

# MODULE 2

DOG TRAINING –  
FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

## LESSON 3

DEVELOPING & FINE-TUNING YOUR TRAINING STYLE



CanineClub  
ACADEMY

## MODULE 2 OUTLINE

### LESSON 1: CANINE TRAINING THEORY

Defining the Owner-Pet Relationship

A Trained Dog Is a Happy Dog

Basic Principles of Dog Training

- Operant Conditioning

- Classical Conditioning

- Reinforcers

- Primary and Secondary Reinforcers

- The Premack Principle

- Aversives

- Compulsion Training vs. Positive Reinforcement

- Extinction

- Shaping

- Chaining

- Habituation

- Desensitization



### LESSON 2: GETTING STARTED WITH TRAINING

Basic Dog Training Equipment

- Collars

- How Would You Like to be Choked or Shocked?

- Leashes

- Harnesses

- Muzzles

Training Accessories

- Clicker Training Tools and Equipment

- Marker Training Tools & Equipment

- Toys for Training

How to Use Your Clicker (or Your Voice or Hand Signals)

Teaching Your First Command

The Four Commands All Dogs Should Know

More Obedience Commands for Fun and Utility

### LESSON 3: DEVELOPING & FINE-TUNING YOUR TRAINING STYLE

Scoring a Dog's Level of Obedience

Comparing Training Techniques and When to Use Them

Troubleshooting

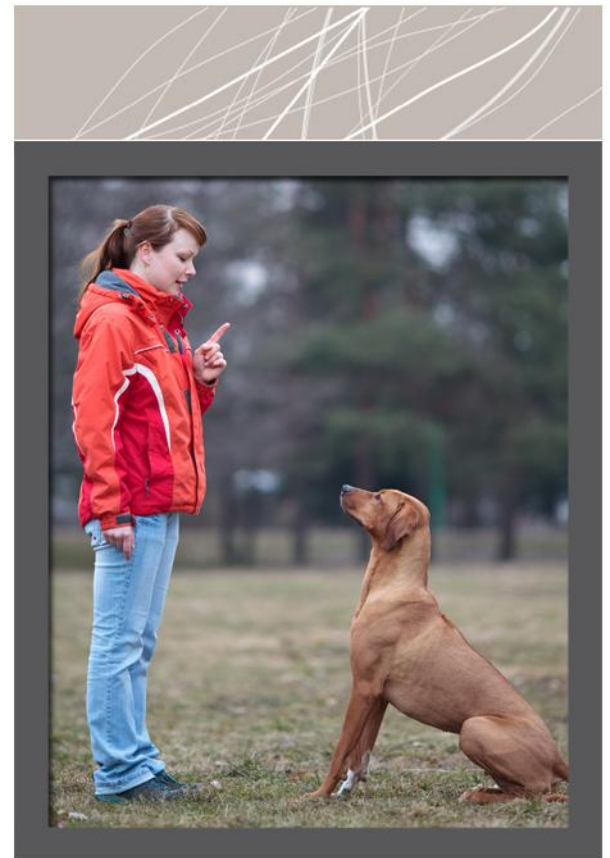
Not Overreacting to Spontaneous Recovery

Teaching Your Dog to "Obey" -- and Not Just to Work for the Treat!!

How Long Does it Take to Train a Dog?

Obedience Training vs. Behavior Modification

### REFERENCES & PHOTO CREDITS



# LESSON 1: DEVELOPING & FINE-TUNING YOUR TRAINING STYLE

*“Of course the only words that I actually managed to yell at the werewolf as he ran at me were, 'BAD DOG!'”*  
— Rachel Hawkins, *Hex Hall*

## SCORING A DOG'S LEVEL OF OBEDIENCE

If you plan to use your Canine Club Academy Certification to become a professional dog trainer, you will want to learn to score a dog's level of obedience. The use of a scorecard before and after training classes can be highly beneficial to both trainer and owner. The scorecard provides information about what the dog knows, what he's perfect at and where his training needs the most work. Even if you are simply training your own dog, using a scorecard to determine his strengths and weaknesses can help you know where to focus your energies.

