
The 6 Key Pillars to...



Controlling Your
Reactive Dog



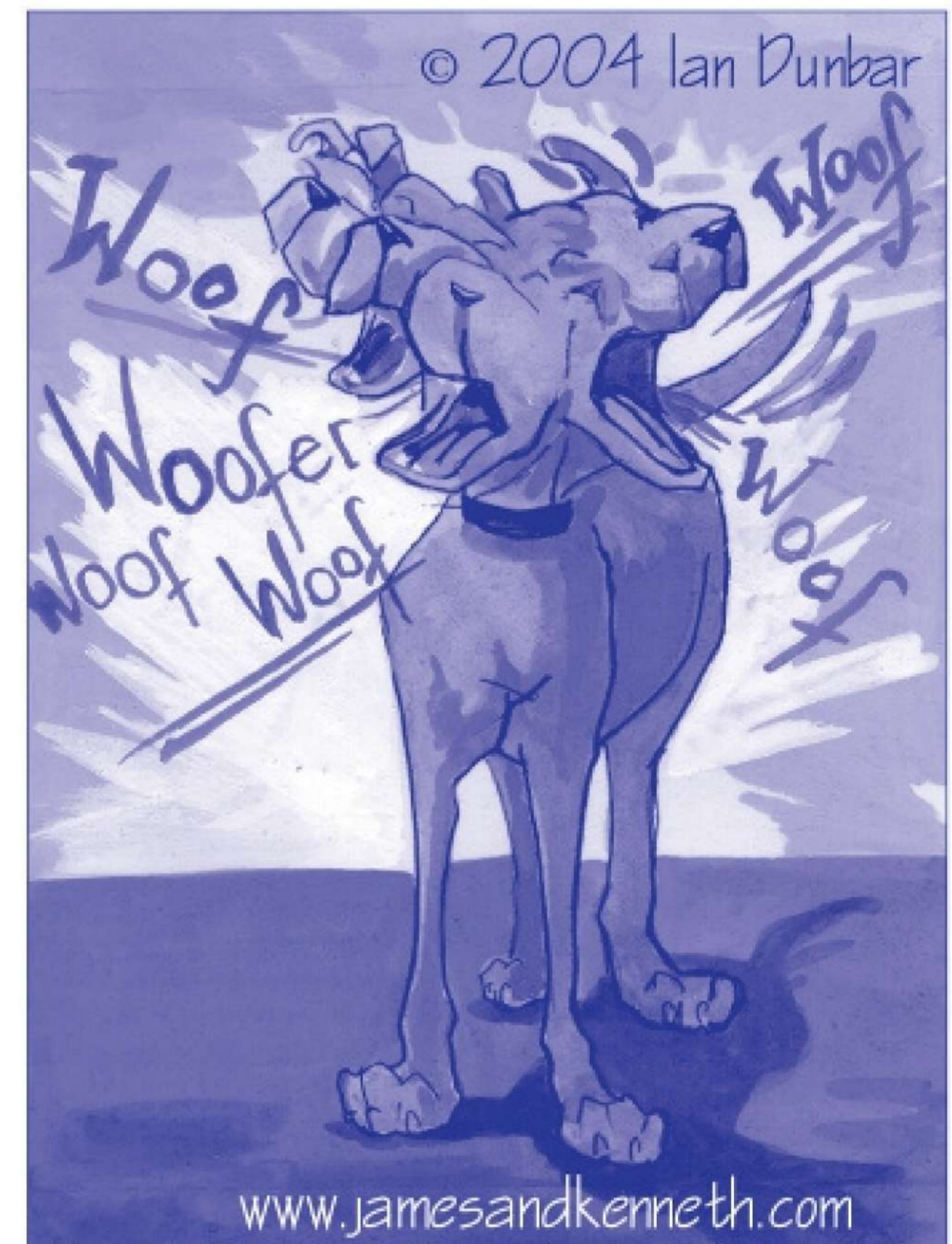
Dunbar Academy

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EXCESSIVE BARKING

Some dogs get extremely worked up when visitors ring the doorbell, or when dogs walk by the house. Some spaniels and terriers bark at the drop of a hat. And our good friend Larry Labrador will bark whenever a leaf falls from a tree three blocks away. Barking is as characteristically doggy as wagging a tail or burying a bone. It would be inane and inhumane to try to stop your dog from barking altogether: "You'll never bark in this town again!" After all, some barking is extremely useful. My dogs are much more efficient than the doorbell and much more convincing than a burglar alarm. The goal then, is to teach dogs normally to be calm and quiet but to sound the alarm when intruders enter your property. The barking problem may be resolved to our advantage by management and education: first, immediately reduce the frequency of barking before we all go insane; and second, teach your dog to "Woof" and "Shush" on cue.



Reduce the Frequency of Barks

Dogs bark the most right after their owners leave home for the day. The easiest way to immediately reduce woof-frequency is by exclusively feeding your dog from hollow chewtoys. Each evening weigh out and moisten your dog's kibble or raw diet for the following day. Squish the gooey food into hollow chewtoys (Kong products and sterilized bones) and put them in the freezer overnight. In the morning, give your dog some frozen stuffed chewtoys. Your dog will spend well over an hour extricating his breakfast from the chewtoys. And if your dog is busying himself with chewtoys, he will be lying down quietly! (For detailed chewtoy-stuffing instructions, read our *Chewing* booklet.)

Do not leave an excessive barker outdoors. Yard-bound dogs are exposed to many more disturbances and their barks more easily penetrate the neighborhood. Leave your dog comfortably in a single room (away from the street) with a radio playing to mask outside disturbances. If you have been leaving your dog outside because he soils or destroys the house, housetrain and chewtoy train your dog so he may enjoy indoor comforts when you are away from home.

