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Chapter **1**

Dog Training: The Key to Your Dog's Safety and Your Sanity

So you have a dog? Lucky you. You want to train your dog, right? Lucky dog. There is nothing that you can do to build a bond more quickly between you and your dog than training together, working as a team and spending time productively.

You want your dog to want to be with you, work for you, and then do it all again — for a treat, for praise, for play, because it's worth your dog's while. This chapter serves as a jumping-off point as you begin to develop your relationship with your dog. Training can be fun for you and for your dog. The results are what make all the time you put in training your dog worthwhile, but the journey of training is what can be so much fun — spending time with the dog who will become your best friend.

Someone once wrote: “All owners thinks they have the best dog in the world, and luckily they are all right.” Hence, the role of the dog will be played by your dog, and we refer to him in this chapter and book as Buddy, your buddy, and for simplicity, Buddy is a he. Please insert your dog partner’s name where necessary. We want your relationship with your dog to be a joy.

Understanding Why You’re Training Buddy: To Do Something or Not to Do Something

Your dog is learning from the moment you meet each other, so you want to make sure you know what he’s learning from you. Are you a pushover, a littermate, or the leader of the pack? You want your dog to see you as the pack leader, the coach. That means you set the rules, what games to play, when to eat, when to sleep, when to exercise, and when to train. Dogs don’t know you’re training them. All they know is you and he are spending time together, which is magical.

The important question when training your dog is this: Are you training your dog to *do* something or to *not do* something? The answer really can be both. You’re teaching Buddy to be a good dog, to do this instead of doing that. To do something would be to sit here while you come in the door and greet your dog. To not do something would be don’t jump up as you come in the door. Teaching your dog to sit while greeting you is so much more fun than teaching your dog to not jump up on you. As often as possible, you’re going to teach Buddy what you *want* him to do rather than what you don’t want him to do.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DOGS

Dogs were originally bred for specific functions, such as guarding, herding, hauling, hunting, and so on. Before 1945, most dogs worked for a living, and many still do. The popularity of dogs as household pets is a relatively recent phenomenon, fueled in part by the heroic exploits of the dogs used in World War II as well as the fictional Rin Tin Tin and Lassie. The upshot of this popularity has been a demand for the family dog who is easy to train, good with children, a little bit protective, and relatively quiet. Even more fun are the dogs people love today in cartoons who are humanized such as Snoopy, Scooby Doo, Lady and the Tramp, and the list goes on. Dogs you own are real and need real guidance and training.

Identifying a Well-Trained Dog

A well-trained dog is a joy to have around. He's welcome almost anywhere because he behaves around people and other dogs. He knows how to stay, and he comes when called. He's a pleasure to take for a walk because he doesn't pull and can be let loose for a romp in the park. He can be taken on trips and family outings. He's a member of the family in every sense of the word. This is your goal for Buddy, to be a well-trained dog!



REMEMBER

The most important benefit of training your dog is safety: your safety, the safety of others, and your dog's own safety. A dog that listens and does what he's told rarely gets into trouble. Instead of being a slave to a leash or a line, a trained dog is a free dog — he can be trusted to stay when told, not to jump on people, to come when called, and to walk nicely with you.

For decades, we, Wendy and Mary Ann, have taught dog training classes, private lessons, seminars, and weeklong training camps. Working closely with veterinarians allows us to spend a lot of time doing behavior counseling with their clients. We ask people to tell us what a well-trained dog should look like and what they want to successfully train their dogs to do. They want a dog to be housetrained (Chapter 8 can help you with that task). Sadly more dogs are given up to shelters for failure to become house trained than any other issue. After that, in order of importance, a well-trained dog is one who

- » Doesn't jump on people
- » Doesn't pull on the leash
- » Does come when called
- » Doesn't beg at the table
- » Doesn't bother guests

Note that these requirements, with one exception, are expressed in the negative — that is, *dog*, don't do that. For purposes of training, we express these requirements in the positive — teach your dog exactly what you expect from him. Here's what the new list of requirements for a well-trained dog looks like:

- » Sit when I tell you. (Chapter 11 gives you the how-to.)
- » Walk on a loose leash. (Chapter 12 is your go-to.)
- » Come when called. (Chapter 10 explains how to teach the Come command.)
- » Go somewhere and chill out. (Head to Chapter 13 for more information.)
- » Lie down when I tell you and stay there. (Chapter 11 can help.)

