanding the science behind positive reinforcement. It is a simple rule that behaviors resulting in pleasant consequences will be repeated, and behaviors with no payoff will decrease. Positive consequences can be anything the dog likes, from massages and belly rubs, to going for a walk, to sitting next to you, to playing. The trainer who understands dogs as individuals with unique personalities, likes and dislikes can effectively use a variety of rewards, in addition to food, during training.

Strengthen Dog/Student Relationships

Another objective of C.L.A.S.S. is to strengthen relationships between students and their canine companions. A positive approach develops and safeguards harmonious relationships by maintaining a mutual trust between dog and student. The C.L.A.S.S. program strengthens relationships through effective communication, understanding and quality time spent together.

Effective communication is essential to any relationship. Training is communicating to help a dog learn what we want him to do, not forcing him to do it. Dogs and humans are born speaking different languages. When a dog is brought into a human household, it is up to the human to communicate in a way the dog understands. Similarly, dogs have an expressive and well-developed system of body language for communication. If we expect the dog to listen to us, we should listen to what the dog is telling us.

The dog/student relationship is also strengthened through shared activity. With positive, rewards-based training, we spend quality time with the dog, resulting in the dog learning so he has the social skills to spend more time with people. Dogs are living, emotional beings who thrive on social interaction; they require human attention to be well-adjusted, not to mention to learn appropriate social behavior. A dog left out in the yard is not only deprived of required human attention and a sense of belonging, but the skills needed to live with humans, as dogs will do whatever works for them if left to their own devices.

Encouragement of Ongoing Training

With its emphasis on teaching and maintaining reliable life skills as well as opportunities to earn H.S., B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. certificates, the C.L.A.S.S. program supports continual training and encourages pet parents to engage in more shared activities with their dogs. Dogs are continually learning with every behavior, so why not use training to be proactive in what your dog does learn?



There are so many reasons to continue training with your dog:

- Training redirects your dog's natural behaviors to acceptable outlets.
- Training builds your dog's behavioral repertoire.
- The more acceptable behaviors a dog learns, the less room there is for undesirable behaviors.
- Training is fun.
- Training increases the odds that a dog will stay in the family for his lifetime rather than be given up due to behavior issues.
- Training makes it possible to engage in many more activities with a well-trained dog, such as:
 - Advanced training classes
 - Dog sports and games
 - Animal-assisted activities (e.g., visit nursing homes)
 - Outings
 - Vacations
 - Search and Rescue

Support for Shelters and Rescues

Another component of the C.L.A.S.S. program is to support training efforts of animal shelters and rescues. The lack of training or improper training is a primary reason for pets being relinquished to a shelter. C.L.A.S.S. can be used to promote adoption through training basic life skills, to provide dogs with mental and physical enrichment, to reduce kennel stress and behavioral problems, and to help keep dogs in their homes. C.L.A.S.S. can also provide a framework for a shelter volunteer program. Shelter websites can feature dogs for adoption that have passed at least one level of the C.L.A.S.S. assessment, thereby giving adoptable dogs more visibility to potential adopters looking to bring home a new canine friend.

Common Pet Parent Questions and Answers

General

Where can a student take a young puppy (8–12 weeks) who is current on all required vaccinations?

Socialization of puppies ages 8–12 weeks is a very important part of having a well-rounded dog.

At this age they should have received a minimum of their first series of vaccines for protection against infectious diseases, and all puppy classes should require this at the very least for admission. The risk of a dog dying from exposure to diseases should be weighed against the risk of a dog being relinquished to a shelter or euthanized because of behavioral issues that develop due to a lack of socialization. This period of learning is a critical period to help influence good behavior of dogs. Places where you can take your puppy include your veterinary clinic, a puppy class that observes proper sanitization and vaccine protocols, and locations where your puppy can meet people and see new things without meeting strange dogs.



Why is picking up after my dog important?

Part of being a responsible pet parent is being a good neighbor. Nobody enjoys the chore of picking up after their dogs in our own backyard. Imagine how your neighbors would feel if they had to pick up after dogs they do not even own! Picking up after or “curbing” your dog is a law in many places but perhaps, more importantly, you should be a good neighbor and good citizen no matter where you are with your dog. Always carry waste bags with you.