Scorecards are used in a variety of canine competitions, such as Agility. Each obstacle or command is worth a set number of points. When those points are added up, a total score is recorded for that dog. This is how a winner of a conformation show or Agility trial is decided. When a dog lacks form, grace, or speed, he may have points deducted. In an obedience training scorecard, you will also be able to find problem spots in which the dog needs extra help in and see where he is in his journey of learning.

There is no set, official scorecard for all trainers to abide by when assessing the trained skills of a dog. The exercise you are currently completing with teaching your dog a command employs a simplified version of a scorecard with only one command. At the end of this lesson, we will provide you with a full example scorecard to use in practicing evaluating your dog. However, feel free to modify it to reflect your own training goals. The same card can be used before training to test what the dog already knows. Use the card after the completion of a training course to test how much he has learned and how willing he is to perform.

### Aspects to Consider

When considering your scorecard, you will note the commands that you have instructed the dog to learn. Not all of the commands on the scorecard will be used when scoring each dog. Beside each command there should be a place for a check box and/or notes. Along with the commands, there should also be a section to test the dog's ability to allow handling and petting by others as well as loose leash walking. You can evaluate a dog you are training yourself, but it may be easier to do your first evaluation of someone else handling a dog.

When the handler runs the dog through the test, watch his responsiveness. Did he sit on first cue or did he hesitate and wait to be told a second or third time? Perhaps his training was not rewarding enough to get him interested, and you can take a step back to find what really gets him ready to work.

Along with responsiveness, how alert is the dog to the handler? The dog should



be focused on his work and not attempting to interact with the environmental stimuli that surround him. During the testing of loose leash walking, he may not have to be in a perfect heel position, but he should follow the handler's direction and not attempt to pull away.

The dog is not the only one being assessed, either. You should also keep an eye on the handler, since most training problems arise with the person first. The handler may be unknowingly confusing the dog by sending mixed messages with his or her body language. The handler should also be interested in guiding the dog through the test, because if his owner is into it, the dog will be too!

## COMPARING TRAINING TECHNIQUES AND WHEN TO USE THEM

### Prompting

Prompting, in training, is the use of a clue to help the dog learn the behavior you are looking for. To prompt a dog, you provide a hint as to what the behavior is that you want to train. For instance, if you want to teach a dog to bark on cue, you may bark at him to elicit him to bark back. This way, you can mark his bark with the secondary reinforcer and provide the reward.

Prompting can also be considered a way of cheering on your dog when he is on his way to completing the behavior you want. One good example is if you are running an agility course with a dog and you encourage him with a "Go, boy, go!" in the middle of the weave obstacle to let him know that he's doing great and to keep going.

As a dog become reliable in the behavior you are working towards, a prompt should be faded out. Fading out the prompt will help to dog to not become dependent on the prompt and instead be able to perform the behavior with just a prior cue.

### Luring

Like prompting, luring also helps the dog achieve a wanted behavior, but by aiding him into that behavior using a reward. One fantastic instance of this is luring a dog to weave between your legs while walking. You can hold a high value treat in your closed fist and encourage the dog to walk between your legs by guiding him with your fist.

A dog's nose will naturally channel his interest into a lured behavior. Old style trainers will often consider a lure as a bribe for the dog and will insist that luring does not produce a reliable behavior. On the contrary, lures are easily faded out of a training session with consistent positive reward training, as seen in both dog training and wildlife training.



Some commands are easier to train with a lure than others, depending on the individual dog. Many dogs find learning agility obstacle courses easiest when first taught with a lure, while others may do better with shaping. If you are training a dog that is extremely food motivated, luring may be the most effective and time saving method to train many behaviors.

## Shaping

Shaping, as proven by many zoological and marine mammal parks around the world, is a highly effective method of training many behaviors. As we discussed in Lesson 1, in shaping, a behavior is broken up into small slices of mini behaviors in which the animal is given a marker each time they get closer and closer to the final goal.

Shaping is used often in clicker training for all types of dogs, from house pets to active police K9s. In shaping, dogs may very well become frustrated trying to figure out what it is you are looking for, so it is important for you to maintain a positive attitude. They will offer various behaviors to see if that is what will get them their reward. They learn how to use critical thinking and have a lot of fun getting rewarded for the right behavior.