The Sit and Down-Stay commands (see Figure 1-1) are the building blocks for a well-trained dog; if Buddy knows these commands and nothing else, you can still live with him. Of course, your Buddy may have some additional wrinkles that need ironing out, some of which are more matters of management than training. (Chapter 11 discusses these essential commands in greater detail.)



FIGURE 1-1:
Well-trained
dogs.

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For instance, a favorite pastime of some dogs is raiding the garbage. Prevention is the cure here: put the garbage where your dog can't get to it. By moving the trash-can to a secured location, you're managing the environment that fixes the problem. By purchasing a trash container that can't be raided, again you're managing the environment and fixing Buddy's bad behavior. Management is much easier and more quickly successful than having to train an unwanted behavior. Of course, teaching the Leave It command and giving Buddy other things to occupy his attention is also great training. Management and training work hand in hand and together result in the best possible dog with whom you can live and be most proud.

For example, one of Wendy's Dachshunds learned to open the refrigerator by yanking on the towel Wendy kept draped through the door handle; therefore, the dog could help himself to anything he could reach. Prevention was the answer: Wendy removed the towel from the refrigerator handle.

WHAT IS AN UNTRAINED DOG?

The untrained dog has few privileges. When guests come to visit, he's locked away because he's too unruly. When the family sits down to eat, he's locked up or put outside because he begs at the table. He's never allowed off leash because he runs away and stays out for hours at a time. Nobody wants to take him for a walk because he pulls, and he never gets to go on family outings because he's a nuisance.

Dogs are social animals, and one of the cruelest forms of punishment is to deprive them of the opportunity to interact with family members on a regular basis. Isolating a dog from contact with humans is inhumane. Spending quality time with your dog by training him will make him the beloved pet he deserves to be.

Selecting a Training Model

You have many ways to train a dog, ranging from rather primitive to fairly sophisticated. Even technology has had its impact on dog training. For example, rather than fenced yards, people often now have invisible fences, which contain dogs within their confines by means of an electrical shock.

Our approach to training is for people who like their dogs and have them first and foremost as pets and companions or for people who want to like their dogs. Someone pointed this out to us when she arrived for class. At that point she didn't like her dog but wanted to make her child happy by having a dog. Either way, we like your dog and want him to be the best possible dog and you to be the best possible trainer for him.

The training involves three phases:

- » **The teaching phase:** In the *teaching phase*, the dog is taught specific commands in an area free of distractions so he can focus on his owner and can be successful.
- » **The practicing phase:** When the dog reliably responds to the commands he has learned, distractions are introduced (we explain distractions in more detail in Chapter 10). As the dog progresses in this practice phase, the distractions become increasingly more difficult in order to simulate real-life situations.
- » **The testing phase:** In the *testing phase*, the dog is expected to demonstrate that he's a well-mannered pet around other dogs and people.



REMEMBER

The ultimate object of any training is to have your dog respond reliably to your commands. Ideally, he responds to your first command. Telling your dog to do something only to have him ignore you is frustrating. Think of Buddy's response in terms of choices. Do you want to teach Buddy to think he has a choice of responding to you? You want a dog that understands — after you have taught him — that he must do what you tell him, no matter what is happening around him. A truly trained dog listens for your voice above all distractions.

Distractions do cause Buddy to struggle to hear your voice above other things as does the genetic influence of those things that Buddy was bred to do instinctively, that which is in harmony with his basic nature. Are all dogs the same to train or does the breed or mixture of breeds make a difference? Like people, dogs are individuals and have individual needs. Understanding breed characteristics and different teaching models helps to make the job of training that much easier.