Do dogs really need to be walked every day?

Dogs need exercise every day just like humans do. Taking a leash walk with your dog is not only great physical exercise for your dog, but it also provides great mental stimulation and helps with ongoing socialization to new places and scents. Taking leash walks with your dog can also contribute toward the two of you building a strong relationship as you walk and work/explore together.



Why should a student check their dog’s entire body every month?

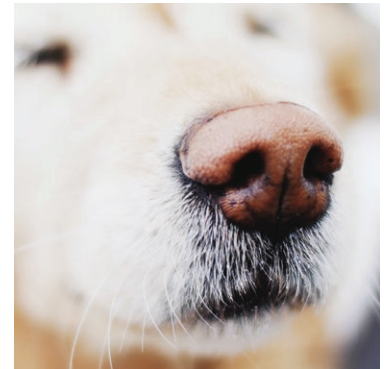
There are many health issues that may go unnoticed if not checked for regularly. Dogs are also very good at hiding their

discomfort or pain. Going over your dog’s entire body closely frequently, including looking at his teeth and gums, can help you identify a potential health issue early in its development that may save you from a large veterinary bill later. Noticing the small things early on in many instances may even save your dog’s life. Going over your dog’s body regularly is also useful for checking that your dog is at a healthy weight.

How is a dog’s sense of smell and hearing different from a human’s?

Dogs observe the world much differently than humans. We rely mostly on our sense of sight, followed by our sense of hearing. Dogs, on the other hand, have a much keener sense of smell than humans. Therefore, they gather much more information about their surroundings by sniffing. They also have a much

greater sense of hearing than humans and can hear sounds from up to a mile away or deep in the ground. Dogs can hear a mole traveling underground and can smell a minute amount of explosives or drugs hidden in an entire warehouse.



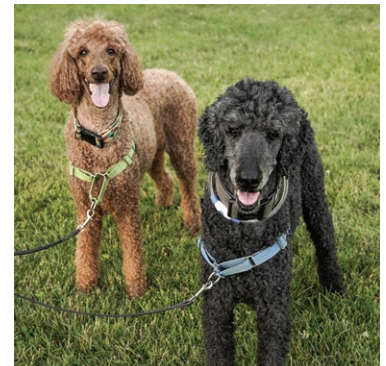
What should I do if my dog is uncomfortable greeting another person?

It is common courtesy to have a person ask to pet your dog. As a responsible student you should always be proactive in protecting your dog from situations that may make them uncomfortable. This means you might need to take the first step to help ensure approaching people are respectful of your dog’s space. Simply ask them to wait before reaching for your dog. You need to determine when – or if – your dog is comfortable enough to receive petting from a stranger.

There is no need to be embarrassed or to feel rushed. Remember, just as there are some people who are a bit more shy and stand-offish, so are there dogs who may need to take some extra time to get to know a stranger. Some dogs may never enjoy meeting strangers and may need extra time and socialization to get used to a new person before allowing themselves to be touched. Always move at your dog’s pace and comfort level.

How do I keep my dog safe if someone is trying to bring a dog over to greet and my dog is reactive?

Never rely on the actions of another person to keep your dog (and dogs around you) safe. As a responsible dog student, you need to do whatever it takes to immediately create distance between your dog and the other dog. Do not feel uncomfortable informing the other dog pet parent to please keep the dog



away from yours and explain that your dog does not care for other dogs. If you have not already done so, consider consulting an expert in canine behavior modification to address your dog's reactive issues. Visit the APDT Trainer Search at www.apdt.com to find a trainer near you who can be of assistance.

Why is crate training beneficial?

Having a doggie-safe area such as a crate will provide your dog with his own personal space and is essential to many aspects of your training. Your dog's crate will be used during times when you cannot supervise him or when you just need a break. Crate training can keep your dog out of trouble when you are away from home, too. You will not have to worry about him chewing on your furniture, shoes or other valuable items, and you will not need to worry about him having an accident in your home. Crates can also be a safe place when traveling. Your dog's crate can be a safe and fun place for him.