Teach "Woof" and "Shush" On Cue

It is easier to teach your dog to shush when he is calm and focused. Therefore, teaching your dog to "Woof" on cue is the first step in "Shush" training, thus enabling you to teach "Shush" at your convenience, and not at inconvenient times when the dog decides to bark. Moreover, teaching "Shush" is now much easier because your dog is not barking uncontrollably—barking was your idea!

Station an accomplice outside the front door. Say "Woof" (or "Speak," or "Alert"), which is the cue for your assistant to ring the bell. Praise your dog profusely when he barks (prompted by the doorbell); maybe even bark along with your dog. After a few good woofs, say "Shush" and then waggle a tasty food treat in front of his nose. Your dog will stop barking as soon as he sniffs the treat because it is impossible to sniff and woof simultaneously. Praise your dog as he sniffs quietly, and then offer the treat.

Repeat this routine a dozen or so times and your dog will learn to anticipate the doorbell ringing whenever you ask him to speak. Eventually your dog will bark after your request but before the doorbell rings, meaning that your dog has learned to bark on command. Similarly, your dog will learn to anticipate the likelihood of sniffables following your "Shush" request. You have then taught your dog both to speak and shush on cue.

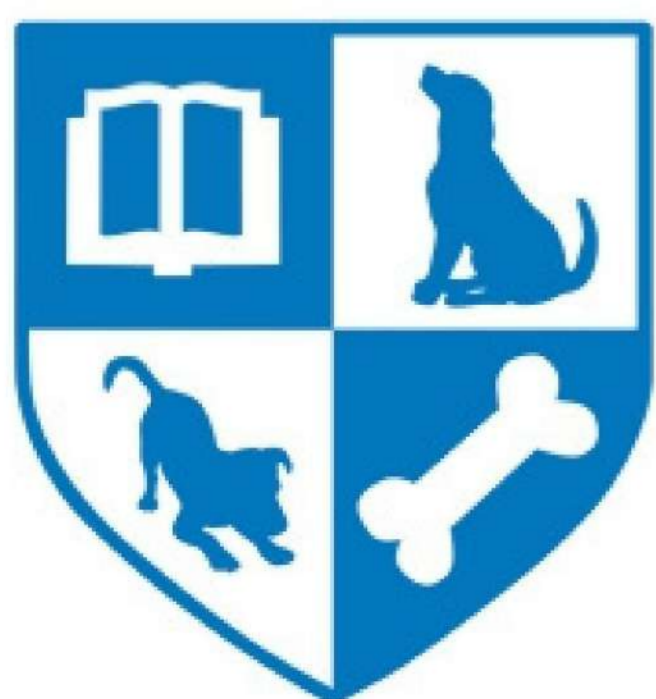
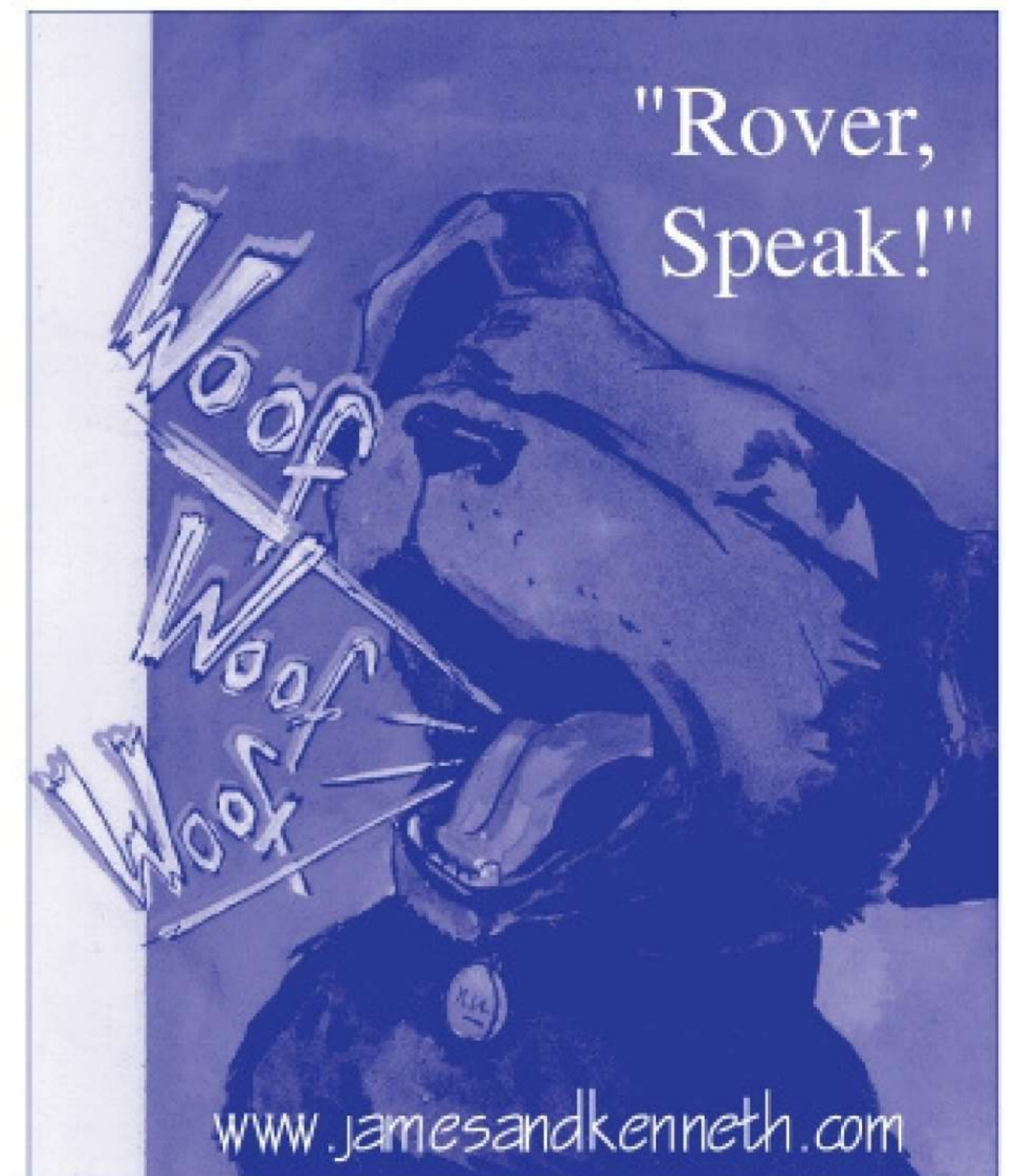
Over repeated "Woof" and "Shush" trials, progressively increase the length of required shush-time before offering a food reward—at first just two seconds, then three, then five, eight, twelve, twenty, and so on. By alternating instructions to woof and shush, the dog is praised and rewarded for barking on request and for shushing on request.