First things first: Considering your dog's breed

Before you embark on your training program, consider what you want your dog to master, and then compare your answer to the task for which his breed was originally bred to do. Many people typically select their dogs based on appearance and without regard to breed-specific functions and behaviors. Whatever trait is in harmony with the breed of your dog is easier to teach or harder to break. For example, a Beagle uses his nose everywhere he goes. Teaching a Beagle to track or follow a scent is much easier than teaching a Greyhound to track. Greyhounds are bred to visualize movement rather than to sniff out prey.

Although most dogs can be trained to obey basic obedience commands, breed-specific traits determine the ease or difficulty with which they can be trained. You also need to consider other traits, such as energy levels and grooming needs. High-energy dogs must have outlets for all of that energy. Chapter 20 discusses problems that occur if your dog doesn't get the exercise he needs. After all, a tired dog is a happy dog, and a tired dog has a happy owner. As for grooming, brushing, bathing, and clipping of hair coats is time consuming and expensive if you hire a professional. For a dog to be healthy, the coat and skin needs to be cared for regularly. Chapter 6 discusses grooming.



REMEMBER

An excellent resource for breed-specific behavior and traits is *The Roger Caras Dog Book: A Complete Guide to Every AKC Breed*, by Roger Caras and Alton Anderson (M. Evans & Company). For each breed, the book lists on a scale from 1 to 10 the three characteristics you should pay attention to: the amount of coat care required, the amount of exercise required, and the suitability for urban/apartment life.

Training a dog: What are you really doing?

When training a dog you're either teaching him to do something (build a behavior) or not to do something (abstain from a behavior). For example, consider the Stay command. Are you teaching your dog to remain where he is or not to move from where he is? You can look at any command and ask this question. When training a dog, you're usually building a behavior. Look at Figure 1-2 to help understand.

FIGURE 1-2:
The difference
between training
to do something
and training to
stop an unwanted
behavior.

	Action	Abstention
	Build behavior	Eliminate behavior
+	Pos. reinforcement (add good)	Pos punishment (add bad)
-	Neg. reinforcement (avoid bad)	Neg punishment (remove good)

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In the figure, the first column lists how to build a behavior. The second column lists how to abstain from a behavior. When talking about behavior in proper training terminology, *positive* means adding something, indicated with the plus sign (+), and *negative* means removing something, indicated with the minus sign (-). These two terms don't mean good and bad which is so often associated with positive and negative.

We need to define two other words in terms of behavior:

- » *Reinforcement* is used in the building of a behavior.
- » *Punishment* is used in the abstaining of a behavior.

An easy way to remember this distinction is that reinforcement of something makes it stronger or builds it, and punishment tends to stop something or abstains from something. These two sections examine reinforcement and punishment in more detail.

Reinforcement: Building a behavior

When training a dog, you want the dog to do something new and different. To do that, you need to motivate him by either giving him something he wants for doing

the new task or getting him to avoid something he doesn't want for not doing it. Consider the following:

- » *Positive reinforcement (+)* is adding something the dog wants in order to encourage him to do something he wouldn't do on his own. For example, you want the dog to go upstairs, so you put a tiny treat on each step to induce the dog to go upstairs.
- » *Negative reinforcement (-)* is eliciting a behavior the dog wouldn't do on his own by making him avoid discomfort. The dog will do what is wanted because he wants to avoid the reinforcement from happening to him. For example, you want the dog to go upstairs, so someone gooses the dog's behind to get him to go upstairs to avoid the discomfort of the pinch. At the top of the stairs, you praise him because he went upstairs.

Which approach works best? It may depend on how hungry the dog is, how much he likes the treat being used, and something more interesting isn't going on around the corner, such as a BBQ. In the negative reinforcement approach, it may depend on how hard of a pinch is and if he doesn't mind the pinch versus the effort it takes to climb the stairs.

Training comes with so many variables. The BBQ next door is a distraction, which is why it's best to do early training when no distractions are around. The ability to climb the stairs or the difficulty of the task you're teaching plays a big part on how willing your dog is. Buddy may suffer the consequences instead of climbing the stairs or jumping into a pool if water is too scary. Make sure you break the task you're teaching into small parts to make it more easily understood and achievable.