What is the best way to pick out treats or food for my dog?

There is such a variance of products available on the market. Marketing and advertising are very alluring to humans, but that does not mean the ingredients are as good as the package may look. As a responsible pet parent, you will want to be aware that some ingredients may not be good for your dog. It is important to educate yourself as to what it takes to maintain good health for your pet for a long and healthy life. Talk to your veterinarian about your dog's nutritional needs and about what ingredients you should look for, and which you should avoid, when selecting a brand of food for your dog. Always use high-value treats that your dog adores. Meat-based human foods are best due to their high water content, and dogs rarely get to indulge in these delicious treats.



Do I really need to trim my dog's nails if my dog does not like it?

Proper nail trims ensure your dog maintains a healthy, natural gait. There is no need for this to be a stressful event for your dog. By hiring a positive reinforcement-based dog trainer, you can learn humane, low-stress methods that will help your dog to accept nail trims, whether they are done by a veterinarian, a groomer or you.

If my dog does not like the leash, is it okay for me to just let him run loose?

Responsible dog pet parenthood includes keeping your dog safe from environmental hazards; many city and state laws also require dogs to be on leash when in public. Even if you live in a rural area where environmental hazards are minimal, or city and state laws do not apply, it is wise to prepare your dog to happily accept a leash. This can be achieved with reward-based, positive reinforcement training.

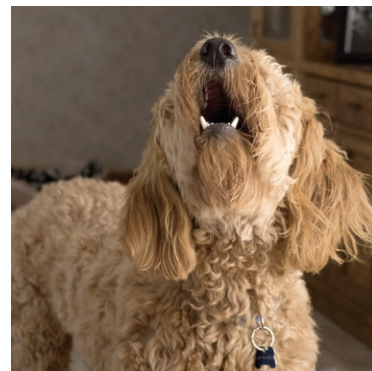
Do all dogs of the same breed act the same? Are some breeds of dog inherently vicious and aggressive?

Each breed of dog has its own unique personality and individual quirks, and some are genetically predisposed to certain behaviors, such as retrieving or tracking. Within any breed, there will be a range of calm to high-energy dogs. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no inherently "bad" breeds, but there are irresponsible pet parents that allow antisocial behavior to develop, whether due to indifference or actually teaching or allowing the dog to behave in an antisocial manner.

Communication and Body Language

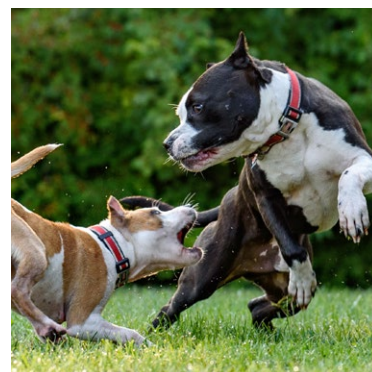
Why do dogs bark and how should I talk to my dog when he is barking?

Barking is as natural to a dog as eating, sleeping and scratching. There are many different reasons why dogs bark. They bark to alert, out of frustration, because they are frightened, bored or even out of excitement during play. Many people do not realize they may actually be contributing to the barking by yelling or scolding their dog. Your dog may think you are joining in and will take the attention as a sign you agree with his actions. Barking can be very frustrating. If your dog is barking, it is important to first get his attention to interrupt the behavior. Using a cheerful, happy tone will help get your dog focused on you rather than on what caused his barking. When your dog responds to your cheerful voice, reward him with a high-value treat for being quiet. The next step would be to redirect your dog's attention to an appropriate, quiet behavior, such as fetch, chewing on a bone or playing with a toy.



How do dogs tell each other they want to play?

Since dog-dog play can sometimes be confused by people as fighting, it is important to understand their body language so no harm may come to either of them. Dog play is often initiated by a play bow, which tells the other dog that he is doing this for fun. Dogs will often bark and growl a bit while playing. Typically, they use a higher-pitched bark than a warning bark. Dogs will also take frequent quick breaks or pauses lasting just a couple of seconds during play. You will also likely see a lot of give and take during play. The dogs will essentially take turns, with one dog leading and then the other. It is important to supervise play sessions in case one dog has had enough, so that you can then intervene if the other dog persists. For instance, if one dog is consistently hiding underneath a chair or trying to get away, it may be



necessary for you to step in to interrupt the play to protect the dog who does not want to play anymore.

