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Remember – your dog needs guidelines to follow and a direction in life just like children. If you are inconsistent you will confuse him at first and then he will seek pack leadership over you. He will become the pack leader and you the follower!

Don't get discouraged – dog training takes time and effort on your part. Be enthusiastic and happy when training your dog. By the same token, make your expectations clear by being firm and quick with your corrections. Last but not least, whenever your dog is doing something right never take it for granted! Always praise your dog and let him know he is a SUPER DOG!

Always, if you have any questions or you run into difficulties, call us. By correcting problems when they start you will prevent bigger problems from occurring!

GOLDEN RULES OF DOG TRAINING

1. Always use your dog's name before all commands, except stay.
2. Once you have given Fido a command to do something, it is necessary to release him with a happy uplifting "release". Don't let him decide when to release himself.
3. Be clear and consistent. When you ask Fido to do something, use a tone of voice appropriate to the type of command you have given him (i.e. "down" and "leave it" should be in a firm deep tone of voice, "release" and "let's go" should be in a happy uplifting tone).
4. Be in the habit of giving only one command to get Fido to do something. If he doesn't comply then reinforce the command with a physical correction.

Example: "Fido sit". Fido should sit immediately. If he doesn't, say "no" and simultaneously give him the jerk-release correction. In this instance you would correct upward.

5. Praise plays an extremely important role in encouraging Fido's efforts as you work and in rewarding a job well done. Make him work for his praise. Praise that is deserved gives your dog a sense of self-esteem. While working, use verbal praise only. Especially with an excitable dog. Reserve your physical praise for when you release him. Then it is appropriate and important to get down and love and pet him with enthusiasm.

6. When Fido makes a mistake, the cause is generally due to one of two things. Either he is confused or he thinks he has a choice as to whether or not he must comply. First determine which of these reasons fits the situation.

If you have decided he is confused, determine what the cause of the confusion might be. Sometimes we are the source of confusion for our dogs by giving crossed messages, sloppy handling, inappropriate commands, etc. Clean up your handling, where necessary. If you have any doubt that Fido does not completely understand what is expected of him, repeat and help him through the exercise.

If you think that he is choosing to defy your commands, he needs an appropriate correction. Set him up by recreating the situation in which he is defying you and correct him appropriately several times, until Fido chooses to do the behavior correctly.

7. Never pet or in any way praise Fido after he has made a mistake. Either help or correct him as the situation calls for. Immediately recreate the situation in which the mistake was made so that he can learn from his experience and receive praise for doing the exercise correctly.

8. When it is necessary to correct Fido do so with a firm verbal "no" and a quick jerk-release action with the leash or pull tab and training collar. The correction should be given in the direction you want your dog to go. "correction in the direction". Jerk up for the sit and down towards the ground for a down, etc. The strength of the correction should correlate with the severity of the offense and with your dog's responsiveness to your correction. The rule of thumb for the firmness of the correction is to use the minimum correction you can get away with, and still have it be effective. If you are not getting the desired result from the correction you gave, increase your firmness. If you find yourself having to repeat the corrections for the same or similar offenses, you need to be *firmer*.

9. Whenever you ask your dog to do something, always treat the behavior as though it is the most important thing in the world at that moment. Dogs cannot differentiate between what is life threatening and what is not. Don't expect Fido to respond immediately out on the streets, where it is so important, if you haven't corrected his mistakes at home when you ask him to do insignificant things.

10. Do not avoid situations where Fido might make a mistake. He cannot learn anything that way. Do not physically restrain Fido to avoid a problem, use his obedience commands to your advantage and correct any inappropriate behavior. Take every available opportunity to set Fido up to learn what is acceptable behavior.

Example #1: If Fido jumps up on people when they come to the door do not hold him back by the collar. Either have him consistently sit each and every time one of your guests arrives or put him on his leash and training collar, and jerk him in a downward motion each time he attempts to jump up. Simultaneously giving the command "off".

Example #2: If he bolts after a squirrel in the park, instead of using his recall command, give him a firm “no” and reinforce by correcting him. In this case the correction would be to go and get him (without saying anything other than the first “no”) and physically jerk-release correct him by his tab and collar back to the spot he bolted from. This way he will know his behavior is unacceptable.

11. If Fido does something he is never allowed to do, the word “no” is given. If you want him to stop something that he is sometimes allowed to do, use the appropriate command for the situation.

