

Class 1 – Dog Training Basics, “Eh!”, Sit, Watch

Ten Essentials for Successful Training

- 1) Trust is essential for the relationship between you and your dog.

A dog's desire to respond to your commands and perceive you as its leader sprouts from his trust in you. Never betray your dog by making him think that he cannot trust you 24/7.

- 2) Keep it simple and monosyllabic. Use one-word and one-syllable commands to teach basic behaviors (sit, down, stay, come).

- 3) Give the command once and use an authority in your voice. If you repeat the command, the dog will wait for the next time to see if you *really* mean it.

- 4) Praise the dog for good behavior. Treats, verbal praise, pats (not on the head) translate into dog as “job well done.”

- 5) Consistency is next to dogliness!!

What is acceptable on Monday must also be acceptable on Tuesday and Wednesday. You can't allow the dog to jump on the couch on Monday when you are in a good mood or have time to spare and then scold the dog for the same behavior two days later. A confused dog is a loveable, but untrained and undisciplined challenge.

- 6) Attempting to correct a dog for an undesirable act that he did an hour ago is meaningless to the dog and frustrating to you. This will only lead to confusing the dog and decreasing his trust in you.

- 7) HANDS OFF!! Physical corrections have absolutely no place in dog training. Smacking the dog with a rolled up newspaper, your hand, or anything else only proves to the dog that you are not worthy of his trust.

- 8) Tone is more important than words. When you want your dog to obey, don't use your happy “good dog” voice. Be authoritative and firm and the dog will know that you mean business. Save the happy voice for giving treats and praise.

- 9) Recall is the most important command to teach a dog.

Recall means the dog comes to you when called. Always praise your dog for coming to you. You want him to know that he will get a treat, praise, and a nice rub when he comes to you. NEVER call you dog and scold him for a behavior (which he no longer remembers).

10) Keep a structure and routine.

Dogs understand structure and routine. They are creatures of habit by nature. Canines respond best to a set routine, so they can reliably anticipate what is coming. Mealtimes, walks, training sessions, playtimes, socialization sessions, etc. are they types of structure dogs are seeking. Structure will lead to good and consistent behavior.

Basic Do's & Dont's

- Petting

- We pet our dogs for at least two reasons:
 - It feels really good to us (and is actually really good for us – it lowers our blood pressure and heart rate)
 - It is a way to tell our dogs how much we love them
- When a dog comes up to you and pushes into your space, insisting in some way that you pet them, they are not necessarily being sweet, loving, or cute. They are demanding that you pet them. If you respond, you are teaching your dog that they can insist that you cater to them.
 - Use this to your advantage – You can use your dog's desire for attention to motivate her to do what you tell her.
 - If they want to be petted, simply cue them to sit and/or lie down first. Now they are learning that if they are patient and obedient, they can still get what they want.

- Body Blocking

- Owners who can only control their dogs with their leashes have dogs who respect leashes, not owners.
 - If you always use the leash to control the movement of your dog, who is in control? Must be the leash!
- One of the ways to maintain leadership positions is by controlling the use of space by other individuals, rather than controlling every move the other dog makes.
 - Dogs herd by simply imposing their body in the direction the other dog is moving. You can do the same. Insert your body in the direction the dog is moving and lean slightly forward.
 - This is a good example of how to stop a dog from breaking a "Stay"... Simply watch your dog very closely and as she starts to get up, lean your body toward her and fold your arms to effectively block that space.

- Note – Dogs are very sensitive to this visual signal, so lean backward a bit when she settles down or you will be putting too much pressure on her.
- Look Aways
 - If your dog gets “pushy” with demanding your attention, simply cross your arms, turn your head upward and to the side away from your dog.
 - If she counters by moving to your other side (where your head is directed) turn your head away again. Be sure your head is tilted upward in dismissal.
 - Looking away is the visual signal sometimes given by high-status dogs toward subordinates and very different than the hard, direct stare that some trainers tell you to give your dog.
 - Be careful of assertive stares to your dog. They are much more confrontational than a dismissive “look away” and might end up putting you at risk.

Consistency

- Consistency, or the lack thereof, is the root of all evil when it comes to training dogs.
 - We as humans are often inconsistent. Dogs do not understand inconsistency. They need black and white, right and wrong, especially when they are learning.
- Inconsistency within Ourselves
 - I often work with people who care about their dog’s behavior one minute or in one situation, but not in another:
 - “I usually don’t mind if my dog jumps up on me, but I hate it when he gets muddy paws on my clothes or tears them.”
 - “I don’t mind if my dog gets on the sofa at night with me, but I don’t want him on the couch during the day when I am not there.”
 - Dogs do not understand the differences in any of these situations. They live in the moment.
 - They do not understand what changes... He only understands that he gets to do it sometimes and, as a result, he will keep consistently trying.
- Inconsistency within the Family Structure
 - Often the inability for a family or a couple to work as a team on dog training begins to deteriorate the obedience of the dog. One person cannot say

“Come!” while the other says “Get over here!” and have it be equally effective.

