



A Better Companion Dog Training

Good Dog Rules for Basic Obedience

THE WALK

- Don't put the leash on an excited dog - wait for your dog to be calm first, then put on his leash and collar(s).
- Prong collars go high on the neck - right behind the ears and under the jaw with the leash attached behind the near ear. The collar should be snug followed by the e-collar, followed by the tag collar at the bottom. Don't forget your carabiner or coupler – safety first.
- Your dog should pause and wait calmly, sitting at the door - you step out first - your dog remains sitting, then you release with a calm “Heel” or “Let's Go”.
- Dog sits again while you shut the door and get yourself situated.
- Grab the leash, in either hand, at just the right length - I want your arm to hang down naturally with just enough slack in the leash to feel if he is out of position when you swing your arm. Too much slack and your dog will wander; too much tension and he'll be confused and feel trapped.
- Say “Heel” and start walking. The dog should be walking at your side, at your pace. If your dog starts to pull ahead, pop the leash straight up or slightly behind you (toward your butt) and immediately release the tension. The “Pop” should be quick and sharp. If your dog moves to your left, right, or behind you, “Pop” in the opposite direction or in other words “Pop” in the direction you want him to go.
- When correcting on the walk, let your dog tell you what level of correction he needs to take you seriously. If you “pop” and the behavior changes, then it was the right level. If the behavior doesn't change, then your correction level was too low or soft. Your dog will always tell you what level of correction he needs by whether the behavior changes, or not.
- Structured walks should consist of a 90/10 ratio of structure versus free time in order for the dog to feel like you are the leader. That means 90% of the walk should be heeling next to you - not sniffing, wandering, barking, jumping or pulling. The 10% free time will be interspersed throughout the walk and only with your permission.

You can use release commands such as “Break”, “Hurry”, “Go Potty”, “Do your business”, etc. - at this point you give your dog more leash and let them sniff/pee, etc. This doesn't need to be an eternity - give the dog a minute or two and then say “Heel” and off you go.

- If while on the walk your dog becomes distracted or intensely focused before he's reactive towards a dog, a cat, squirrel, or anything, give him a “Pop” on the leash to redirect his attention to you. Your dog should not be focused on everything else going on in the environment, your dog should be focused on walking with you.
- Upon returning home, the dog once again sits at the door and waits while you walk inside - then you release with “Heel” or “Let's go”.

LEASH AND COLLAR - INSIDE THE HOUSE

- The leash and the prong collar or e-collar should always be on when you are home and able to supervise. Removing the leash and collar too soon undermines the training process, and teaches the dog he can blow you off and get away with disobedience and sends conflicting messages. This is a habit you do not want to cultivate as it is extremely difficult to fix.
- Remember to always remove the leash and collar whenever you leave or are unable to supervise at which point your dog should be in the crate.

GIVING COMMANDS

- Remember, only say the command ONCE. Whether “Sit”, “Down”, “Place”, or “Come”, if the dog doesn’t immediately move into position, then guide the dog with leash pressure into position. Later in the training process, when the dog completely understands the commands, and chooses not to comply, we will use a leash “Pop” (or e-collar) and a verbal “No” to correct. If after the “Pop” the dog doesn’t go into position, you will guide with leash pressure.
- Do not say “Stay”. Stay is implied in my training system. The only way a dog is allowed to leave the “Sit”, “Down”, or “Place” command is with the release “Heel”, “Break” or the “Come” command.

FEEDING

- The dog should not be allowed to free feed or graze. Your dog should be fed on schedule, and if the dog doesn’t finish his food within a few minutes, it should be removed. Free feeding allows the dog to distance himself from your leadership by encouraging him to think of himself as the provider of food, after all he goes to the magic bowl and gets food whenever he wants to.
- The actual feeding process should consist of the following:
 - With the leash and collar ON, your dog should be in command - either “Place”, “Sit”, or “Down”, or in a crate (also in a sit or down) - not wandering around, begging, or hassling you while you prepare the food.
 - Bring the food to the dog - once again, the dog should be in command - either “Place”, “Sit”, or “Down”, or in a crate in a sit or down. The dog is NOT allowed to move toward the food at all until released. You should set the food down, wait for calm eye contact, and then release with a calm “Break”.