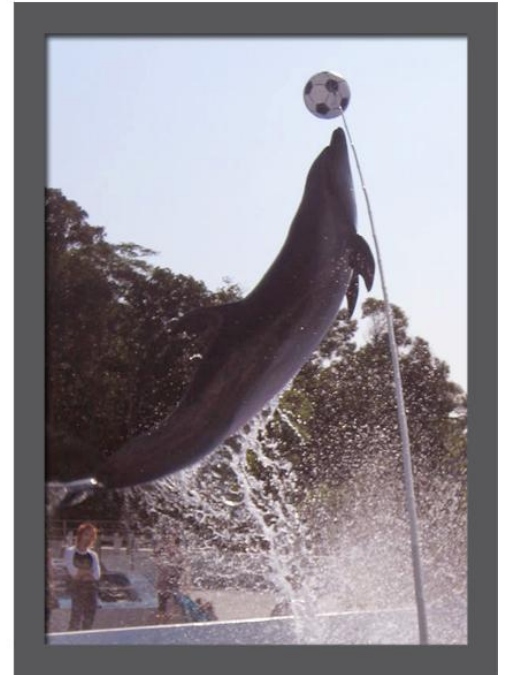
In shaping, as in any progressive positive reinforcement training, no punishment is offered for a wrong behavior. In fact, when an animal performs something other than what you are looking for, they simply do not get the secondary and primary reinforcers. Nothing happens, and they know to try something else.

## Targeting

Targeting is an extremely useful trained behavior for dogs. In targeting, the dog learns to touch his nose or paw to a designated object. This helps in training everything from the retrieve to going to bed at night. Targeting can be seen during dolphin shows, when a dolphin leaps into the air and touches his beak to a ball in the air.

Targeting can be one of the very first things a dog or puppy learns along with their other obedience commands. A dog can learn to target his person's hand, an object such as a paper plate, or a store-bought targeting tool. The tool is typically a metal rod or stick with a plastic small ball on the tip. The dog is encouraged to interact with the ball and gets a marker and reward each time until he is touch his nose or paw to it.

Service dogs are taught targeting very early in life. Targeting becomes a constant in their life for medical alerts, picking up items and turning lights on or off for their disabled handlers. Agility competitors may learn to target to make sure their paws touch the correct contact spots on obstacles to avoid penalties.



## Modeling and Capturing

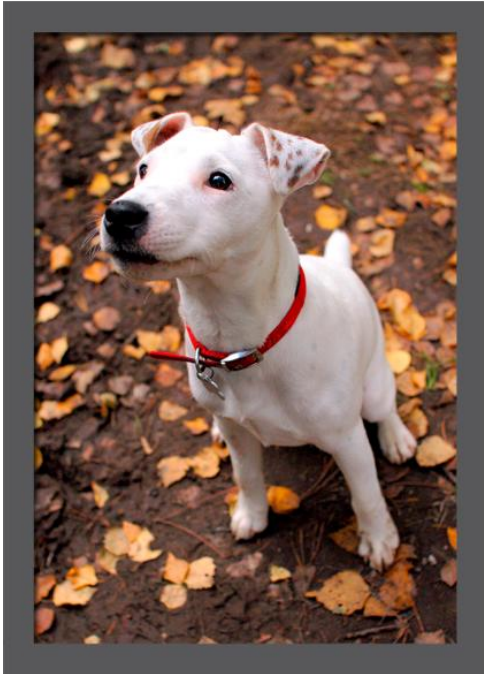
Capturing is probably one of the most used techniques among clicker trainers along with luring and shaping. With capturing, you simply wait until the dog performs exactly what you are looking for and use your marker to let them know “Yes! Correct!” and give them a reward.

Modeling is not often used with clicker or marker training techniques, and is considered an old style of training along with the use of aversions. To use modeling, you will force the dog into the position you want and then offer them a reward for being in that position. Sit, down, and heel used to be taught this way worldwide as common practice. The dog would be pushed into a down or sit and then handed a reward for being there.