Remember, always speak softly when instructing your dog to shush, and reinforce your dog's silence with whisper-praise. The more softly you speak, the more your dog will be inclined to pay attention and listen (and therefore, not bark).

Teach Your Dog When to Bark

Invite a dozen people for afternoon tea to teach your dog when, and when not, to bark. Instruct your visitors (some with dogs) to walk by the house a number of times before ringing the doorbell. When the first person walks by the house, it will take all of your attention to keep your dog shushed. But persevere: it will be easier when the same person walks by the second time, and again easier on the third pass by. Eventually your dog will habituate and will no longer alert to the same person's presence in the street. Profusely praise your dog and offer treats for silent vigilance. Repeat reinforcement for quiet vigilance several times on subsequent passes by. But when the visitor starts up the garden path, eagerly and urgently say "Speak! Speak! Speak!" Praise your dog when he woofs, and then instruct him to sit and shush at the front door while you welcome the visitor. If your dog exuberantly barks and bounces at this point, simply wait until he sits and shushes and then praise and offer a treat. Have the visitor leave and come back a number of times. Eventually, your dog will greet him by sitting in silence. This procedure becomes easier with each new visitor. Your dog soon learns to watch passersby in silence and to give voice when they step on your property, but to sit and shush when they are invited indoors—a trained neighborhood watchdog, which even non-dog-owning neighbors will welcome on the street where they live.

If you require a more detailed description, read our *Barking* booklet. To teach your dog to be calmer and bark less, you will need numerous stuffable chewtoys. To teach your dog to "Woof" and "Shush" on cue, you need some freeze-dried liver treats. All of these products are available from your local pet store or on-line from www.amazon.com.



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COME - SIT - DOWN - STAY

Leashless-training methods are essential for pet dogs, because they are usually off-leash indoors. Lure-reward and reward-training techniques make training quick, easy, effective, and enjoyable for dogs and their owners. Reward training is as owner-friendly as it is dog-friendly. Since reward-training depend on brain rather than brawn, the techniques are easily mastered by all dog owners, including children.

Weigh out the puppy or dog's daily allotment of kibble and put it in a container for family members to use for all of these exercises. Every piece counts as an individual lure and reward. Use kibble to train throughout the course of the day.

Come

For puppies, simply say "Puppy, Come," do something silly, and your puppy will come running. Praise your pup as she comes running towards you, and grab her collar and offer a food reward when she arrives. For adult dogs, say "Doggy, Come" and then squat down and waggle a food lure in front of you. Two or more family members may practice yo-yo (back and forth) or round-robin recalls. Say "Puppy, go to Jamie" as a cue for Jamie to call the pup. Once Jamie has hold of the puppy's collar, it is his turn to choose who to send the puppy to. This is a great way to teach your puppy "Go to..." commands, as well as the names of family members.

Sit

Hold a food treat in front of your dog's nose, say "Sit," and move the lure upwards and backwards just above the dog's muzzle. As your dog looks up to follow the treat, she will sit down. If your dog jumps up, you are holding the treat too high. If your dog backs up, work with the dog in a corner. When she sits, say "Good girl!" (or "Good boy!" if you have a boy-pup), and offer the kibble as a reward. From now on, ask your dog to sit in front of you after every recall.

Down

Say "Down," and quickly lower the treat from the dog's nose to a point in between the dog's forepaws. Praise the dog when she lies down ("Good girl!") and offer the treat. It is easier to entice your dog to lie down if she is already sitting, since her hindquarters are already down.

To teach your dog to lie down when she is standing, hold the lure between finger and thumb and lower the hand (palm downwards) to rest on the floor. As the dog worries at the lure, she will likely place the side of her muzzle on the floor ("Good girl!") and then assume a play-bow with elbows and sternum on the ground ("Gooood girl!"). By gently moving the lure towards the dog's chest and between her forepaws, her rear end will collapse backwards and she will lie down ("GOOD GIRL!!!") Now step back and ask your puppy to come, sit, and lie down. An upward motion of your hand (held palm-upwards) has become the





handsignal to sit, and a downward motion of your hand (held palm-downwards) has become the handsignal to lie down.

Stand

Stand is a very useful command when you want (or your veterinarian wants) to examine your dog. Say "Stand" and move the lure away from the dog's nose, waggling it in the position where your dog's nose will be when she stands. When she stands, say "Good girl" and offer the lure as a reward. Repeat sequences of the three body positions (sit, down, and stand) in random order, e.g., sit-down-sit-stand-down-stand. Initially, praise and reward each correct response. Once your dog responds fairly reliably, only reward her quicker and snazzier responses. Have family competitions to see how many body position changes your dog will do for just one food reward.

Stay

Initially, praise and reward your dog the instant she sits, lies down, or stands. With successive trials however, continue to praise correct responses but progressively delay offering the food reward for a little longer each time: for two seconds, then three seconds, five, eight, twelve, twenty, forty, sixty, and so on. Before you know it, your dog will happily respond quickly and remain in place for several minutes.

