

SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRAINING SESSION

Practice the exercises off lead in a distraction free area. Please remember that your practice area should be confined (inside house, fenced yard, etc.) DO NOT allow your dog to be off lead outside in an unconfined area.

If you have a boisterous dog, you might need to play for a few minutes before you start training. Throw the ball a few times before you start practicing. You can also use the ball or another toy as a lure instead of food. Be sure to play for a few minutes after each training session.

Some dogs get stressed when they are learning new exercises. Yawning, scratching, looking away, wanting to play and a raised paw could signal signs of stress. Do not force him to do anything he cannot do. However, if he is physically and mentally able to do an exercise, help him through it. Remember to break each exercise into small individual steps. Work on one step at a time.

If you, or your dog, get frustrated, angry, or a little bit out of control during a training session, stop. Do something you know your dog can do well. Play a minute and end the session. Allow both of you some time to rest and gain control. During this time determine what went wrong and how it could have been avoided. A large percentage of your dog's training should be done in your head while your dog is outside playing or sleeping on his mat or in his crate.

Leaders are Fair, Kind and Consistent.

Be firm, not harsh. Don't work with your dog if you lose your patience, but stay with it! The concept of an alpha owner will become clear to your dog with consistent repetition.

Terri Ryan, 1991

If your time is limited, use your regular routine to practice. Heel your dog down the hall on the way to the kitchen. Tell him to sit and stay while you start the coffee brewing. Release him, then practice a down/stay while you eat your breakfast. Provide a sterilized bone stuffed with cheese. Require him to relax on his mat and enjoy chewing while you read the newspaper or watch television. Do recalls from various rooms in the house.

Playing games can also become a training session. Since you are the leader and the source of all good things, you get to choose the games and the toys. Teach your dog that he must play by your rules. If you play tug of war you must begin and end the game. The game must be gentle, not vicious and the dog must not "kill" the toy. You must retain possession of the toy at the end of the play session.