

# Training Tips

Here are some helpful tips to make your training fun and successful:

- 1. Be positive!** Make sure to reinforce your dog for doing things you like. Praise, treats, play, or anything your dog loves are great reinforcers. Use them when your dog does something you ask for (like coming when you call) or even when she just offers something you like (laying down quietly while you are eating dinner).
- 2. Ignore what you don't like.** If your dog is jumping up on you for attention when you come home then simply cross your arms and turn your back. Even pushing your dog down and telling him to get off of you can be desirable attention for many dogs.
- 3. Redirect.** If you have ignored your dog for jumping or caught him in the act of chewing your favorite chair then the next step is to redirect his behavior. Ask him to sit instead of jumping (he can't do both at once) and then treat him for sitting. Give him one of his toys when he stops chewing the chair and then praise him for chewing his toy.
- 4. Keep the training sessions short.** Don't worry about setting aside hours for training because you won't need to. The best way to train is in small bursts so that you have your dog's full attention. 1-5 minutes is best. You can even work the training right into your day: how about getting your dog to sit before she goes out the door, or maybe a sit stay to have her dinner bowl put down, or you could ask her to lie down before you give her the evening belly rub! Your dog needs jobs too so that she doesn't get bored, so put her to work- you will both love the results.
- 5. Always end on a good note.** If you are training your dog to lie down for the first time and she finally gets it then congratulations! You are probably both relieved so give her a pat or a treat and call it quits. It is always best to end with success. This helps to build confidence and keeps you both from becoming frustrated. If you have been trying to teach her down but she still doesn't seem to understand what to do then go back to something she knows: if she already knows sit really well then ask her to sit, praise or treat, and end that training session on a good note.
- 6. Set your dog up for success.** If you always want your dog to come when

called, but right now he doesn't even come to you in the house, then you need to start small. If you try to call him when he is chasing a squirrel he probably won't come yet and so he has already failed. Start by calling him while he is on leash in the house, then praise and treat. When he is coming to you 95% of the time on the first time you call then you can increase the difficulty. Try off leash at home, then on leash outside, then on a long line outside, then off leash in a fenced in yard, then on a leash when there is a squirrel far away, etc. By gradually increasing the difficulty of the situation you will allow your dog to succeed step by step.

**7. Practice everywhere.** This is important for a few reasons. First, dogs do not generalize well: if you teach your dog to sit in the kitchen and only practice it there then she may give you a funny look when you ask her to sit at Aunt Sally's house. Practice sit in all different rooms of the house, and at different times of day, then try it at other people's houses and when you are out on a walk. Just remember that it may seem like a whole new thing to your dog when you change the environment or circumstances. Second, it is always a good idea to get your dog out in the real world. She needs entertainment and social activity just like you so that she doesn't develop fears of things she rarely sees- like the vet's office. Then practice your training there- wouldn't it be great if your dog would sit stay on the scale at the vet's to be weighed?

**8. Be consistent and fair.** If you want your dog to come the first time you call then only call once. If she doesn't come then either pull her in gently with the leash or go get her and bring her back to where you called her from. Then praise and treat. If you just keep calling then she will think she doesn't have to come until the fourth time you call, or maybe not at all. The same thing goes for any other behavior: if you ask her to stop chewing the sock and she doesn't then get up and take the sock away. Then give her one of her toys and praise her for playing like a good dog. Being fair means that you have reasonable expectations. If your dog just learned to stay then you can't expect her to stay on her bed while you eat an entire 6-course meal and get mad if she gets up. With a little time and training you will get there.

**Remember:** Training can be fun and very rewarding if you follow these guidelines. It just takes some practice and patience. Happy Training!