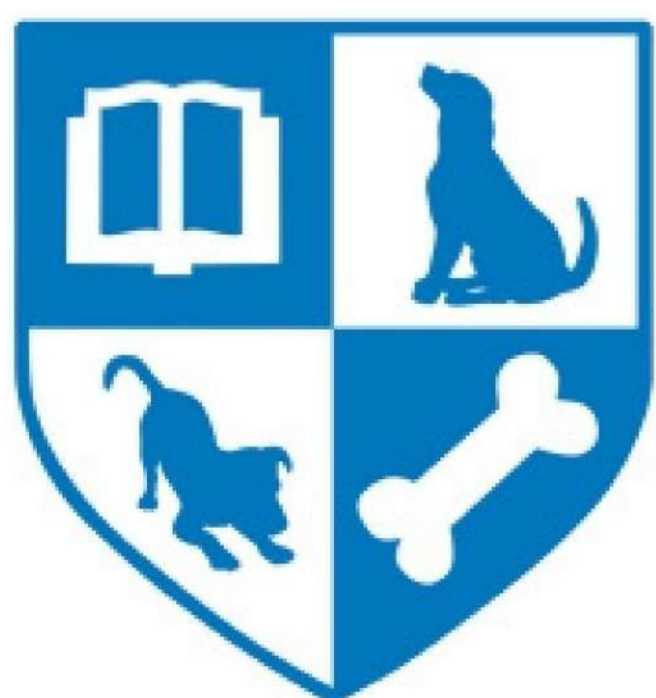
Phasing Out Food Lures and Rewards

Initially, use kibble both as lures to entice your dog to come, sit, lie down, and stand, and as rewards for doing so. Thereafter, use different items as lures and rewards. For example, lure the dog with a Kong but reward it by throwing a tennis ball. Or, lure the dog with a kibble but say "Go play!" as a reward. After a few repetitions dispense with food lures entirely—your verbal instructions and handsignals will suffice; from now on only use kibble as a reward.

Finally, dispense with training treats as rewards. Instead, ask your dog to sit and/or lie down before every enjoyable doggy activity. Have your dog sit, lie down, or stand-stay before scratching her ear, before throwing her ball, before letting her off-leash, and before inviting her to share the couch: i.e., replace food rewards with more meaningful life-rewards.

Now you will be able to ask your dog to sit for her supper in a bowl because you no longer need to use her kibble as training lures and rewards.

To learn more about lure-reward training, read *Doctor Dunbar's Good Little Dog Book* and watch *Training Dogs With Dunbar*, both available from your local pet store or on-lw



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FEAR OF PEOPLE



Socializing a puppy to people is the easiest and most enjoyable aspect of raising a dog. On a regular and ongoing basis, puppies need to meet, play with, and be handled and trained by a wide variety of people, especially including strangers, men, and children.

Narrow Window of Opportunity

Old dogs can indeed be taught new tricks. An adult dog may learn basic manners and good behavior (where to eliminate, what to chew, and when and for how long to bark) at any time in his life. However, *socialization must occur during puppyhood*—during the critical period of socialization, which ends when puppies are 12–13 weeks old. Shy and fearful dogs can be substantially rehabilitated, but they will never develop the confidence and social savvy of a well-socialized puppy. They will never become what they could have been.

Puppy socialization is critical for your puppy to develop the confidence and social savvy to continue socializing with people as an adult dog. Unless your puppy meets unfamiliar people every day, it will become fearful.

After eight weeks of age, puppies start to become shy and wary of unfamiliar people, and between five and eight months of age, they become fearful of strangers, especially men and children. Fearfulness and aggression worsen very quickly, because once a dog becomes fearful or aggressive, socialization stops. If your puppy becomes fearful, his life as a companion dog will be riddled with anxiety and stress and he will be useless as a working, competition, or protection dog.

If you notice any signs of shyness, standoffishness, or fearfulness in your puppy or adolescent dog, seek help immediately. Contact the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (1–800 PET DOGS or www.apdt.com) to locate a Certified Pet Dog Trainer (CPDT) in your area.

Neonatal Handling

There is no better time to accustom puppies to enjoy being handled than when they are still neonates. The puppies cannot see or hear, but they can taste, smell, *and feel*. The puppies recognize and accept the handlers as strangers. What could be easier than inviting friends and family to gently hold, handle, and stroke neonatal puppies? Additionally, the ideal time to accustom puppies to sudden movements and loud, strange, and sudden noises is when the eyes and ears begin to open (between two and three weeks).

Socialization in the Puppy's Original Home

To fully enjoy life as a human companion, a puppy must be taught to thoroughly enjoy the company and actions of all people, especially strangers, men and children. It is not sufficient for puppies to meet the same small circle of familiar friends each day. Puppies need to meet *unfamiliar* people every day—especially men and children. Before they are eight weeks old—and the critical period of socialization is almost two-thirds over—puppies need to have been handled and trained by at least 100 different people.

Puppy socialization and handling exercises are so simple, so important, and so much fun. Each person should use kibble to lure-reward each puppy to come, sit, lie down, and roll over. Then visitors can pick up, cradle, cuddle, and stroke the pups, while looking in their eyes and gently examining their jaws, paws, ears, belly, and private parts.

Remember to maintain routine hygiene: All people should leave outdoor shoes outdoors and wash their hands before handling puppies less than 12 weeks of age.

Socialization in the PuppyDog's New Home

By eight weeks of age socialized puppies will start to become shy and wary of unfamiliar people. Consequently, it is necessary to accelerate their socialization program. During his first month in his new home, a puppy needs to be handled and trained by an additional 100 different people—at least three strangers daily. Puppy handling is still so easy and enjoyable. (Please note: All these exercises will work with adult dogs, they just take much more time.)