Why does my dog turn away when I hug him?

Although humans love hugs, it does not necessarily mean that a dog will be comfortable with one. Dogs do not hug each other; in fact, dogs are very respectful of each other's space. There are many other ways to show affection to your pet. If your dog turns away when you hug him, your dog is politely letting you know he does not want or enjoy the hug. Hugging can be stressful for dogs as they may feel trapped by the embrace.

How should someone greet a dog?

When greeting a dog, try to use slow, casual body movements. You should not be closer than two feet from the dog. If the dog does not approach you, turn your body slightly sideways to the dog, which is a nonthreatening posture, rather than squaring off/directly facing the dog. Always allow the dog to take the first steps to approach you, and then wait before you reach out to pet the dog. Once the dog feels comfortable enough to approach you, the first physical interaction you may consider is to briefly pet the dog under the chin or along his side, rather than reaching over the dog's head. If the dog does not want to approach you, simply respect the dog's choice and walk away politely.



What is the best way to let my dog approach and greet another dog?

In terms of canine social behavior, appropriate greetings are nose-to-tail. Nose-to-nose greetings in the dog world are not only impolite, but they increase the risk of your dog being bitten by a dog who may not love other dogs.

What are calming signals and why does my dog use them?

Dogs do not have the ability to use verbal language like humans. They rely on body language to communicate with each other and other species. One aspect of their body language is called calming signals. They use these signals to share their intentions with other dogs and with us. For instance, dogs use their tails to communicate their feelings. Just because the tail is wagging does not necessarily mean the dog is happy. Depending on how he is carrying his tail, as well as other body language, will tell you whether the dog is in the mood to play, nervous or in the mood to fight.

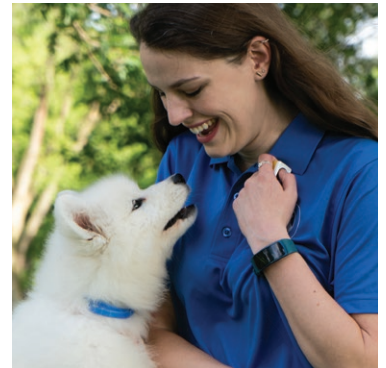


When a dog wants to show another dog that he means no harm, he will turn his head and sometimes entire body away from the imposing dog. Dogs may also scratch, yawn or lick their lips to signal they are feeling too much pressure. With humans, dogs will display these same behaviors in an attempt to communicate that they are uncomfortable in their current situation. We should "listen" to these behaviors and give our dogs a break from the situation at hand. Just like people, dogs cannot work effectively if they are under too much pressure.

Of course, dogs also scratch when they have an itch, and yawn when they are tired or bored, so the signals must be read in context.

What are the best ways to communicate with my dog, and why is understanding dog body language important?

Many people feel their dogs understand every word they are saying and then are frustrated when their dogs do not respond to something they are asking them to do. While dogs can learn to associate many words with items or actions, they fall far short of understanding everything people are saying.



They are, however, quite good at understanding your tone of voice. For instance, a happy, high-pitched, cheery voice indicates you are pleased or you want to play. Your tone of voice is important to begin good communication with your dog and to let him know what you expect from him and when.

Dogs are also very good at communicating through body language, including facial expressions. Once you start to understand your dog's body language you can start to communicate with your best friend in a way they can understand. The signs dogs use to communicate with each other include facial expressions, body postures and movements. Dogs specifically use their faces, ears, tails and eyes to communicate.

Students need to learn how dogs use different body movements to communicate, as a dog's body language is often misinterpreted. For example, we commonly think a wagging tail means a dog is friendly, but depending on the speed of the wag and the stiffness and posture of the body, it can also mean a dog is potentially in a defensive or offensive threatening mode.