BEHAVIOR ISSUES

- Jumping up: If your dog jumps up on you or others, simply grab the leash at the moment it occurs and “Pop” either downward, or to the side - whichever is more convenient and accessible - while saying “No” or “Off”. If using an e-collar simply push the button to deliver the “Pop” at a level appropriate to the situation.
- Nipping/Mouthing: If your dog is nipping/mouthing, grab the leash at the moment it occurs and correct with a leash “Pop” and a firm “No”. If using an e-collar simply push the button to deliver the “Pop”.

- Counter Surfing: If your dog is counter surfing, you need to either catch him in the act and correct with a leash “Pop” and a “No”, or set up the situation in order to teach with something the dog likes (a lot!) so that you are ready to correct at the appropriate time. Put it just in reach, and wait for the dog to make a choice. If he jumps up or makes a move for the food, “Pop” instantly and firmly say “No” - then repeat the process, giving the dog the opportunity to make a better choice. The e-collar gets the best results for counter surfing.

- Guests or yourself coming through the door or coming home: You and your guests should ALWAYS ignore your dog when he is excited or hyper/manic but correcting as necessary - never pet, talk, or otherwise reinforce the excitement, for some dogs looking at them is a reinforcer. If you or your guest interacts with your dog while it is excited, you will be training your dog that excited, hyper behavior is what gets him affection. You will also train them that they should go bananas every time someone comes through the door, and it can become an explosion trigger. First correct the behavior and then teach an alternate behavior that gets him appropriate attention.

CRATE

- To put your dog in the crate, walk him in with the leash and collar on – if he resists, use a bit of pressure with the leash, this will cause him to walk on in. Ignore any objections or protests and guide him firmly into the crate. Repeat the in and out several times if necessary.
- When removing your dog from the crate, you should put his leash and collar on while the dog is still in the crate, waiting calmly - inviting the dog out without his leash and collar on is inviting trouble. Remember that he is faster than you and if he is not leashed he can engage in all kinds of shenanigans before you can catch him. You want to be able to ensure courteous, respectful behavior upon exiting the crate.
- Your dog should never come bounding out of the crate - if it starts to rush out, or push out without your release, simply close the crate door firmly on them. Repeat this exercise giving the dog the opportunity to make a better, more courteous choice. Once he waits patiently with the crate door open, you can then calmly release with “Come” or “Let’s go”.

BASICS

- At the beginning of training, your dog should be in command almost always. The exceptions would be when he’s on a potty break, in the crate, or having supervised playtime. This is only temporary, but incredibly important at first - I will let you know when to loosen things up!
- Don’t ever yell at or lose your cool with your dog - this is completely counter-productive. A calm, confident, assertive approach is what conveys leadership - use the leash and collar to correct - not yelling.
- The more you tell your dog what to do, the better he gets. The less you tell him what to do, the worse he gets. Dogs who don’t practice their skills get rusty.
- Dogs thrive and flourish on structure, rules, discipline, routine, and leadership – to them structure equates love.
- If you don’t fulfill your dog’s needs for exercise, structure, and leadership, you can’t expect him to fulfill your needs for good behavior.

- You want to train CALM, not EXCITEMENT, so be careful what behavior you reward and what behavior you correct. Or in other words, “you GET what you PET”.
- Although counter-intuitive, dogs need structure, rules, and leadership FAR more than they need affection.
- The biggest breakdown in the human/canine relationship is our inability to truly understand what love and fulfillment look like to our dogs. The highest form of love is fulfilling your dog’s true needs - putting his needs for exercise, structure, rules, and leadership before your needs for constant love and affection, babying, etc.
- Treat your dog like a human and he’ll treat you like a dog. Remember he is a dog and respect him enough to treat him like one.

Although challenging at first, if you follow these rules and guidelines, you will be well on your way to a fantastic dog and a fantastic relationship with him!