- Pick a plan and an ideal for your family.
 - Sit down and decide on what words to use for commands that mean the same thing to everyone.
 - Decide on whether the dog will be allowed on furniture
 - Decide on what behaviors to reward and which ones need to be changed
- Inconsistency with Strangers
 - This is arguably the biggest one!
 - “Our dog can jump on us, but not other people.”
 - “Our dog listens great at home, but doesn’t listen when we have company over or outside of the house.”
 - Inconsistency, no matter where it comes from, is the source of your dog’s confusion.
 - Dogs may never ignore a command when given at home alone, but add the distraction of another person or take your dog somewhere and he doesn’t listen.
 - Many people get embarrassed or feel inconvenienced when working with their dog around others and the dog learns that they do not have to obey when company or strangers are present.
- The key to dog training is to be consistent, especially in the leaning stages, with your dog. Your dog cannot reason or understand small differences.
 - Inconsistency is unfair... One minute your dog gets away with or is rewarded for a bad behavior and the next minute he is scolded and/or punished for the same act.
 - This type of environment makes it difficult, if not impossible, to learn.

Markers & Releases

- Marker

- When the dog does what you tell it to do... What do you say?
 - Lures and reinforcers eventually go away – and this is what will be used as the reward afterwards
- How do you let the dog know that it did what you told it to do?
 - **Mark It!!**
 - Good!
 - Yes!
 - Fine!
- Release
 - Everything that you do with your dog must be initiated by YOU!
 - We do not want the dog to get the Mark, get the reinforce, and then run away
 - So we need to let the dog know when it is done
 - **Release it!**
 - Ok!
 - Done!
 - Free!
 - Make sure the dog moves when released!
 - If the dog moves before you release, immediately correct, put it back into the position, DO NOT GIVE ANOTHER REINFORCER, and then release.
 - This simple marking and releasing is extremely effective in building your leadership position with the dog.
 - **Make Sure The Dog Moves When Released!!**

“EH!” – The Attention Getter

This command is used to get your dog's attention the instant she becomes distracted.

Our goal is to teach your dog to look at your face when she sees another dog, person, rabbit, car, bike, child, etc.

By teaching her to do this, we are creating a new habit (something more constructive) to do in these situations, rather than hoping she will just figure it out on her own.

- 1) Begin in an area with no distractions and gradually work your way up to include them.
- 2) Help your dog at first by using a strong smelling treat to lure her nose around to your face right after you quietly say "Eh!", but drop out the lure early or it will replace "Eh!" as the prompt. Try this 3-4 times, then begin saying "Eh!" and waiting for your dog to look on her own.
- 3) Once she is looking at you, mark the behavior. Say "Good" and reinforce generously with treats, toys, or play.
- 4) Now when she isn't looking at you, give the command and see if she turns.
 - a. If she doesn't look, walk up to her and put the treat right in her mouth while marking the behavior.
 - b. If she looks, but doesn't come to you, squat down just a bit and then give the treat when they come to you while marking the behavior.
 - c. If she comes to you, give treat while marking the behavior.

As you and your dog work on "Eh!", methodically setting up situations that gradually increase in difficulty (but your dog can handle), you will still be running into that thing called "Life Reality." There will be any number of situations that your dog will not respond to "Eh!", where it's more likely that pigs will fly than your dog respond. In this kind of situation, don't even bother to prompt. There is no profit in setting your dog up to fail.

If a situation is too much for your dog to handle, move without pause to your backup plan. Your backup plan involves getting out of the situation as quickly as possible with a "U-Turn." Give a "This way!" command and turn 180 degrees and move away from the situation. Once you are at a distance where you know the dog will respond, prompt the dog with "Eh!" and reward generously.

Sit

- 1) Start off in a low distraction environment. We are NOT going to use a verbal cue to begin with
- 2) Put a smelly treat in the palm of your hand and hold in place with your thumb.
- 3) Allow dog to sniff the treat, but do not give it to them.
- 4) Move the lure (treat) slowly over the dog's head, high enough that he must crane his neck back to continue targeting, but not so high that he jumps to target.
- 5) Move the lure slightly backward over the dog while maintaining the same height.
- 6) Now wait!
- 7) If the dog gets up or jumps, start over.
- 8) When the dog is sitting, mark the behavior and give the reward.
- 9) Repeat this 4 - 6 times – each time, the dog should sit with less and less effort from you.

Another way to think about is that there is a string attached from your middle finger to the dog's nose. As you bring your hand up in front of the dog, their head will follow up while their butt hits the ground.

Watching – Focusing on You, Not Distractions

Distractions are the #1 challenge when training a dog. When your dog is focused on you, the distractions become less and less potent. Continued practice and use will build the dog's confidence and trust that it is ok to focus on you and not be concerned with distractions.

- 1) Use the Eh! Command to get your dog's attention.
- 2) Put the dog into a sit
- 3) Put the lure into your hand and move the lure towards the dog's nose and immediately bring it up towards your eyes. While moving the lure, give the command "Watch!" sharply.
- 4) When the dog looks at your face, try to quickly make eye contact and immediately reward the dog with the marker word and reinforce.

- 5) DO NOT TOUCH THE DOG OR PHYSICALLY FORCE HER TO LOOK AT YOU.
- 6) Once your dog looks at you on command, begin holding their gaze for 1-2 seconds
- 7) Increase the number of seconds you can hold their gaze

*** Be sure to give the reward for any behavior out of the hand that is opposite of the one giving the cue. This reinforces that the dog's behavior produces the reinforce and this doesn't have anything to do with the reinforce as a lure. The goal is for him to learn that not seeing a lure is more predictive of reinforcement than seeing one. Failure to get a reliable response with the reinforce invisible is setting you up for a lifetime of a dog who "only does it when I have a treat in my hand." If the dog balks at any stage for the blank, **do not crack and put food back into it.** Simply wait and reinforce the sit when you finally get it.