



Paw Prints

Beyond Basics Homework

Teach polite social behavior

Dogs who demand attention can be frustrating to live with, and can in some cases even start to behave aggressively due to lack of impulse control. The family's frustration in dealing with this kind of behavior will often cause the dog to miss out on quality time with the family. Teaching polite behavior includes teaching impulse control. Like children, puppies and dogs need to learn that they can't have everything they want, when they want it. They need to learn how to ask for what they need (food, attention, exercise) politely.

Identify challenging behavior

- Jumping up (this is also a greeting behavior, so take care not to correct harshly)
- Forcefully or repeatedly nudging or pawing at you, or barking directly at you
- Barging through doorways or narrow spaces past you or in front of you
- Guarding food or possessions (*If your dog has ever growled at or bitten a person over food, toys or any other item, that is a serious problem. Please talk to your instructor for help.*)

Don't wait until your dog is misbehaving before you act – teach some manners so your dog will know what you want. It's less confusing and stressful for your dog, and for you too.

Techniques for responding to attention-seeking behaviors

First, observe your dog. Is s/he doing something calm? Regularly capture calm behavior with praise and attention. Behavior that is rewarded will be repeated! If you know that your dog will get excited when visitors come over, put her on leash and give treats for sitting next to you. It's not enough to just tell your dog what you DON'T want – you must also tell him what you DO want.

Look aways: A "look away" is an exaggerated way of ignoring your dog. If your dog starts barking or nudging at you, fold your arms over your chest, tilt your chin upward, and stand still. Don't speak or make eye contact. As soon as the dog stops the challenging behavior, look at him and talk to him. Help him understand how to get your attention politely.

Inhibiting cues: Inhibiting cues are things like "Wait", "Leave It", "Drop it" and "Stay" – things you ask your dog to do to stop or slow down his/her motion. Asking a dog to do something for you, before she gets what she wants, teaches polite behavior. If you ask your dog to wait at the door, and then you take her out, you are using a "real life reward" for good behavior.

Teaching Heel

Remember the "sweet spot" activity from previous classes? Creating a "sweet spot" is a luring method of getting your dog to stay next to you, by holding treats on that side of your body and giving your dog a reward every time he comes to that spot, or stays by you.

That's the beginning phase of teaching "heel". "Heel" means "stay close by me, and slightly behind me, on one side, until I say otherwise". Heel is useful for small segments of walks, where you need your dog to pay close attention to you in order to get past a distraction or another dog. We don't recommend using "heel" for the entirety of all walks – it's hard for the dog, and restricts the environmental enrichment they get from a walk, which is actually the most beneficial part of taking your dog for a walk.



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- A. Have someone hold your dog on leash (or have your dog loose in a fenced area with few distractions). Start walking in a circle, around the person and your dog, but not talking to or trying to engage with your dog. Anytime the dog approaches, say “good dog” and give a treat to reward the dog for coming to your side.
- B. As the dog starts to come next to you more frequently, give treats and praise to encourage the dog to stay by you as you walk. If the dog moves away, stop the treats and praise and keep walking.
- C. Once the dog grasps the concept of “Ah-ha! I get treats every time I come to your left/right side!”, then start to say “Heel” as the dog approaches that spot.
- D. Like “Stay”, “Heel” needs a release word, to let the dog know s/he is finished heeling. Once the dog is reliably coming next to the correct spot when you say “heel”, and staying with you for at least a few steps, then start to say “OK” (or “free” or whatever you want to use as a release), and stop the treats to allow the dog to move away.

Do all initial training in quiet, low distraction environments, and work up to using “heel” on your walks in the neighborhood.

Teach to greet without jumping up

Dogs jump up because they want to be closer to our faces. We can teach them to ask politely for us to come down to their level.

Before your dog jumps on you, ask for an alternate behavior: As soon as your dog comes toward you, turn slightly sideways and quickly ask her to sit. If she does, give her attention immediately to reward her good behavior.

If your dog jumps on you, ignore the dog: If your dog won’t sit (too excited) try a “look away” – tipping your chin up, and standing calmly. Don’t talk to her and don’t touch her. As soon as the jumping stops, give attention and try to distract her.

When your dog jumps on others:

- **Teach your dog that an approaching person = sit:** Ask your dog to “sit” when a person is approaching or you have a visitor at your door. Reward her when she is sitting. The idea is that your dog learns an approaching person is a signal for them to sit.
- **Manage your dog’s behavior with a leash:** Attach a leash with a knot tied by the handle to your dog’s collar. When someone approaches, step on the leash to prevent your dog from jumping up. Reward your dog when all four paws are on the floor and not on your visitor.

Careful: Avoid some often-recommended but harsh older techniques, like “kneeing the dog in the chest” (you can injure your dog’s jaw); “grabbing his paws” (you teach him that you are scary and maybe cause him to panic; you also interfere with the training you’ve done to get him to accept you touching his paws for things like nail clipping).



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Teach Leave it

Bend down and place a biscuit under your shoe. Make sure your dog sees you place the biscuit. As the dog starts to investigate, say “Leave it”, only once, and then wait.

Your dog will probably sniff and dig at your shoe to try to get to the biscuit. Don’t talk or move around, just wait. As soon as she stops focusing on the biscuit, say “Good dog” and give her a treat from your pouch. Move your foot slightly so that she remembers the biscuit, and repeat the activity.

Soon your dog will start looking at the biscuit but then look at you for a better reward from your treat pouch. That’s what you want – for her to think that “Leave it” means “Forget about that item – I’ve got something better”. At the end of the session, pick up the biscuit and put it away. Don’t give it to her, or you’ll teach her to just ‘wait’ for the biscuit instead of forgetting about it.

Take care not to accidentally let the dog steal the biscuit. Each time that happens it will set back your training.

Leave it, Phase II: After your dog has mastered “Leave it” under the shoe, set up a desirable object (open peanut butter jar?) in a room, and walk her into the room on leash. The moment she notices the object, say “leave it” and stop walking (make sure you haven’t accidentally given her enough leash to get to the object!). Wait. As soon as she disengages from wanting the object, say “good dog!” and give her a couple of treats as you and she both walk a few steps away from the object.

Practice this routine until she can do it off-leash successfully.

Set your dog up to succeed: prevent, manage, create a solid foundation

Impulse control depends on the dog being able to focus and relax. Many of these challenging behaviors are driven by boredom and excess mental and physical energy. Dogs need mental and physical exercise every day.

Most dogs need at least two 45-minute walks each day, where they can get their noses on the ground, sniff, and explore. This uses their brains more effectively than ten minutes of fetch in the back yard. Use sniffing walks and feed from toys to help your dog settle and focus each day. Then, use puzzle and food-dispensing toys strategically to help your dog settle during more exciting activities, such as the arrival of a visitor.

If you plan ahead, and you take care of your dog’s mental and physical exercise needs every day, you will eliminate over 80% of these kinds of challenging behaviors before they even start!