When using modeling, the dog is not using his mind to figure out what you want to get the reward. He is simply forced into doing what you want and then rewarded. Whether or not the dog ever truly learns a reliable command this way is debatable, but it is more difficult both physically and mentally for trainer and

dog. Thanks to our knowledge of dog psychology, we now understand better what makes dogs tick, and can help them learn and figure things out, rather than simply compelling them to do our bidding.

## TROUBLESHOOTING



### Give Your Words Power!

If you have ever seen an owner tell his dog four or five times in a row to sit, and finally give up, you can bet it is because the dog sees no substance to the word. It is quite possible that the dog knows what it means, but simply sees no reason to obey. Give your words power so the dog not only respects them, but wants to sit when you tell him to.

Giving your words the ability to control your dog does not involve domination, intimidation or punishment. In fact, it involves conditioning the dog to associate your command with a wonderful emotional reaction. During

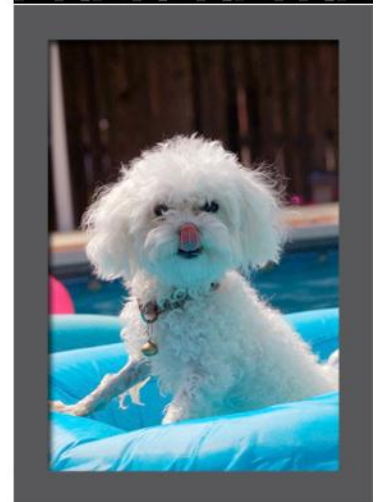
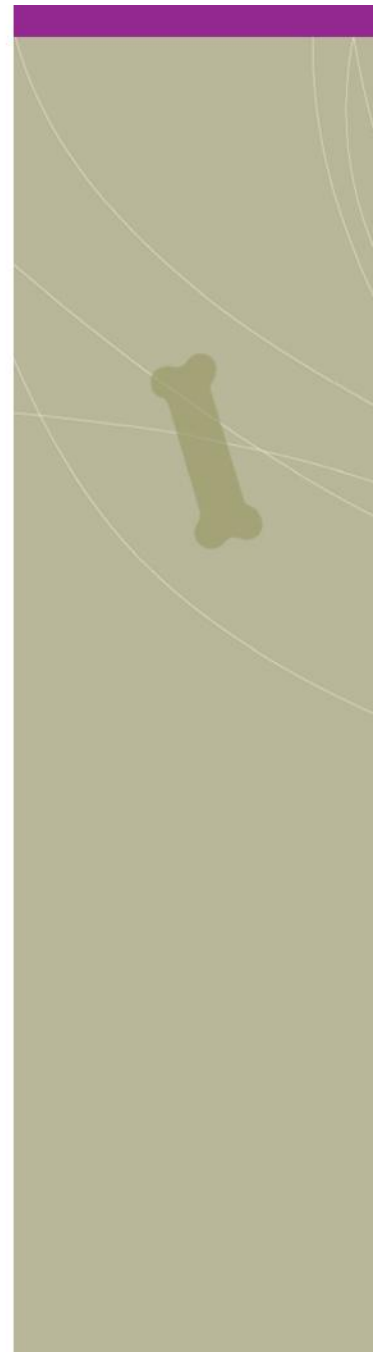
training sessions, you should never repeat your command. In fact, the behavior should be reliable before a command is even given. Only add the command after your dog knows what to do first, either through luring, capturing or shaping.

Once the dog understands the command and its association with the behavior and finally a reward, you should treat each command as if you are in a training session. If you dog does not obey, he does not get told again, he gets ignored. This is called a least reinforcing scenario. The dog does not get reinforced for ignoring your command. The reward comes when he obeys, and he will be happy to do so for that reward.

### The 45-Second Rule

Some trainers believe in what is called the 45 second rule. This rule states that no behavior can be given a consequence, either positive or negative, after 45 seconds have passed since the behavior was performed. The belief is that you cannot reward or punish a dog for something that happened 45 seconds ago, or longer.

This brings us back to timing your mark on a wanted behavior. If your mark is timed at the exact right moment when a behavior is performed, your reward may take longer to be given to the animal. Because the marker has become a secondary reinforcer, the timing of the reward is not as important. Although, providing the reward sooner rather than later is far more effective and shortens the time it takes to train a behavior to completion, the marker is the most important aspect.



