

Pawsitive Results Critter Academy

Where people learn to lead...and pets love to follow!

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Tips for Training

1. Don't think of behaviors as good and bad - those words carry too many moral implications that have no place in the dog's existence. Try desirable and undesirable.
2. Set your dog up for success! Manage the dog's environment so he can't make mistakes. When training, keep your criteria low enough that the dog can be successful frequently.
3. Don't be afraid to have a high rate of reinforcement. Your dog won't be spoiled - he'll be eager to work because it's fun! We will lower the rate of reinforcement later.
4. Divide your dog's food into tiny portions and have him work for it throughout the day. Some dogs, such as herding breeds, actually prefer to work for their food.
5. Train off-leash whenever possible. Remember: the leash is a tether for safety - it's not a training tool.
6. Don't always have treats in your hand or on your person when you train. It's okay to delay delivery of the treat for a few seconds while you walk to a bowl.
7. Keep treats stashed in various places around the house. That way you are always ready to reinforce desirable behaviors, and your dog will think you're able to magically make good things appear any place, any time!
8. Change the picture a little bit every time you ask for a behavior. Change your position. Change locations. The only thing that should be consistent is the cue.
9. Ignore undesirable behavior as much as possible. Every time you reinforce a desired behavior, it's like adding money to a bank account. The more money in that account, the stronger the relationship with your dog. Punishment may stop a behavior, but it also removes money from that bank account and it hurts your relationship.
10. If you do use a punishment or physical correction, look at the effect. Did the behavior stop, or does it happen a lot less frequently? If not, it didn't teach the dog what you wanted it to. Instead of associating the punishment with his behavior, he may only be associating the negative experience with you.