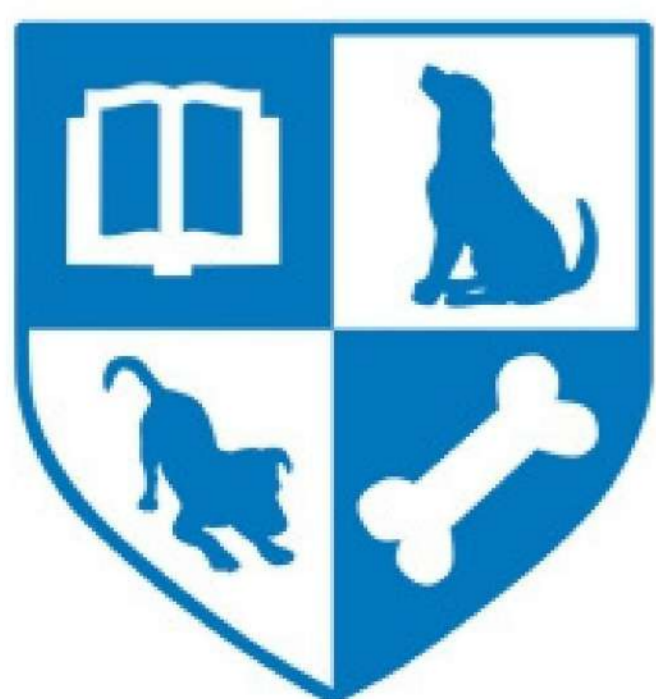
Weigh out the puppy's dinner kibble and divide it into bags to give to each guest to handfeed to the puppy. Put a few treats into the men's bags and lots of treats into the children's bags. Each guest will train your puppy for you, using kibble and treats to lure-reward the puppy to come, sit, lie down, and roll over. Each person will also pick up and handfeed the pup, examining his mouth, ears, paws, and rear end, before passing the puppy to someone else. "Pass the puppy" is marvelous game and prepares the puppy for handling and examination by veterinarians and groomers. At the end of the evening, your puppy will love household guests and especially enjoy the company and actions of men and children.

Puppy Classes, Walks, and Parties

As soon as your puppy is old enough, enroll in a puppy class so your puppy may socialize with other dogs and people and fine-tune his bite inhibition. Without a doubt, walking your puppy is the very best socialization and confidence-building exercise. Stop every 25 yards and instruct your puppy to sit (for control), and occasionally to settle down (with a stuffed chewtoy) and watch the world go by. Handfeed dinner when anyone approaches—one piece of kibble for a woman, three pieces for a man, three pieces of freeze-dried liver for each child, and five pieces of liver for a boy on a bike or skateboard. You may allow passersby to handfeed your pup once you have shown them how to lure him to sit to say hello. Above all, don't keep your puppy a secret. Continue to have regular puppy parties at home and invite family, friends, and especially neighbors to meet your puppy. Instruct each person to bring a friend. When you socialize a puppy properly, you will find your own social life improves dramatically.

For a more detailed socialization agenda, read *AFTER You Get Your Puppy* (Ian Dunbar) and *Help For Your Fearful Dog* (Nicole Wilde)—available on-line from www.amazon.com.

To locate puppy socialization classes in your area, contact the Association of Pet Dog Trainers at 1-800 PET DOGS or www.apdt.com.



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FIGHTING WITH DOGS



Many people have unrealistic expectations about dog-dog social behavior. Dogs are expected to behave perfectly and get along with all other dogs, even though people have difficulty being universally accepting and friendly. However, although people may often disagree, argue, and sometimes resort to pushing and shoving, very few people inflict severe injuries. When tempers flare, extreme physical aggression is strongly inhibited. Really, dogs are not that much different.

Most dogs have frequent disagreements and arguments, and on occasions resort to scrapping noisily, but only extremely rarely does one dog severely harm another. Whereas it is unrealistic to expect dogs never to squabble, it is perfectly realistic to raise and train dogs to never hurt each other when fighting.

To teach canine social savvy: first, socialize your puppy to be friendly, so that he would rather play than fight; second, prevent predictable adolescent de-socialization, but most important; third, teach your puppy bite inhibition, so that if he does scrap as an adult dog, he causes no harm.

Socialization

Socializing a young puppy is as easy as it is enjoyable. Enroll in an off-leash puppy class, visit different dog parks on a regular basis, and walk your puppy at least once a day. To socialize your puppy, he must meet unfamiliar dogs on a regular basis.

Prevent Developmental Desocialization

Adolescence is a particularly stressful time for young dogs, especially males, who are repeatedly harassed by older dogs, especially males. The ritualized harassment is both normal and necessary, allowing older dogs to put developing youngsters "in their place" before they are strong enough to compete on the social scene. Harassment is triggered by rude adolescent behavior and by extremely elevated testosterone levels in five- to eighteen-month-old adolescents. Castrating your puppy will prevent most harassment from older dogs.

Additionally, to maintain self-confidence and offset the stress of adult-doggy discipline, an adolescent dog requires many positive social interactions. Regular play sessions and repeated friendly encounters are vital. However, for many dogs, socialization with other dogs is abruptly curtailed at between six to eight months, usually following the first couple of scraps. This is especially true for small dogs and large dogs. Worrying that a little dog may get hurt, the owner is more likely to pick him up and less likely to let him play. Similarly, worrying a large dog might hurt other dogs, the owner now tends to keep her restrained on a tight leash. Thus, at a crucial developmental stage, many dogs are seldom allowed to interact with unfamiliar dogs. A vicious circle develops—the dog desocializes and his bite inhibition begins to drift, whereupon fights and potential damage now become more likely, making it even more difficult to socialize the dog.

To prevent your puppy from becoming asocial or antisocial during adolescence, he must continue to meet unfamiliar dogs on a regular basis. Always praise your puppy for meeting, greeting, and

playing with unfamiliar dogs. Never take friendly behavior for granted. Always let your dog know that you are very happy when he is friendly. Throughout adolescence and adulthood, praise and reward your dog with food treats after every friendly encounter with another dog.

