

## TRAINING YOUR RESCUED DOG

**Training your rescued dog is important to his health, happiness and well-being. Teaching him to be socially and behaviorally accommodating will make him more desirable to be adopted. Before you begin, make sure you are calm, happy and ready to have fun with your rescued dog, and to make it fun for him. If he makes a mistake, or YOU make a mistake (you both will), that's OK. Just laugh it off and move on. Don't get frustrated, don't get angry, don't raise your voice. Have fun!**

**House Training:** Never let an un-housetrained dog out of your sight while inside! Every time a dog relieves himself inside, it creates a habit. An un-housetrained dog should be either:

- Inside, with you watching him. He should always have a leash attached so you can quickly take him outside if necessary. If you have a tendency to nod off while on the couch, loop the leash around your hand or foot so you will know if he wants to take off.
- Outside
- In a crate

If you follow these rules, your dog should be trained in a week or two. Adult dogs can be housetrained, too!

The best method is the crate training method. Buy a crate or kennel big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down in. This will be the dog's "den" and sleeping place.

Dogs are clean animals and want to keep their home and sleeping area clean. Even young puppies will try their best not to go inside their crate.

- On the dog's first day home, let him wander in and out of the crate. Put a towel and some treats in it. Put the crate close to where the family hangs out, so your dog will feel like part of the family.
- Young puppies must go out many times a day; every half hour is a good starting place, and immediately after eating or drinking a lot of water at one time (such as after play). In our opinion, older dogs need to go out at least four or more times daily (more is better). All dogs should go outside immediately after long periods of sleep, or when they have been in their kennel for extended periods.
- Take the dog to the SAME spot outdoors. The smell will remind him why he's there.
- Do not play with him. Your dog is here for a purpose and until that purpose is fulfilled, both of your minds should remain on the task at hand.
- When puppy relieves himself outside, PRAISE him, "Good Dog!!" and give him a treat. Praise is the key to housetraining! Your dog will learn that going outside means treats and will be eager to go out.
- If you're inside and notice your dog starting to sniff and circle, grab him and take him out. If you catch him in "mid-stream", startle pup with a noise and take him out.
- What if you notice a mess on the floor but didn't see your dog do it? Clean up the mess without fussing at your dog. Dogs live in the moment and won't understand that you are punishing him for something he did in the past. Rubbing your dogs' nose in the mess or hitting him with a newspaper won't work.
- Use a cleaner that will kill smells and bacteria, such as Simple Green (grocery stores), Nature's Miracle (pet stores), or vinegar and water. If you don't clean the spot very well, the smell might make him go there again.
- At bedtime, take your dog outside and then lock him in his crate for the night. He'll make an effort not to foul his bed. Then take him outside first thing in the morning. Some young puppies may not have the muscle control to hold it all night and will have to go out during the night.
- Don't feed your dog after about 6:00 p.m. This will help your dog make it through the night.
- Dogs can be left in a crate 4-6 hours. Dogs should not be left in a crate more than 8 hours.
- Tips: Hang a jingle bell on the door and jingle it when you take your dog out. He will learn to ring the bell when he needs to go out.
- Install a dog door. Dog doors are a wonderful invention! Dogs quickly learn to come and go on their own.

**Crate (Kennel) Training:** Please remember that training your rescued dog to be comfortable while confined in a crate or kennel is an important part of his being desirable for adoption. There will be times in a dog's life when he will need to be confined for his protection as well as protection of others around him. Kennel training should never be used as a punishment, but should be seen by the dog as a safe place. A place he can go to take a break or just have some alone time.

***Note: Do not ever force your dog into the kennel/crate. He must always enter and stay because he feels safe, not because you won the fight with him to go into the kennel.***

How to train your rescued dog to be comfortable in his kennel:

