

CAR, DOOR AND GATE MANNERS

It is vital that your dog learns to behave when you open a car door, the door to your home or backyard gate. All too many dogs see an open door or gate as a prime invitation to run full speed straight out the opening. This can mean right into the street and possibly into the path of oncoming cars. There are specific ways to use the lessons you are learning in your obedience class to teach your dog to be well mannered when encountering an open door or gate.

The “Stay” or “wait” command is one of your best training tools. Do your homework and practice in various locations. Establish a bond of trust and respect with your dog by following these exercises. Remember, if you give the “stay” command, always release your dog from a “stay” rather than have him finally give up and release himself after you are gone.

THE SANDWICH SIT

- Heel your dog to the door and tell him to sit. Praise. Give the “Stay” or “wait” command by passing your open hand in front of his face so it clearly represents a temporary “wall” in front of the dog’s eyes. Praise.
- Open the door and pause a few seconds.
- Say, “Let’s go.” Then slowly walk through the opening. On the other side of the door, halt then give the “sit/stay” command. Close the door or gate. Praise.
- Say, “Let’s go,” or “Heel,” depending on what you want him to do.

THE CAR

Follow the instructions above except you will say to your dog, “Get in the car,” then fasten his canine seat belt, if you have one. When you are ready for your dog to exit, tell him to sit and wait before you get out of the car to open his door. When you have control of the leash, say, “Let’s go.” If the dog bolts or breaks, use your “stop it” word and repeat the exercise until he calmly goes through the opening. This will take many repetitions over a period of time.