



**A dog owner is responsible for their pet in public places, so if your dog misbehaves you can be responsible for the consequences. A poorly trained dog can also be a danger to himself. Imagine the consequences if your dog ignores you and runs across a busy road. In order to have a safe and well behaved dog you will need to start training when your dog is very young. The rewards of this are clear - there is perhaps no greater pleasure than owning a well-behaved, well-trained dog.**

### **What is basic training?**

Basic obedience training is important for the well-being of your puppy. All training should be positive and reward based - using food or toys as rewards. A dog can be taught simple commands such as 'sit' and 'stay' and 'down'; to come back when called and to walk nicely on a lead.

### **When should I start training?**

If you have never trained a dog before you will find it really helpful to take your dog along to training classes. These classes are more about teaching you how to train than training your dog for you. The classes should only use kind, effective, reward based methods of training. You will learn many useful skills that you can apply at home.

Puppies learn very quickly so it is important to begin showing them the house rules as soon as you get them home. Decide what the house rules are (dogs allowed/not allowed on the sofa, upstairs etc) and stick to them - it is not fair to a dog to allow them to do things as a puppy (such as sit on the sofa) that you will expect them not to do when they are an adult. Never punish your puppy - they are just doing whatever comes naturally, they do not know right from wrong, you must teach them what you want. Reward your puppy for the behaviour you do want and either ignore or redirect any behaviour you don't want. The key to successful dog training is consistency - say what you mean and mean what you say!

### **How do I start training?**

A puppy does not have a long attention span so make training little and often. Training should always be fun and rewarding for your puppy. So use plenty of reward - either food or toys - whichever your puppy likes best. Only train when your puppy is fresh and always finish the session on a positive note (when your puppy has just done something well).

The best way to teach your puppy is by the use of food rewards. Most dogs learn to respond to hand signals and body language more quickly than words so it can help to teach them initially using both. The best way to teach basic commands is to lure your puppy into position with a food reward and then say the command you want to teach, praise and reward him. For example: if you want the puppy to sit bring a piece of food from the puppy's nose up over his head - his head will come up and his bottom will normally go down into a sit. Say 'sit', praise him and give him the treat. With lots of repetition it will not be long before your puppy associates the action with the command (and with the reward!).

### **How do I house train my dog?**

One important part of training for most dogs is house training. Dogs naturally learn to separate living and sleeping areas from toilet areas so you first need to teach your puppy which areas to use for what. Provide your dog with a defined bed (this can be moved around the house so that your pet can sleep in different places). Show your dog where the toilet area is by taking them there every time they need to use the toilet - for example when they first wake up, after eating and every hour or so when they are young. Once your puppy uses the toilet area praise and reward them. It is very important not to punish your dog for accidents and mistakes.

### **What other things can I teach a puppy?**

The essential early skills are the social skills - how to behave as a member of your household. Many behaviours which may appear cute in a puppy - jumping up, chewing hands or clothes, can become real problems as the dog matures - teaching your puppy not to do these things are an important part of basic training

Try to expose your puppy to as many different experiences as you can at a young age - a well socialised

## Training your dog



puppy is more likely to become a well-adjusted dog. Puppies need to meet lots of different people - both in your home and out and about, visit many different places - towns, countryside, parks, learn to socialise with different types and breeds of dogs.

**If you want any other information on health issues concerning your dog please contact Feldon Veterinary Centre on 01926 423161 and we will be happy to advise you.**