

Putting your puppy/dog on his best behavior

Special Care Instructions for _____

Good communication builds good relationships

Just as between people, good relationships between dogs and their owners are based on good communication. Dogs communicate between themselves by means of body signals. It's only natural, then, that they'll use the same method to communicate with people. Your responsibility as a pet owner is to learn to interpret such signals. Doing so will enable you to teach your puppy or dog the appropriate way of telling you what he or she needs or would like, whether it's food, to be let out, to play or... to receive some loving attention from you!



Good behavior should be rewarded

Parents often don't remember to praise their children when they behave well, yet will never forget to tell them when they do not. We tend to do the same with our pets. We ignore them when they are quiet and well behaved and pay them attention only when they behave inappropriately. It's always best to do the reverse and praise—and reward—a desired behavior, and ignore the unwanted.



Social skills aren't just for humans!

One of the most important lessons your puppy or dog should learn is that he must sit before interacting with you or any other human. You can easily teach a puppy or even a mature dog to sit. Dogs learn at any age, as long as lessons are repeated often enough and teaching sessions are short and fun.

Step 1

- To begin, take a very special food treat like a small piece of cheese, and hold it between the two fingers of a hand.
- Place this hand close to the front of your pet's nose.

Step 2

- Raise the hand above his nose and then backwards. Your pet's head will move to follow the treat.
- Eventually, your dog will sit, because it will be more comfortable.

Step 3

- As soon as he does, say "sit" and give your pet his treat. As a dog always connects what he is doing with what you are doing at the same time, he'll associate the action of sitting with the word "sit" and a reward—at this stage, the food treat.

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Unwanted behavior should be ignored...



Dogs, just like humans, are social animals and need interaction with others, so withholding your attention is a very effective passive punishment. For example, if your dog jumps up on you, cross your arms, turn your head away and remain absolutely silent until he stops jumping. Don't try to push him away, look at or talk to him. He'll interpret any of these actions on your part as attention, or even play. When your pet does finally sit, reward him with your undivided attention.



If, in the past, you allowed your puppy or dog to gain your attention by barking or jumping up on you, you must realize that if you subsequently decide to ignore such behavior, your pet will only try longer and harder to regain that attention. An analogy in human terms would be a person who presses the button of an elevator whose doors do not open. He or she will press the button repeatedly, before giving up and walking down the stairs. To successfully change your dog's behavior, you must ignore—and outlast—all his efforts.

...Or interrupted

Dogs do react to eye contact. Call your puppy or dog by his name. As soon as he looks at you, you should give him a special treat. Repeating this simple exercise at any time will teach your pet that it is worthwhile to pay attention to you. In fact, calling your pet's name is an effective way of interrupting, and thus eliminating, unwanted behavior. Making an unusual sound is another way of interrupting. Once your dog is paying attention to you, you can ask him to come or sit.

Play takes training, too!

Puppies and dogs need to exercise and play and to have contact and interaction with both people and other dogs. They should be taught to play with toys only and should learn that human hands, feet or any other body part are not toys. If your pet grabs a hand or foot, either intentionally or accidentally, such behavior should be interrupted either by withholding your attention (ignoring him) or by making a high-pitched "ouch" sound. As soon as he lets go, offer a large toy and resume playing.

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