- Place the crate in an area of your home where your family spends a lot of time.
- Make the kennel comfortable by placing a soft blanket or dog bed inside. If your dog is destructive or tries to eat the blanket, consider placing a more desirable chew toy in the kennel with him. If he still chews on the blanket or bed, you may have to remove them from the kennel.
- Put his favorite toys inside the kennel.
- Secure the door in a wide open position so it doesn't close against him and startle him.
- Introduce your dog to the kennel by placing some treats just inside and letting him go up to the kennel, get the treats and investigate.
- When he is comfortable sticking his head inside the kennel, place the treats deeper inside and let him step into the kennel to get the treats. Allow him to leave the kennel whenever he wants to.
- Work towards placing the treats further back in the kennel so that he has to have all four feet inside to get the treats. Again, do not close the gate and allow him leave at will.
- Once he is comfortable going inside, feed all of his treats and his meals inside the kennel.
- Play games, work on cues, give lots of treats and praise while he is in the kennel. Practice Sit, Stay, Down and other cues while he is in the kennel.
- When he shows that he is comfortable and has no fear of the kennel, you may close the door, but do not latch it.
- Step away from the kennel, but remain in his sight while he is inside. After a few seconds, open the door and let him come out if he wants to. He may just decide that this is a good place to be and stay inside for a while.
- If he has not tried to escape or get out of the kennel to this point, you may latch the door.
- Gradually increase the time that he is inside with the kennel door closed, but remain in his sight.
- When he shows that he is not bothered by being in the kennel for longer periods of time, you may leave the room, but only for a few seconds to start.
- Increase the time you are out of his sight.
- Once your rescued dog is comfortable with progress so far, you may leave the house, but do this for very short periods of time at first.
- Gradually increase the time he is left alone, in short increments.

The key is to make sure your dog is completely comfortable with each step of this process before going on to the next step. If at any time your dog becomes anxious or fearful, go back to a previous step and work your way back up to where you left off. Properly introduced, most dogs will accept the kennel as their personal safe and comfortable place and will happily enter without complaint.

**Required Training for Our Rescued Dogs:** Sit, Stay, Down, Come, Touch, Look, Leave it, Off, Loose leash walking.

- **Sit:** Stand in front of the dog, with the dog facing you. Hold a treat above the dog's head and say "Sit". If the dog does not sit, move the treat towards the back of his head so that he has to tilt his head back and look up to see the treat. This will encourage him to place his haunches on the ground. The very second that he sits, or makes a solid attempt, give him the treat and praise him as if he had just saved the world. Repeat this exercise several times until he sits quickly. Practice this several times a day for several days, eventually decreasing the number of treats you give him.
- **Stay:** When you have your dog sitting reliably on cue, say the word "Stay". Just stand in front of him while he stays for a couple of seconds. When he has stayed for a couple of seconds, release him from the stay by saying "OK", reward him with the treat and massive praise. Repeat this several times. Once you think he understands, you may begin to increase the distance between you and the dog. Take a step backwards while he stays. After a few seconds, release ("OK"), reward and praise him. Gradually increase the time of the stay and the distance. With enough practice, you will be able to leave the room while he stays without moving.
- **Down:** Beginning from the Sit position, place your hand with a treat in front of him and let him sniff. Take your hand down and out at an angle so that your dog's head follows down, but his bottom also stays down. If he gets up from the Sit, do not give the treat. Instead, get him back into the Sit position and repeat taking your hand down and out. If your dog is having difficulty and does not move his paws out to lie down, you may reward in small steps for following the treat and putting his head down while still holding his bottom on the floor. However, you should strive to get him laying flat on the floor after the first couple of tries. Do this by bringing the treat to the floor and holding it there until he is in a full down position. He will probably lick at and try to get the treat, but do not give it to him until he is in the down position. Once he is flat on the floor, give him the treat and lots of praise. Repeat this several times per day for several days. Eventually reduce the number of treats and remove them all together.
- **Come:** This should be an easy cue to teach, as the dog probably wants to be close to you, especially if you have treats for him. From a sit/stay position, step a few feet away, while still facing the dog. Hold out a treat and say "Come". When he approaches you, reward him and give him lots of praise. Place your dog back in the sit/stay position and repeat the action. Do this several times at increasing distances and increasing times of sit/stay. Go to a room out of sight of the dog while he sits/stays and ask him to come.
- **Touch:** Have your dog sit in front of you with his attention on you. Hold a treat in your left hand. Hold your right hand open and in front of him and wait for him to touch his nose to your open hand. When he does so, give him the treat and praise him. The goal is to get your dog to turn away from the hand with the treat in it and touch his nose to your open hand. As soon as he has been successful, praise the dickens out of him and give him the treat. When he has done this several times, say the word "Touch" as soon as his nose touches your open hand. Repeat several times with the same hands, then start over with the treat in your right hand and have him touch the left hand. Eventually you will say the cue "Touch" just before he touches your hand and he will begin to associate the cue with the action. Again, once he does as you ask, let him have the treat and give him lots of praise. He needs to feel like he is the best dog in the world for doing what you asked him to do. As he gets better and better at Touch (and he will), decrease the number and frequency of treats and ask him to do the action just for the praise. He will.
- **Look:** Hold a treat in either hand, with your dog sitting in front of you. Bring the treat up to your nose, and as you do this, say the word "Look". When he looks in your eye, what do you do? Treat and Praise! Repeat this activity several times per session, several times per day. As your dog learns the cue, increase your distance from the dog and decrease the frequency of treats.
- **Leave it:** With your dog sitting in front of you, place a treat in your open hand and bring it in front of him. If (when) he tries to get the treat, close your hand so he can't get it. Keep your hand closed until he stops attempting to get the treat. Once he sits quietly with his attention on you and not the hand with the treat, give him the release cue "OK" and let him take the treat from your hand. Repeat this several times. After several successes, tell the dog "Leave it". Wait a few seconds, say the release cue "OK" and let him have the treat. The goal is to be able to have a treat in your open hand and ask your dog to ignore it until you tell him it is OK. Gradually increase the time of the Leave it. The next step in this cue is to place your dog in the down position and lay the treat on the floor in front of him while saying "Leave it". Be ready to scoop the treat up if he tries to

