

FRIENDS OF DOGS/PRIJATELJI PASA FACT SHEET 5



DOG TRAINING

Dogs are basically simple creatures who will respond well to anyone who gives them clear instructions, routine, regular exercise, praise, love and shelter. Training can be started at any age, the sooner the better. Older dogs are also receptive to training, although some may be less keen or less quick to learn than a younger dog. In order to be effective and to gain the best results, all training should be based around positive rewards. Positive reward training works because if you reward your dog with something he wants as soon as he does what you ask, he is far more likely to do it again. Rewards can be anything that your dog or puppy really wants and could include; food treats, a favourite toy, playing a certain game or getting a pat. If you are using food treats, you will need to reduce the size of your dog's normal meals or use his whole meal divided up into smaller portions, to prevent your dog putting on weight. Always combine the giving of a reward with verbal praise such as "Good dog".

When teaching a new command, you will need to reward your dog every time that he does what you ask correctly. Once he has the hang of the command, however, it's a good idea to change the way you reward by only giving the reward every now and then, because this will make your dog try harder for it. **Always verbally praise** your dog each time, even if he is not being rewarded with a treat.

Why punishment doesn't work

Punishment should never be used in training. If you punish your dog, it will only teach him to be scared of you and may eventually teach him to be aggressive. He will mistrust you and your relationship may break down completely. Avoid punishment in training (and everyday life) by trying the following – it will be far more effective and could improve your relationship with your dog:

- Reward all wanted behaviour – so that your dog is likely to repeat it in the future.
- Ignore unwanted behaviour – so that your dog is less likely to repeat it.
- Avoid triggering the unwanted behaviour – avoidance prevents the unwanted behaviour from happening in the first place!

Where unwanted behaviour cannot be ignored or avoided, train an alternative, acceptable behaviour for your dog to perform instead. It is much easier to train a dog to do something else that you don't mind, than to train him to completely stop something that you do not like. For example, if your dog jumps up at people, teach him a really good 'sit' command and ask for this when meeting others. If he is rewarded with treats and attention every time he sits, he'll soon automatically be doing this when he meets people, instead of jumping up! Also ask people coming to your house and meeting you in the street to ignore your dog totally for the first few minutes, as if he is not rewarded by attention for jumping up, he will soon stop.

friendsofdogsmontenegro@gmail.com

Nevladino Udruženje "Prijatelji Pasa" Tivat; RegistarSKI Broj 70008035; PIB:11004946
Non-Governmental Organisation "Friends of Dogs"; Registration Number 70008035; PIB:11004946
Montenegro Banka; Projateli Pasa; 530-24696-33

Try this at home...Teach your dog to sit

Five basic commands that are useful for your dog to know are; sit, down, stay, come and walking nicely on the lead. Here is how you can start by training your dog to sit on command:

- 1) Have your dog standing in front of you
- 2) Show him that you have a food treat in your hand
- 3) Slowly move your hand and treat above and over his head towards his tail, as you give the command "sit"
- 4) His head should go up as he tries to reach the treat, and his bottom should go down into the 'sit' position. Do not push his bottom down to make him sit, as he is likely to push up against your hand as a result and this may hurt his back – just keep practicing if it takes him a while to understand.
- 5) Give him the treat and praise him as soon as he sits.

'Important Training Tips' - doggy 'do's and 'don'ts

Do

- Practice in your home and garden first.
- Start training with your new dog or puppy as soon as possible.
- Keep sessions short (5-10 minutes max) and fun.
- Reward or treat him on a random basis, once the new command has been learnt – but still remembering to verbally praise every time.
- Try to use hand signals with your verbal commands, as some dogs may find it easier to recognise these.
- Keep commands clear and consistent.
- Take your time and be patient.
- Stick to one new command per training session at first to avoid confusing your dog.
- Consider going to a good local training class – but if your dog is anxious or fearful around other dogs, a one-to-one training session with a trainer may be better.
- Try to finish on a high note - your dog is more likely to want to train again next time! It is a good idea to give your dog an enjoyable long-lasting chewy treat to relax with at the end of a session, or he may become frustrated when the rewards/treats stop!
- Look on the internet for extra help and advice.

Don't

- Let your dog get bored - stop immediately if you see this happening.
- Tell him off if he gets it wrong.
- Shout or physically punish him - it will make him scared of you and may cause him to become aggressive.
- Train him if he is tired or hungry – it'll make him frustrated and he won't enjoy training.
- Chase him when you want him to come - he'll think it is a great game and will run away even more.
- Do your early training in an area with lots of distractions, such as other dogs, people, noises, smells.
- Expect too much too soon.
- Expect him to understand a command until you have taught him what it means

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