



A dog owner is responsible for their pet in public places, so if your dog misbehaves you could be in trouble. 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 the perfect pet 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 dog.

What is basic training?

Basic obedience training is important for the well-being of your puppy. Training is about your dog learning to respect you as 'leader of the pack'. If basically trained a dog should respond to simple commands such as 'sit' and 'stay' and 'down' and come back when called. It is a huge advantage if your dog learns to walk properly on a lead.

When should I start training?

If you have never trained an animal 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. You will learn many useful skills that you can apply at home.

Puppies are very impressionable so it is important to begin showing them the rules as soon as you get them home. Puppies learn very quickly with proper instruction. If you allow a puppy to have their own way now, they will be confused later when you change the rules. Never punish your puppy remember - they are just doing whatever comes naturally. Instead, reward your puppy for the behaviour you do 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 and treats; 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 treats. Most dogs learn to respond to hand signals and body language more quickly than words (so start with a signal such as a raised hand to mean sit). If your puppy sits of its own accord use the hand signal or the word 'sit' and reward the puppy. If you want the puppy to sit press gently on its bottom until he sits and then say the word or give the signal and reward. 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?

The most important 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. Once your puppy uses the toilet area praise and reward them. It is 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. Never allow your puppy to get away with these at first or they will be hard habits to break. Try to expose your puppy to as many different experiences as you can at a young age - a well socialised puppy is more likely to become a well-adjusted dog.



If you want any other information on health issues concerning your dog please contact your local branch of Culverden Veterinary Group: Tunbridge Wells - 01892 520296, Crowborough - 01892 661650, Wadhurst - 01892 782382 and we will be happy to advise you.