For example, if you tell your dog to sit, but you wait until after he has sat and gotten up to reward him, he will believe that the act of standing is the behavior you want. Even though you told him to sit and he obliged, whatever behavior he is providing during the time of the mark being given is the one he will associate with the reward.

Likewise, as we learned in Module 1 during our discussion of anthropomorphism, if your dog had a potty accident on the floor while you were gone, reprimanding him for it when you come home will only teach him that you are angry and to avoid you when you arrive home. He will not associate what he did on the floor with your punishment, but will see you coming home as a negative thing if it happens often.

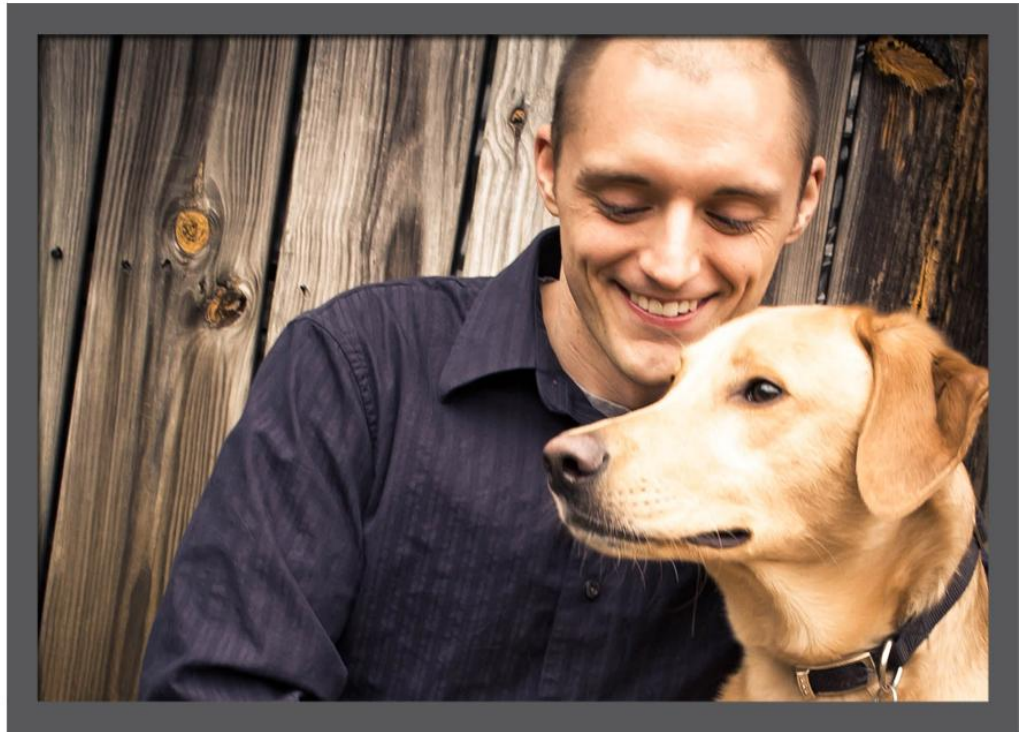
When a dog performs a wrong or unwanted behavior, such as urinating on the floor without your knowledge, punishment simply does not work. You could be sending the wrong signals and exacerbating the problem instead of fixing it.

## **Training In Context**

Training your dog in context means to understand the context, or surroundings, in which a dog performs a behavior and determine whether or not he will perform it again. Potty training a dog is one instance in which training in context tends to be greatly overlooked. When owners begin potty training, they typically confine the dog to a crate, play pen, or room, and quickly take him outside to do his business when needed. After a while with no accidents, the owners may consider the dog housebroken and let down their guard, allowing the dog to roam the house without constant attention. Later, they are likely to find potty spots in another room.

In this instance, the dog was taught to go potty outside, not in his playpen or otherwise confined area. He was never taught that going in other rooms of the house was not acceptable, so he simply acted on what he knew and understood.