Example: If it is okay for Fido to show affection by licking you, but now you would like him to stop, then use the command “enough” and reinforce if necessary. If Fido is allowed on a certain chair that you now need him to vacate use the command “off”. If Fido gets on the bed, were he is never allowed, then use the command “no”.

COMMANDS

LET'S GO

Most of the time when you are walking your dog you would use the command “let's go”. Hold the leash in your left hand so that he stays on your left side. He has the 2-3ft. length of the leash; he must not go beyond 3 ft. in front or behind you, and not more than 1 ft. from your left side. He need not be attentive or sit at your side when you stop. He needs only to walk along with you politely. He must never pull. Your arm should be able to hang loosely at your side. You can call Fido to a heel while you are walking if necessary.

Example: You are approaching a crowded section of the sidewalk. Call Fido to a heel by saying “Fido heel”. Then release him with a “release” when you no longer want him to heel. Fido should automatically go into the “let's go”.

HEEL

The proper heel position is when Fido's shoulder is in direct line with your left leg. The heel command is executed by giving your dog's name then “heel”. As you say the word “heel” you should be simultaneously stepping off with your left foot. Fido is expected to move off with you and maintain an attentive, working attitude until he is formally released with a new command like “let's go” or the “release” command.

Fido should never take his attention away from his work by looking away, sniffing, barking, or relieving himself during the heel exercise. He is to sit automatically by your side every time you come to a halt. To keep him alert while heeling, incorporate right about and left about turns. Alter your pace from normal to fast to normal to slow. It is important to walk and stop smoothly. Your dog responds to body language as well as verbal commands. Erratic or tentative movements can easily confuse him. He can be asked to come to a heel from another formal position, such as a sit or a down command or even while he is walking on a relaxed "let's go". It is important to give the heel command each and every time you step off from a halt. You must reinstate the command even if you have only stopped for a moment. He should be sitting at your side waiting for the next command.

SITS AND DOWNS

The same rules apply to both of these positions except that the sit is used for short periods of time and the down for longer periods of time, as the down is a much more comfortable position for the dog to remain in.

Saying "Fido sit" or "Fido down" executes these commands. He should respond immediately and remain in that particular position until released.

Example: If Fido has been put on a sit and he gets up or lies down, he needs to be corrected back into a sit position. You would correct him with a jerk release in an upward direction. Placing him in exactly the same spot he got up from. Or if Fido has been put on a down and he gets up, he needs to be corrected back into a down with a jerk release in a downward direction. Placing him exactly in the same spot he got up from.

With a few exceptions, most of the dogs that have completed our training program do not need a hand signal for the down. For those dogs who still need help with the down give the command "Fido down" and simultaneously give the hand signal. From a standing position you would hold your hand in front of you at head level lowering your arm towards the ground. Remember do not bend or stoop over. From a sit or down Fido can be asked either to continue working or you can release him.

STAY

This command means that your dog is to remain exactly where he has been placed until you have returned to his side and given him a command to either continue working, or to release him. He should never be released or called from a stay until you have returned to proper heel position. He should remain where he was put regardless of the distractions. If he breaks his stay, immediately give him a firm "no", return to him and correct him (using the pull tab or leash attached to his training collar) back to where he'd originally been placed. Fido is expected to maintain a down stay for up to one hour. It is recommended that you practice this exercise daily.

WAIT

This command is used to signify a temporary stay or stop from motion. Fido need not be in a formal position while he is "waiting". He need only remain generally where he is without moving forward. However, if you asked him for a formal position such as a down, he must remain where he was placed and asked to "wait", until he is released. While practicing the wait in motion, he may stand, sit, or down as long as he does not move when he has been told to "wait". **Remember** the "stay" and "wait" commands are very different; stays are never released until you return to Fido in heel position.

Example: Before you let Fido into the house with muddy feet tell him firmly, "Fido wait". He should remain where he is until he is release. If he bolts through the door ignoring your command, jerk release him back out through the door and repeat the exercise until he stops his forward motion through the door and waits for your "release" command.

We also use the wait command between formal commands so as not to ruin the stays. In this instance, the wait signifies "be at attention because you are going to be asked to continue working". The wait should be used before your dog is allowed to get in or out of the car, before eating, when going thru doors or gates, etc.

Example: If you tell Fido to sit and you want him to remain sitting while you throw a ball tell him "Fido wait", throw the ball and then either, "release" him or give him a command to "fetch" the ball. If he breaks the "wait" correct him by using his training collar to jerk release him back to the exact spot he was told to wait in. Repeat this exercise until Fido "waits" for your "release" or "fetch" command. Since you are not returning to proper heel position to release your dog this would not be an appropriate time to use "stay". There is a distinct and important difference between the "wait" and the "stay". Use them appropriately.