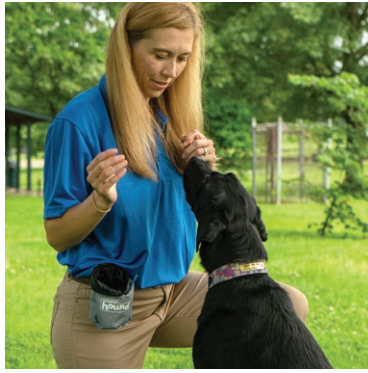
Training and Learning

What kind of rewards can be used in positive reinforcement training?

There are many types of rewards that will provide the necessary positive reinforcement for your dog. Dogs have varied temperaments and interests. Not all dogs are food-motivated in every context or environment. Other types of rewards can include a favorite toy, a game of chase or tug, petting, verbal praise, and even teaching the dog a special trick he enjoys, making the training fun.

What is positive reinforcement and why should I use it?

The most effective way of teaching a new behavior is using positive reinforcement, which provides a win-win situation for you and your dog. The dog learns that doing what you want gets them what he wants (i.e., food, toys, affection). There are various ways to positively reinforce behavior. You can “lure” your dog into the desired behavior and then reward. You can wait for your dog to offer the desired behavior and then reward. You can use a marker signal, such as a clicker, to “mark” when a dog does something you want and then reward. Whatever behaviors you reward (or positively reinforce) are the behaviors you will see increase.



What is clicker training?

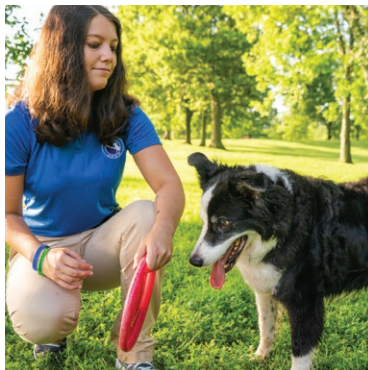
Clicker training is a type of positive reinforcement training that is simple and very effective. The student uses a clicker, which is typically a small plastic box with a metal strip inside of it that makes a clicking sound when pressed. The clicker is pressed to mark the desired behavior, indicating to the dog that he did the right behavior and a reward is on its way.

What does “capturing” a behavior mean?

Capturing a behavior can be one of the fastest ways to train a new behavior. For example, if you want to teach your dog to lie down using the capture method, you would simply wait for your dog to decide to lie down and then reward him the moment he does the behavior. Timing is crucial for capturing a behavior. Think of it as a camera – you want to take a picture of the exact moment your dog does the behavior. You are not asking, commanding or luring him into the action. You are waiting for your dog to offer the behavior on his own. Capturing works best for teaching a behavior your dog does naturally, such as sit, lying down, barking on cue, sniffing or holding objects. The primary difference between capturing and other positive reinforcement training techniques is the dog is making the decision to offer the behavior without being asked or prompted.

Can my dog be trained positively if he does not like food as a reward?

A reward is quite simply anything that your dog finds intrinsically rewarding. Some examples of rewards include toys, access to the outdoors, a car ride and attention/affection from people. Food is often used because many dogs are motivated by it, and food is also quick and easy to deliver to your dog. However, if your dog just ate his dinner, using a food reward may not be your best option. The key is to know what is rewarding to your dog in that moment! Make a list of



20 things that are rewarding to your dog including food, toys, treats and other life rewards such as belly rubs or playing with another dog.

My dog does not understand training. Is he just being stubborn or dominant?

Training your dog can sometimes require patience. Dogs learn quickly what works and what does not work. Dogs are often called stubborn or dominant when they seem to ignore our requests. What they are truly displaying is confusion, lack of motivation because the behavior hasn't been positively reinforced, or not understanding what you're asking them to do. Perhaps your dog has not generalized the behavior to that situation, is stressed or distracted, or has not made the connection yet between your cue and the behavior you are seeking.

If my dog does not perform a behavior he has been trained to do reliably, what should I do?