Anything from a different floor texture to various ambient sounds in a location can change the known behaviors a dog has been taught into unknown behaviors. Dogs must be taught their trained commands as if they are new to them in different situations and locations to build a proofed and reliable behavior.



## **NOT OVERREACTING TO SPONTANEOUS RECOVERY**

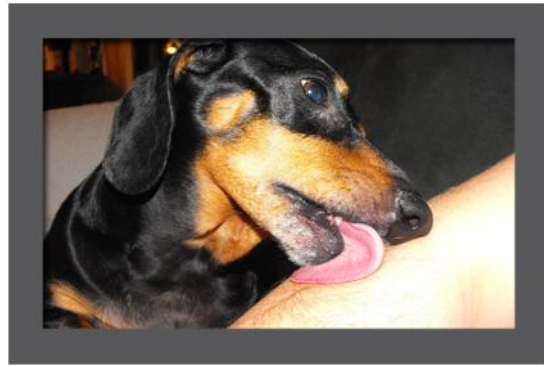
Often times a dog will seem to lose all the training he has been through and will regress to being an unmanageable dog. Common symptoms are leash pulling, seeming to forget house training rules, barking at strangers on walks, or being fearful in typically normal situations. This kind of behavior and reactivity is called spontaneous recovery and can happen at any age with certain triggers, although it is most common during the teenage stage of puppies. Spontaneous recovery can occur due to hormones, a change in the environment, or unusual stress in a dog's life. Sometimes the cause is just unknown to the humans of the

house. Although spontaneous recovery can be discouraging in the moment, it does not mean that your dog's memory has been erased and he will never obey again. It simply needs to be worked through.

Dealing with spontaneous recovery can be upsetting for humans, but you need to be your dog's rock through difficult time. If possible, remove whatever is causing the dog stress. Every dog has his own threshold of stress, meaning the amount of activity or number of scary things he can handle until he can no longer react to commands or enjoy play. If the dog is stressed, get rid of what is stressing him and try giving commands again. The dog may be too aroused to obey at first, but be patient and consistent and he will eventually remember his training. Working through these stages calmly will help him better deal with spontaneous recovery in the future if it happens again.

## **TEACH YOUR DOG TO "OBEY" – NOT JUST WORK FOR TREATS!**

Old style trainers will claim all the time that using positive reinforcement only teaches a dog to obey when treats are involved. This claim is simply untrue, as using positive reinforcement creates the highest probability of a dog repeating learned behaviors without a primary reinforcer involved.



You do not need to carry treats with you at all times to reward a dog for a job well done. When the dog has been well versed in exactly what behaviors you want, you can easily set out on a walk or ask for chained behaviors without food rewards. The relationship between the owner and dog is a key factor in the dog wanting to please its owner through obeying commands on first try. With proper training, the dog will see the commands and acts of fulfilling the asked behavior requests as rewards in themselves because they have been associated with positive emotions.

This is why you will see dogs rush through an Agility course easily without the handler having even a crumb of cheese in his pocket. The dog has been trained with positive reinforcement when he was first taught how to run through the obstacles, and the positive rewards brought out joyful emotions within the dog. Those emotions become associated with the commands, and the dog becomes more than happy if not eager to obey the handler on first command.

Have confidence in your dog, and in the relationship of trust you have built with him. Maintaining a consistently fun and positive atmosphere during training will enable you to eventually phase out treats and other rewards, leaving you with a well-trained and socialized dog that is a joy to be around.

