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*Misha May Foundation Dog Training & Rescue*

## 1

**Behavioral changes can take time:** Plan how to manage your dog's undesirable behavior while you change it.

- Block the front window to stop barking until you teach your dog to perform a different behavior instead, like running to you or going to his bed.
- Crate or contain your dog until he is fully house trained and has outgrown being destructive.
- Only give your dog treats you can take away easily while you teach him to "give" by trading his prize for your more valuable prize.
- Use a longer and longer leash to successfully reinforce the "come" command in each practice session rather than letting your dog off leash prematurely which ill-advisedly gives him an opportunity to "run" instead of "come."

## 2

**Consistency:** Set reasonable rules and be consistent. Your dog will relax knowing how to get what he wants and knowing what he can't have.

- Upon entering the kitchen, your dog can expect to receive a treat if he lies down and stays calm. This prevents and re-trains counter surfers.
- If your dog comes right in from the yard when you call him, the reward should be lavish praise and loads of attention.
- Sitting politely makes his dinner appear.

## 3

**Cues and Commands:** Dogs have to associate a new word with a behavior and recognize that it always means the same thing. The following steps are helpful:

- 1) At first, when your dog sits on the floor, you name the behavior saying "sit." This is true for "down," "stay" and every other cue.
- 2) After practicing this, you say the word "sit" gauging whether he has learned its meaning and will respond appropriately.
- 3) Once your dog repeatedly sits every time you tell him to, ask him to sit in many different places until it can be generalize that no matter where he is asked to sit, it means the same thing.
- 4) If your dog does not sit when asked, he does not fully understand. You will need to continue to teach him through naming and generalizing exercises.

## 4

**English as a Foreign Language:** Dogs don't naturally comprehend our language. Help them understand through the precise, concise use of meaningful words.

- Instructive: "leave it," "wait" and "fetch"
- Confusing: "stop – no – leave it – no – don't!" or "can you wait there?" or "get it, get it, fetch it, get it"
- Ignore and Reward: Ignore undesirable attention-seeking behaviors whenever possible—they will go away. Watch for and reward desirable behaviors consistently—they will increase.
- If your dog jumps up once for attention, completely ignore him. If he continues to jump, leave the room (and your dog).
- When your dog automatically sits in front of you or a guest, the attention he is seeking should be given.
- When your dog is lying down calmly, quietly say "good boy" to show him that you noticed.

## 5

**Know Your Dog:** Take the time to get to know and appreciate your dog as an individual that has a personality, preferences and dislikes.

- Assess whether your dog is adequately socialized to enjoy a dog park, or is more relaxed meeting and playing with one dog at a time.
- Notice whether walks allow your dog to explore and smell, or arouse fear and elicit defensiveness. Perhaps he would prefer to play with you in his own backyard.
- Do children make your dog nervous and desiring distance, or does he revel in their polite company?

## 6

### **Managing Multiple Dogs:** Yours, Boarding, Fosters or Playmates.

- If you live with multiple dogs, afford them each comparable levels of affection, attention and access to resources, just as you would your human children. Without a reason to compete within a household or to deal with a bully, dogs can relax and get along.
- Keep introductions low key and one-on-one, if possible, slowly but surely building a sense of familiarity, safety and belonging.
- Encourage calm separation periods throughout the day to prevent overstimulation.

## 7

### **Professionals:** Attorneys, Dentists, Mechanics, Teachers and Dog Trainers. Each has expertise to help you remedy questionable or deteriorating situations before they become irreparable!

- Call a trainer right away with your question. You may not even need an appointment.
- Consult to find out if the problem might go away on its own. Usually this is not the case.
- Seek out effective protocols for more complex behaviors like separation anxiety, PTSD and escaping.
- ALWAYS get in contact with a qualified trainer if there is growling, nipping, guarding of food, toys or territory. The same is true for extreme general discomfort, uneasiness between resident dogs, or any signs of aggression.

## 8

### **Puppies:** A puppy is a baby of another species. Commit to teach your dog everything he needs to know about living in the human world before he gets too big to handle or too unruly to be easily trained.

- House training can be based on a dog's natural inclination to keep his living space clean. Three simple rules will ensure success: he is either outside going to the bathroom, is in a crate or confined, or is leashed to you so he can't wander off and make mistakes.
- Do socialize – provide experiences which build a positive association with your dog's environment.
- Do not traumatize - don't expect your dog to handle scary, unfamiliar or stressful situations.

## 9

### **Survival:** Accept that most dogs have strong drives linked to their survival which may result in behaviors we find annoying such as barking, digging, chasing or escaping.

- Suppressing or punishing these natural inclinations can result in neurosis and aggression, as well as additional undesirable behaviors.
- Help your dog satisfy his drive through physical exercise including walks and games, mental stimulation like training, bonding time together or designated digging areas.
- Recognize that certain breeds or mixes have tendencies like herding, retrieving or guarding. Acknowledging a job well done or offering guidance otherwise results in a win-win team effort rather than a win-lose confrontation.

If you would like more detailed information on any of these issues, handouts are available to further explain most of these tips. Please send an e-mail [MishaMayFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:MishaMayFoundation@gmail.com) and let them know which ones to send to you.

Misha May Foundation Dog Training & Rescue offers free puppy socialization and introductory seminars, Obedience and Good Manners classes, a Dog Trainer Apprentice Program and Understanding Dogs Behavior classes. Most canines and their issues are welcome and can be helped. Find our schedule and information at [www.mishamayfoundation.org](http://www.mishamayfoundation.org)

### **Position Statement on the Use of Dominance Theory in Behavior Modification of Animals**

The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior:

- Recommends that veterinarians NOT refer clients to trainers or behavior consultants who coach and advocate dominance hierarchy theory and the subsequent confrontational training that follows from it.
- Emphasizes that animal training, behavior prevention strategies and behavior modification programs should follow the scientifically based guidelines of positive reinforcement, operant conditioning, classical conditioning, desensitization and counter-conditioning.
- Recommends that veterinarians identify and refer clients only to trainers and behavior consultants who understand the principles of learning theory and who focus on reinforcing desirable behaviors and removing the reinforcement for undesirable behaviors.

Full article available at:  
[www.mishamayfoundation.org/dominance.pdf](http://www.mishamayfoundation.org/dominance.pdf)