Bite Inhibition

Most dogs, especially males, are involved in a number of scraps during adolescence. If the dogs acquired good bite inhibition during puppyhood and learned how to resolve differences without causing harm, there is little, if any, damage. However, if the dogs did not learn bite inhibition as puppies, there may be substantial damage.

Dog fights are noisy and scary, and many owners insist: "He fights all the time and is trying to kill the other dogs!" It is essential to objectively assess which dogs are dangerous and which are not. Calculate the dog's fight/bite ratio by asking, "How many times has the dog fought?" and "How many fights warranted veterinary treatment for severe bites?" The observation (that the dog fights a lot of the time) and the assumption (that the dog is trying to kill other dogs) are quite contradictory. If the dog is trying to kill other dogs, then obviously he is not that good at it, since he has had numerous attempts and failed on every occasion. On the contrary, a large number of fights and the absence of injury, offers proof the dog is definitely not trying to kill other dogs. (If one dog were truly trying to harm another dog, the physical damage from a single incident would be extreme.) Certainly he is undersocialized but he has marvelous bite inhibition.

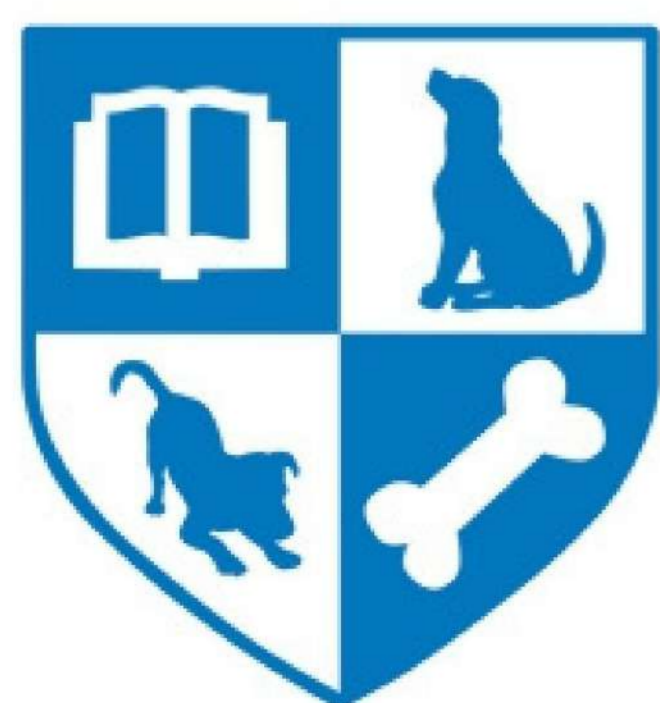
"Growl classes" provide an effective solution for scrappy dogs that have never harmed another dog. Owners can safely practice controlling their dogs in a controlled setting, and dogs may gradually rebuild their confidence so that eventually they may resume socialization and play.

For dogs that harm other dogs, common-sense and precautionary management are the only options. The dog should be kept on-leash and muzzled whenever on public property. Allowing a dog that harms other puppies and dogs the opportunity to interact with other dogs would be unfair, irresponsible, and potentially dangerous.

Bite inhibition is the key. The issue is not really whether dogs fight, but whether or not one dog harms another. Puppies that had ample opportunities to socialize, play-fight, and play-bite with other puppies usually develop good bite-inhibition. They learned how to inhibit the power of their jaws and consequently may resolve adulthood differences without causing harm. Bite inhibition can only safely be established during puppyhood. Giving your puppy the opportunity to develop good bite inhibition is the most important reason for enrolling in puppy class.

To learn more, read *AFTER You Get Your Puppy* and our *Fighting* booklet and watch the *SIRIUS Puppy Training* and *Fighting* videos—available on-line from www.amazon.com.

To locate puppy classes and "growl classes" in your area, contact the Association of Pet Dog Trainers at www.apdt.com.



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H Y P E R D O G



Puppies are naturally noisy and hyperactive. Puppies are exuberant when greeting, playing, and when expressing friendliness and appeasement. However, adult dogs are noisy and hyperactive because they are untrained and have unintentionally been encouraged to act that way. For example, eagerly jumping puppies are petted by people, who later get angry when the dog jumps up as an adult. The dog's only crime? It grew!

Sadly, adult dogs receive considerable abuse for expressing their enthusiasm and exuberance. For example, "The Trainers from the Dark Side" recommend teaching a dog not to jump up by shouting at the dog; squirting him in the face with water or lemon juice; swatting him on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper; yanking on the dog's leash; hanging the dog by his choke-collar; squeezing the dog's front paws; treading on his hind paws; kneeling the dog in

the chest; or flipping the dog over backwards. Surely these methods are a bit cruel for a dog that's just trying to say hello. Indeed, in the words of Confucius, "There is no need to use an axe to remove a fly from the forehead of a friend." Why not just teach dogs to sit when greeting people?

Be smart. Be kind. Teach your puppy (or adult dog) to settle down and shush when requested and how to greet people in a mannerly fashion. Both dog noise and exuberance may be controlled and channeled into appropriate outlets.

Sit and Settle Down

Lure-reward train your puppy or dog to come, sit, and lie down. Simple instructions such as "Sit" and "Lie down" are extremely effective solutions for nearly all doggy activity problems. Rather than telling the pup "No, no, no!" and "NO!" for everything she does that annoys you, simply ask her to lie down, and then praise and reward her for doing so. If she lies down obediently, she cannot run around the living room, chase her tail, chase the cat, hump the cat, jump on the furniture, jump up and down in the car, run out the front door, or chase and jump on children. Lying down and most behavior problems are mutually exclusive; your dog cannot lie down and misbehave at the same time. Take the initiative and direct your puppy's behavior by teaching her to lie down on request.