## **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO TRAIN A DOG?**

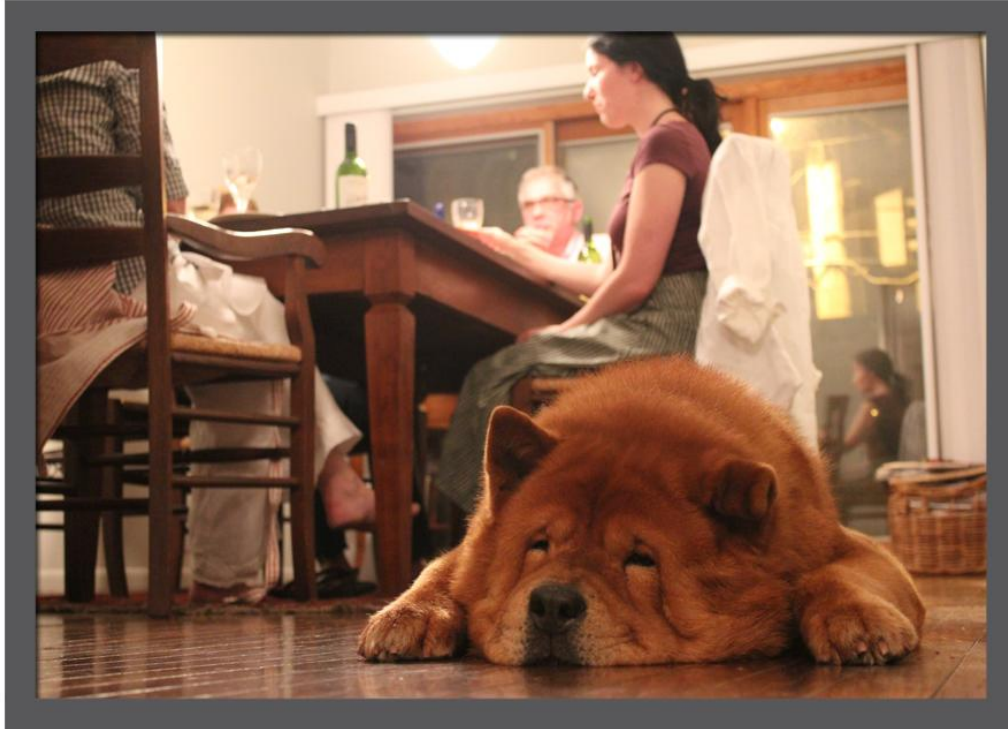
Slow and steady wins the race. Training, like most learning activities, is best accomplished in short, frequent sessions. Your dog will learn much more in ten minutes each day than in an hour once a week. By offering only a short, maybe five or ten minute training session daily, the dog will learn quickly and your full day will not be all about dog training. In fact, incorporating training within the daily activities of a household should be recommended to all dog owners. Everything from asking the dog to politely wait to eat his food until given a



release word to loose leash walking for exercise or even fetch for playing ball, is easy and fun to train if no one stresses out over it.

Each dog is an individual, and how long he takes to learn basic commands and socialized behaviors will depend on his temperament, age, environment, and of course, the expertise of his trainer. However, you should never consider your dog “finished” training, as he will learn throughout his life time even if you're not meaning to train him. A dog will watch your body language and act accordingly. Even old dogs love to learn new tricks, so continuing training through a dog's lifetime is not necessarily a bad thing but can be quite enjoyable and fun.

Lastly, always end a training session on a high note. Making a training session continue on too long may cause the dog to become bored and not look forward to the next session.



## **OBEDIENCE TRAINING VS. BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**

When one thinks of dog training, typically a dog walking nicely on leash and sitting when told is what comes to mind. This is obedience training. Teaching the dog simple, common and useful behaviors to perform to a cue can be beneficial in their daily lives with humans.

Behavior modification varies in that it tackles unwanted behavior issues seen in dogs. Behavior modification is used in both adults and puppies, and can implement prevention as well as alternative behaviors and even include desensitization techniques. The purpose of this type of training is to eliminate or prevent unsavory behaviors that a dog or puppy may exhibit now or in the future.

Virtually all private trainers offer behavior modification, and it can cover everything from fear aggression to resource guarding to jumping up on strangers. Eliminating unwanted behaviors or preventing them from occurring is just as important as common obedience training. Every dog needs both types of training to be a well-rounded canine citizen. During future modules, we will cover behavior modification for puppies and rescue dogs, as well as troubleshooting specific behavioral problems. For now, feel free to go take a well-earned break playing with your dog before you tackle this lesson's assignment.

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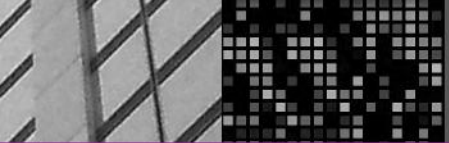
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