LEAVE IT

This command is normally used to stop or divert behavior that is not necessarily wrong, just inappropriate at the time. It means move away from or stop the behavior completely and not go back to it.

Example: Fido goes to visit a small dog at the park. You know that your dog has no ill intent but the owner of the other dog looks panic stricken. It would be much more appropriate to tell Fido not to bother the dog by saying a "leave it" command rather than calling him to you. This would also apply in the case of a family having a picnic, where Fido thinks it might be fun to join in. You again would use the "leave it" command. If Fido continues toward the thing you have told him to leave correct him with a jerk release in a direction away from the object of his interest.

CHASING BEHAVIOR

The command "no" is used very strongly for any chasing of cats, cars, bicycles, livestock, skateboards etc. Your dog must know that this behavior is not acceptable under any circumstances. This behavior is the most dangerous for people and dogs alike, it results in dogs being struck by cars and adults and children being bitten. If your dog does not respond to the verbal command, of "no" or "leave it" you must enforce your command and stop the chasing behavior each and every time. You would correct Fido by going to him wherever he has ended up, and using the pull tab connected to his collar, jerk release him all the way back to the exact spot he was at when you told him "no". If Fido is more likely than not to ignore you when a tempting opportunity to chase arises you should put him on a long line and set him up to get corrected several different times in a variety of places.

RECALL - "COME"

The recall command is one of the most valuable commands your dog will ever learn. The reliability of this command depends entirely on your keeping Fido honest with his recalls. Your dog has been trained to come off leash during distractions (i.e. playing with other dogs at the park) with the use of a long line attached to the training collar and then graduating to using just the tab attached to his training collar. The command used to call your dog is "Fido come", always use your dog's name first and never dilute the command "come" through the use of "come on" or "come here", etc. Your dog has been trained to come immediately on the first command. It is imperative that this be reinforced so you don't get into a nagging habit and Fido tunes you out! If Fido does not come immediately the first time you call, you need to correct him. This is accomplished by saying a firm "no" and then going to him wherever, and however far away he is, and jerk release correct him all the way back to the exact spot you called him from. If you start to see Fido's recall becoming a problem you must set him up by going back to using a long line around distractions. Call and correct him in the above manner until he is coming the instant you call him.

RELEASE

The release command is used whenever you want to dismiss your dog from any given obedience exercise. When your dog is told "release" while on leash he may move around freely as long as he does not pull at the end of the leash. When he is released off leash, he may run around, and play with other dogs etc. This command is always given in a happy uplifting voice. During our training lessons we released your dog several times so that we could enthusiastically praise him, allowing him to be free to run around and play.

Example: You are walking Fido on leash down a sidewalk on a "let's go" command and you see another dog coming your way. You have two options: one is to continue the "let's go" right past the other dog and initiate a "leave it" command correcting Fido with a jerk release if necessary. Your second option is to have Fido on a "let's go" up to the other dog and say "release" allowing the two dogs to visit. This command can also be applicable when Fido needs to relieve himself in a designated area during a walk. In all cases Fido should never pull against the leash. If he does you should give Fido a jerk release correction and simultaneously say "no Pull"!

GO TO SPOT (Four-week training program only)

Your dog has been taught to "go to spot" by pointing to his place or spot (i.e. a dog bed) and giving the "go to spot" command verbally. If Fido ignores this command he needs to be jerk release corrected in the direction of his spot (bed). He must stay on his spot until he is released off of it. He may stand, sit or down on his spot as long as he does not move off of his spot until you have formally "released" him. When your dog first goes home you may have to help him identify his new spot with the use of food, a leash or his tab leash.

IN CONCLUSION

We have tried to address most of the basic information you need to continue working consistently with your dog. What you are teaching your dog by performing these exercises is that you have control over him physically. He doesn't learn about social relationships through an intellectual process. You cannot sit him down and discuss it with him, dogs must learn on a physical level through consistent reinforcement and repetition. You must continue to expect your dog to maintain his training at the level you see during your cross training lessons. This is entirely up to you. Being consistent will not only help to maintain your dogs training it will make his life easier if the rules are always the same. If you have any questions at all please call us and we will do our best to help you. We are always available for consultation and/or refresher lessons if needed.