Rather than feeding your puppy from a bowl, weigh out his kibble in the morning and use individual pieces as lures and rewards during oodles of five-second training interludes throughout the day. Practice in every room of the house, in the car (while stationary), and on walks. Pause every 25 yards and instruct your puppy to perform a series of body positions: for example, sit-down-sit-stand-down-stand. Within just a couple of days you'll have a totally different dog.

Simple reward training methods work wonders with out-of-control adolescent and adult dogs. Hold a piece of kibble in your hand but don't give it to your dog. Stand perfectly still and give no instructions; simply watch to see what your dog does. Characteristically, the dog will run through his entire behavior repertoire. Your dog will wiggle, waggle, circle, twirl, jump-up, lick, paw, back-up, and bark...but eventually he will sit or lie down. Praise him and offer the piece of kibble as soon as he sits (or lies down—your choice). Then take a gigantic step (to reactivate Rover), and stand still with another piece of kibble in your hand. Repeat the above sequence until Rover sits

immediately after you take each step and then begin to progressively increase the delay before offering the kibble. Maybe count out the seconds in "good dogs"—"Good dog one, good dog two, good dog three, etc." If Rover breaks his sit while you are counting, simply turn your back on him, take a three-second timeout, and repeat the sequence again. In no time at all you will be able to count out 20 "good dogs" as Rover sits and stays calmly, looking up at you expectantly.

Move from room to room repeating this exercise. When walking Rover, stand still every 25 yards and wait for him to sit, then praise him and continue the walk. After handfeeding your dog just one meal in this fashion indoors and on one long walk with sits every 25-yards, you'll have a calmer and much more attentive dog.

Jumping Up

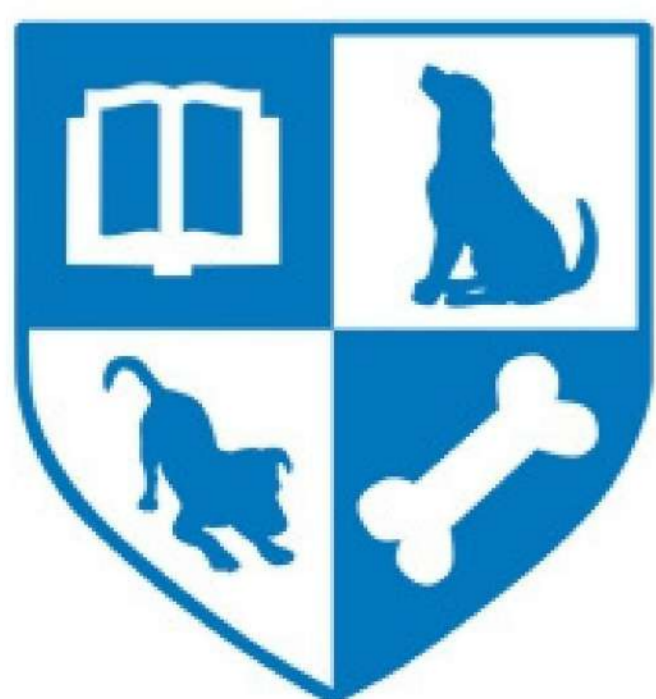
Jumping up deserves a special mention because it is the cause of so much frustration and abuse. Right from the outset, teach your puppy to sit when greeting people. Sitting is the obvious theoretical solution because a dog cannot sit and jump up at the same time. However, it may initially be difficult to teach your dog to sit when greeting people because he is so excited that he doesn't hear what you say. Consequently, you will need to troubleshoot his training.

First practice sits (as described above) in locations where your dog normally greets people, e.g., on-leash outdoors, and especially indoors by the front door. Then invite over ten friends for a dog training party. Today your dog's dinner will be handed by guests at the front door and by friends on a walk. After eventually getting your dog to sit to greet the first guest, praise your dog and have the guest offer a piece of kibble. Then ask the guest to leave and ring the doorbell again. In fact, repeat front-door greetings until your dog greets the first guest in a mannerly fashion three times in a row. Then repeat the process with the other nine guests. In one training party you will probably practice over a hundred front-door greetings. Then ask your all your guests to leave one at a time and walk round the block. Put your dog on leash and walk around the block in the opposite direction. As you approach each person, instruct your dog to sit. Praise him when he does so and have the person offer a couple of pieces of kibble. After five laps, you will have practiced 50 sidewalk greetings. Now your dog will be ready to sit to greet *bona fide* guests at home and strangers on the street.

Put Doggy Enthusiasm and Activity on Cue

To be fair to your dog, make sure that she has ample opportunity to let off steam in an acceptable fashion. Sign up for flyball and agility classes. Play fetch with tennis balls and Frisbees and do yo-yo recalls (back and forth between two people) in the park. Formalize "crazy time"—train your dog to jump for bubbles, or play "tag" and chase your dog around the house. And maybe train your dog that it is acceptable to jump up on cue—to give you a welcome-home hug.

To learn more, read *Doctor Dunbar's Good Little Dog Book* and our *HyperDog* booklet, available on-line from www.amazon.com. To locate puppy, adolescent, flyball, and agility classes in your area, contact the Association of Pet Dog Trainers at www.apdt.com.



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WALKING ON LEASH



By and large, leash-pulling masks the real problem: without a leash you would probably be without a dog. It is indeed a sobering thought to think that most dogs prefer to forge ahead to sniff the grass or other dogs' rear ends than to walk by their owner's side.

There are some dogs who simply don't want to walk beside owners who keep yanking the leash. However, regardless of why your dog pulls, all dogs need to be trained to walk nicely on leash. If not, they are unlikely to be walked at all.

Trying to teach a dog to heel using leash prompts and corrections requires a lot of skill and time. And even then, all you have is a well-behaved dog on-leash. Let him off-leash and he's history; you cannot safely take him for off-leash rambles, and you still cannot control him around the house, where he is off-leash all the time.