get it before you give him the release cue "OK". You can also practice this cue during meal times by placing his food in front of him and asking him to "Leave it" until you release him by saying "OK".

- Off: To keep your dog from jumping on you, or visitors, teach him the Off cue. If the dog is jumping on you, cross your arms or keep them motionless at your side, turn your back to the dog and say the word "Off". Just ignore him. Do not give him the attention he is rudely seeking. Once he quiets down and is no longer trying to jump on you, give him great praise and a treat. It will take some time and many attempts to teach this behavior to your dog, but it is important to be persistent and make no contact with him. Pushing him off from you is a form of attention (a reward for the dog) and should not be used. You may also use an alternate behavior, such as Sit. When he indicates that he is about to jump on you or your guests, tell him to "Sit". If he does as you ask, give him praise. If gets up from the Sit, immediately stop the attention and ignore him.
- Walking on a loose leash: It is natural for your dog to want to explore when you are walking with him. That means trying to go beyond the limit of the leash and sniff, paw or dig at everything that moves, or doesn't move. He should be allowed to explore, to sniff and to paw while on a walk. That is a reward in itself. But your dog should not be pulling on the leash in order to do this. To correct this behavior, put your dog in a frame of mind where he depends on you to decide where the walk will take him. When he pulls on the leash, immediately change direction and say "This way". Do not tug or jerk on the leash. Just change direction. Repeat this every time you feel the slack in the leash tightening, even if it means changing direction after every two or three steps. This may take many changes in direction over several walks, but your dog will learn to rely on you to choose the course for your walk.

Every one of these training techniques can be taken outside once your dog is reliably responding to them in the controlled environment of your home. Place your dog on a long lead (20'-30') and go through each of the cues at increasing distances. This will give you and your dog the foundation needed to be able to have him respond to your cues at distance and with distractions. Imagine your dog seeing a squirrel run across his path a few yards away and the second you see him start to react, you ask him to look at you. He immediately ignores the squirrel and turns to you.

#### **Important things to remember**

- Positive reinforcement/gentle training methods will always be employed in the training of our dogs.
- Do not ever scold, raise a hand to, hit, kick, jerk or be negatively physical with the dog at any time for any reason.
- If you are having trouble with any of these techniques or need help in how to employ them, let us know. We are here to help you as you help our dogs.
- Formal training sessions are not always necessary to teach your dog these cues. You can turn almost any interaction between you and your rescued dog into a training session. If you are sitting watching TV, call him over to you (Come). Ask him to Sit, practice Leave it, or Look or Touch. Mix it up, keep it interesting and fun.
- Training should not be a chore, but a way to have fun with your dog, get him thinking, give him the attention he deserves and help to mold him into the perfect dog ready for his new family and the great life ahead of him.

It is important that our rescued dogs have a basic foundation in these behaviors. A well behaved dog who works at pleasing his handler is a dog that is more likely to be adopted.

Your dog will comply with your wishes for one of two reasons: Because he is fearful of the consequences of noncompliance, or because he is rewarded for doing what you ask him to do. The former produces a scared, retiring dog who will avoid human contact. The latter will give you a happy, well adjusted, sociable member of your family. Any training method which uses fear, punishment or any negative consequences is unacceptable and will not be used when working with our rescued dogs.