You later can add distractions to the training after Buddy has learned the command. Distractions make the task more difficult for Buddy. When working with distractions, your dog needs to choose doing the task over being distracted. The object of distraction training is to train until your dog does the task no matter what is going on around him simply because you asked him to do so.

Punishment: Eliminating an unwanted behavior

When training a dog to stop doing an unwanted behavior, there should be a consequence. The consequence can be either adding something the dog doesn't want or removing something he does want. Consider the following:

- » **Positive punishment:** *Positive punishment* adds an unwanted consequence (+) at the start of the bad behavior just as it begins. For example, as soon as a counter-surfing dog sniffs the edge of the counter, you can shake a bottle half-filled with pennies at the dog as an unpleasant consequence. (**Oops:** If the dog is already on the counter or eating off the counter, using the bottle with

pennies is too late. The dog has been rewarded by getting the food off the counter. Because the Oops happened, the dog has learned to counter surf which is why it's an Oops.) To eliminate the bad behavior, you must add something that the dog doesn't want so he'll avoid the penny shaker and not counter-surf. When the bad behavior stops, you don't offer praise; you never want him to counter-surf, so don't praise him for his wishing he could still get up on the counter to eat.

» **Negative punishment:** *Negative punishment* removes something (–) that the dog wanted because the dog behaved badly. For example, if a dog is jumping up on you when you come into the house, turn your back to the dog for a moment, removing your attention that he wants because he jumped up. Turn back toward him once more, and if he jumps again, spin around, removing your front, your facial expression, and your attention.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DOG RING-WISE BY ACCIDENT!

The term *ring-wise* refers to a dog who won't perform in a show ring or in front of an audience or for friends. The dog becomes ring-wise because when a dog is performing in an obedience ring, the owner isn't permitted to use food to aid the dog to perform. Therefore, the dog won't perform in a ring after he has learned something because doing so isn't worth his while. Ring-wise is an unwanted label because dogs should perform whether there is food present or not.

Adding rewards or removing rewards, praising or not praising, and adding an unpleasant consequence or stopping an unwanted consequence all make the difference in the dog's learning.

When you use food all the time while training or practicing a behavior you're building, you're using positive reinforcements. When you stop using the food you normally use all of the time, you're using negative punishment because you're taking away what the dog wants. The dog will unlearn the trick or stop giving you the behavior under these conditions in front of an audience. In other words, he'll become ring-wise.

To avoid this problem, randomly use food. As he learns a behavior, you need to diminish his reliance on food. Instead of giving a treat every time, only give it every other or third time; skip a time once in a while and make it random. Buddy will learn to try harder to get the treat; he'll try to do the best for you and will remain focused on you as you continue to work. He'll learn that food comes if he keeps trying. Keep it fun, and Buddy will work always, even in front of an audience.

Identifying Six Basic Commands Every Dog Needs to Know

Every dog needs to know six basic commands: Sit, Down, Stay, Come, Heel, and Leave It. You can look at these as safety and sanity commands — your dog's safety and your sanity. Here's a look at each of these commands:

- » **The Sit command:** You use the Sit command (refer to Chapter 11) anytime you need your dog to control himself. You can use the command to teach your dog to do the following:
 - Sit politely for petting instead of jumping on people
 - Sit at the door instead of barging ahead of you
 - Sit when you put his food dish on the floor instead of trying to grab it out of your hand
- » **The Down command:** You use the Down command (check out Chapter 11) when you want your dog to stay in one place for prolonged periods, such as when you're eating dinner or at the vet's office.
- » **The Come command:** You need to teach your dog the Come command (flip to Chapter 10) so you can call him when you take him for a hike, when he wants to chase a squirrel, or when it's time to come inside.
- » **The Stay command:** When you want to teach your dog to remain in place without moving, you teach him the Stay command (see Chapter 11).
- » **The Heel command:** Or the Let's Go command, depending on what you want, is when you want your dog to walk politely and not pull you on the leash (refer to Chapter 12).
- » **The Leave It command:** You teach your dog the Leave It command (head to Chapter 9) so he leaves stuff alone when you don't want him to have it.