Luckily, there are more effective and enjoyable ways to get the job done. First, teach your dog to follow off-leash. Second, incorporate many sits and stays for control and attention. Third, teach your dog to heel off-leash and on-leash. After following these steps, you will find it is easier to teach your dog to walk calmly on-leash.

Teach Your Dog to Follow Off-Leash

Your dog's desire to follow and remain close is the necessary foundation for walking politely on-leash. You must become the center of your dog's universe. You need to stimulate and strengthen your dog's gravitational attraction towards you by moving away enticingly and heartily praising your dog all the time he follows. Click your fingers, slap your thigh, or waggle a food treat or a toy in your hand to lure the dog to follow. Proceed with a happy heart and a sunny disposition: talk to your dog, tell him stories, whistle, walk with a jaunty step, or even skip and sing.

Do not accommodate your dog's improvisations; you are the leader, not the dog. Whenever your dog attempts to lead, accentuate his "mistake" by doing the opposite. Stretch the psychic bungee cord: if your dog forges ahead, slow down or smartly turn about; if your dog lags behind, speed up; if your dog goes right, turn left; and if your dog goes left, turn right. Practice in large areas, such as in your backyard, friends' yards, tennis courts, dog parks, and safe off-leash areas. Feed your dog his dinner kibble, piece by piece as you walk. Once your dog is following closer, time yourself while practicing following-courses at home, going around furniture, from room to room, and from the house to yard.

Sits, Downs, and Stays

Enticing your dog to follow off-leash takes a lot of concentration and it is easy to let your dog drift. Consequently, instruct your dog to sit or lie down and then stay every ten yards or so. Frequent sits, downs, and stays teach your dog to calm down and focus. They also give you the opportunity to catch your breath, relax your brain, and to objectively assess your dog's level of

attention. Sitting is absolute: either your dog is sitting or not. Only have the dog sit or lie down for a couple of seconds (just to check that he is paying attention) and then walk on again. Occasionally ask your dog to lie down for a minute or so to watch the world go by. You will find that the more down stays that you integrate into the walk, the closer, calmer, and more controlled your dog will be when following you.

Teach Your Dog to Heel Off-Leash & On-Leash

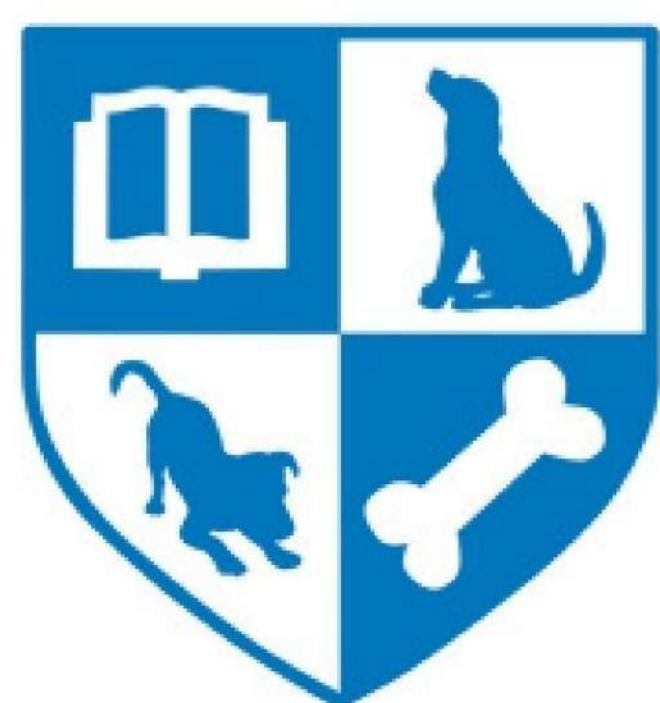
Instruct your dog to sit, and then lure him to sit using a food or toy lure in your right hand. Transfer the lure to your left hand, say "Heel," waggle the lure in front of your dog's nose, and quickly walk forwards for a few steps. Then say "Sit," transfer the lure to your right hand to lure your dog to sit, and maybe offer the kibble as a reward if your dog sits quickly and stylishly. Repeat this sequence over and over. Practice indoors and in your yard, where there are fewer distractions, before practicing in the dog park and off-leash walking areas. Then just attach the dog's leash and you will find he heels nicely on-leash.

Walking On-Leash

Teach your dog not to pull while you are both standing still. Hold the leash firmly with both hands and refuse to budge until your dog slackens the leash. Not a single step! It doesn't matter how long it takes. Just hold on tight and ignore every leash-lunge. Eventually your dog will stop pulling and sit. As soon as he sits, say "Good dog," offer a food treat, and then take just one large step forward and stand still again. Hold on tight; your dog will likely explode to the end of the leash, thereby illustrating the reinforcing nature of allowing your dog to pull for just a single step. Wait for your dog to stop pulling again (it will not take as long this time). Repeat this sequence until your dog walks calmly forward (because he knows you are only going one step) and sits quickly when you stop and stand still. Your dog quickly learns he has the power to make you stop and to make you go. If he tightens the leash, you stop. But if he slackens the leash and sits, you take a step. After a series of single steps and standstills without pulling, try taking two steps at a time. Then go for three steps, then five, eight, twelve, and so on. Now you will find your dog will walk attentively on a loose leash and sit automatically whenever you stop. And the only words you have said are "Good dog."

Alternate heeling and walking on-leash. For most of the walk, let your dog range and sniff on a loose leash, but every 25 yards or so, have your dog sit, heel, and sit, and then walk on again. Always sit-heel-sit your dog when crossing a street: sit before crossing, heeling across, and then sitting on the other side of the street.

To learn more, read the *Open Paw Four-Level Training Manual* and *Doctor Dunbar's Good Little Dog Book* and watch the *Training The Companion Dog* DVD series—all available from your local pet store or www.amazon.com.



This behavior blueprint is provided courtesy of Dunbar Academy

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