Ideally a dog should respond to a cue asked of him on the first time. If your dog does not respond to your cue within a few seconds of you asking him, one of a few things is likely occurring – either he does not know the behavior as well as you may have originally thought, he may not be motivated enough to execute the behaviors, or there is something in the environment that is distracting him from executing the behavior successfully. There is also a possibility there may be some underlying medical condition that is preventing him from completing the behavior. If the problem persists you should consider checking with your veterinarian to rule out any medical issues. Do keep in mind that dogs are not robots and may become distracted or become unmotivated at some point. Keep consistent in your training and remember occasionally rewarding your dog from time to time will be the best way to keep him motivated for a reliable response.



What should I do if my dog is barking in his crate?

You should first figure out why your dog is barking. There may be several reasons why he is barking in his crate, including trying to get your attention, because he is stressed about his crate or perhaps because he needs to go to the bathroom. The most common answer is that he is barking because he wants your attention. There is a simple solution: Ignore your dog. Do not look at him, do not say anything to him, and perhaps even walk away. Once he stops barking, wait a few seconds and then give him some attention, which will be a reward for being quiet. By ignoring him, your dog will quickly learn that being quiet, not barking, is the way to get your attention. If you think your dog needs to go to the bathroom, the answer is obvious – let your dog out! If you think your dog is barking because he is stressed, speak with your trainer about ways to help him become better acquainted with his crate or what alternatives you can explore for containing your dog.

What should I do if my puppy is biting my hands every time we play?

Puppy biting is a natural behavior for puppies. They explore the environment with their mouths. There are a few things you can do to minimize or eliminate puppy biting. During playtime make sure you are playing with a toy and not with your hands. A larger toy is better than a smaller toy and will help teach your dog to use his mouth appropriately during



play. If your puppy's mouth comes into contact with your skin at any time, the best reaction you can have is to say "ouch" and remove all of your attention for a few moments – just walk away, turn your back and ignore him. It will not take long before he learns what level of play is and is not acceptable. Consistency will be very important for your success. That means everyone needs to play the same way. Playing rough with your puppy, even if it's just with one person, will teach him that it's okay to play that way. It's also very important to make sure your puppy is getting enough exercise. Try games like hide-and-seek with his favorite toy, set up a treat hunt, take him for a short jog in the park, and/or give him a food puzzle or brain game to wear him out mentally when you cannot wear him out physically.

What should I do if my puppy is jumping up, scratching me and leaving welts on my arms and legs?

Teaching a puppy how to respect a human's space is an important life lesson. Lest the puppy think we do not ever want them to come into our space, this life lesson must be taught in a positive fashion. It is helpful to redirect your puppy's attention to an alternative behavior instead of using you as a scratching post. Rewarding an alternative behavior, such as "sit" instead of jumping all over you is one way to train the puppy to get his paws off of you. If the jumping, scratching and space invading is attention-driven, then a parent must think about whether the puppy is getting meaningful, appropriate attention and exercise throughout the day. It is also important to make sure your puppy's nails are well-trimmed at all times.

How do you reward a dog when teaching him a behavior that has multiple steps?

An example of a behavior with multiple steps is fetch. The steps might be chasing after the ball, picking up the ball and bringing the ball back to you. The trainer would teach each behavior step-by-step and reward each successful step. Eventually the student can gradually ask for more of the sequence of steps for the dog to achieve the reward. The steps might look something like this: Dog chases after the ball and gets a reward. Dog picks up the ball and gets a reward. Dog brings the ball back and gets a reward. Then, the dog chases the ball and picks the ball up, which gets him a reward. Finally, the dog chases the ball, picks up the ball and brings the ball back (the complete behavior) to get the reward.

About APDT

The Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT) is a professional educational organization of trainers who are committed to becoming better trainers through using positive, dog-friendly methods based on sound scientific principles, and following the LIMA (Least Intrusive Minimally Aversive) and Humane Hierarchy principles. The APDT promotes caring relationships between dogs and people and works to increase public awareness of dog-friendly training techniques. For the online trainer search, pet parent resources and veterinarian handouts, visit the APDT website at www.apdt.com and www.trainyourdogmonth.com.



The APDT offers a unique opportunity for professional networking and sharing of ideas through our conferences, membership directory, newsletter and seminars. For career information, membership benefits and online webinars, visit www.apdt.com/trainers.