Recognizing Factors that Influence Success

Of the many factors that influence success, you are the most important one. You're the one who decides how to approach training and what you want your dog to learn. Your dog is your responsibility and whatever your dog does — good or bad — is under your control.

Having a good relationship with your dog

The goal of training is to create a mutually rewarding relationship — you're happy and your dog is happy. To foster such a relationship, become aware of how many times you use your dog's name to change or control his behavior. Your dog's name isn't a command and certainly isn't a reprimand. His name is used to get his attention and is then followed by a command. See Chapter 9 for how to train Buddy to recognize his name.



REMEMBER

Stop nagging and learn to communicate with your dog through training. Focus on teaching Buddy what you want him to do rather than on what you don't want him to do. Above all, limit negative verbal communications, such as "No," to emergencies. Repeatedly yelling "no" isn't the way to foster a good relationship. Instead of using "No," use a command that you've taught and actually means something. Too many people use "No," and therefore it means nothing.

A good relationship also requires spending quality time together. You can spend time with your dog by training, going for walks, playing ball, doing tricks, and so on. Chapter 17 provides some great ideas you can do with Buddy.

Owning a healthy dog

Your dog's health has an enormous influence on his training success. A dog who doesn't feel well won't learn well either. First and foremost, his health depends on what you feed him. You need to feed him a high-quality food that provides the nutrients he needs (see Chapter 4).

Your dog also needs an annual checkup by your veterinarian, preferably with bloodwork. Regular bathing and grooming are similarly important. If you live in an area where there are ticks, check him regularly. Deer ticks spread Lyme disease, which can have debilitating effects on your dog. Ticks, heartworms, and internal and external parasites need to be diagnosed and treated by your veterinarian.

Making training time a priority

One of the most common complaints for not training is: "I just don't have the time to train my dog!" First, look at training as a fun game — something you and your dog enjoy doing together. It shouldn't be a chore. Then identify the times during the day when you interact most with your dog.



REMEMBER

Here are some times when you can take advantage of training opportunities:

- » **Feeding time:** If your dog is still a puppy, you feed him four, three and eventually two times a day. Each meal is a training opportunity — teach him to Sit and Stay before you put his dish down. Make him wait for a second or two, and then let him eat. You'll be surprised how quickly he catches on to this routine. You also can put the dish down first and follow the same procedure.
- » **When exiting and entering buildings:** If you have more than one dog, door manners are an absolute must. They're equally important for the single-dog household. It usually takes about 30 seconds for the dog to catch on that he's supposed to wait before you tell him it's okay to exit (or enter). It's a matter of consistency on your part until the behavior becomes automatic. Chapter 14 discusses door manners.
- » **While relaxing with your pooch:** You can teach the Leave It command while you're watching TV. Take a few treats to your favorite chair and have fun teaching the progressions to the exercise (refer to Chapter 9).
- » **During walks:** Every time you take your dog for a walk is a training opportunity to teach him to sit at the curb, to heel when passing other dogs, and to walk on a loose leash when walking beside you as you say "Let's go" and "Heel" (head to Chapter 12.)

All of these commands teach your dog to focus on you and look to you for direction — and they all happen as a part of your daily routine.

Oh, the Places You and Your Pooch Can Go: Beyond the Basics

Performance events for dogs date back to the early 1930s, and the first obedience trial under American Kennel Club (AKC) rules took place in 1936. The purpose of obedience trials, as stated in the AKC Obedience Regulations, is to “demonstrate the dog’s ability to follow specified routines in the obedience ring and emphasize the usefulness of the purebred dog as a companion of man.” Now AKC allows mixed breed dogs in all of their performance events, having a purebred isn’t required to compete in AKC events. Following are some of the options you can explore if you want to take training to the next level. For all of the following, visit www.akc.org.

The Canine Good Citizen Certificate

In 1989, the AKC developed the popular Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test, a program for both purebred dogs and mixed breeds. The CGC test uses a series of exercises that demonstrate the dog's ability to behave in an acceptable manner in public. Its purpose is to show that the dog, as a companion for all people, can be a respected member of the community and can be trained and conditioned to always behave in the home, in public places, and in the presence of other dogs in a manner that reflects credit on the dog. (For more details on this test, go to Chapter 25.)

Now AKC has expanded the CGC to include the Urban and Farm and Advanced CGC tests. Your dog also can earn a Temperament Testing. AKC is just one of the National Dog Clubs though it is the largest and most well-known.



TIP

In many areas you can find classes to help you train your dog and prepare the two of you for the CGC.

AKC S.T.A.R. puppy program

The goal of the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy program is similar to the Canine Good Citizen program, except that it's aimed at puppies. Just like the CGC program, the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy program includes a *Responsible Dog Owner Pledge* as well as a basic training program in which puppies up to 1 year of age are eligible to participate. After you attend a basic training class locally, your puppy must take a test. Look on the internet for information on dog training in your area. When the puppy passes the test, he receives a certificate and a medal.

AKC tricks titles

AKC offers multiple titles for your dog as he learns and performs different levels of tricks. From Novice to Performer and Elite Performer and several in between. There is no limit to getting your dog to become a star and earn a title to prove it. See Chapter 17 to get you started.

More than training: Understanding how dogs help people

Man and dog have been together for a long time. It didn't take man long to recognize the dog's potential as a valuable helper. Originally, the dog's main jobs were guarding, hauling, herding, and hunting. Over time, more jobs were added to the canine's resume; now dogs perform an amazing variety of tasks. These tasks fall into four broad categories: service dogs, detection dogs, assistance dogs, and companion dogs.

For more information, visit the websites here for these organizations: Canine Companions for Independence (www.cci.org), Canine Assistants (www.canineassistants.org), Dogs for the Deaf (www.dogsforthe deaf.org), Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (www.assistedogsinternational.org), Assistance Dogs of America, Inc. (www.adai.org), Guiding Eyes for the Blind (www.guidingeyes.org).

An Exercise to Get You and Your Pooch Started

Eager to get started with some training? We hope so! We begin with an exercise that shows you how to train your dog while you're feeding him. We chose this exercise because you're going to feed your dog two times a day (and even more frequently if he's a puppy), and each time you do so is a training opportunity. It's also a good exercise because the dog quickly figures out what is to his advantage, namely, he stays and he gets to eat. He'll also learn leadership while you work this exercise. Leadership means that you own the food and you're giving it to him, but only when you release him to the bowl. Leadership means you're the leader of the pack, the coach of the team, and your dog is the player.



TIP

If your dog is enthusiastic and bouncy, you'll have more success with this exercise when he's leashed rather than loose.

Follow these steps to successfully train your pooch Sit and Stay before eating:

- 1. Prepare his meal as you normally do.**
- 2. While your dog is wearing the leash and collar, pick up his leash with your left hand and hold it as close to his collar as is comfortable for you, but without any tension on his collar.**
- 3. Pick up his dish with your right hand, say "Stay" and then put the dish on the floor.**

When he makes a dive for the bowl, pull up and back on the leash and pick up the dish. He doesn't have to sit; he just isn't allowed to dive for the dish.
- 4. Repeat Step 3 until he holds his position when you put the dish on the floor; see Figure 1-3.**
- 5. After he's successful at maintaining his position, say "Okay" and let him eat in peace.**

"Okay" is a release term to tell the dog he's now free to move. If you don't like "Okay," you can choose a term to your own liking, such as "You're free."

FIGURE 1-3:
Teaching
your dog the
Stay command
as a part of
feeding him.



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REMEMBER

As a general rule, it takes about three to five repetitions on the first try for the dog to get the message. *Avoid* the temptation to use negative communications, such as “No” or “Ah-Ah.” Instead, use the leash to gently yet authoritatively control your dog. After several sessions, he’ll more than likely sit on his own in anticipation of getting his meal.

