

# Top 5 Essential Dog Training Commands

The first steps in training your dog.

Training your dog may not be as difficult as you think. It is simply a matter of understanding a little about canine nature in general and relating with your dog, having a lot of patience and learning some simple training techniques.

We will be describing here the techniques to help you teach your dog some of the most basic commands so that within a few weeks you should have an obedient and basically trained dog. From there you will probably want to go on and train the dog further but if not at least you will have a dog that obeys your commands when necessary.

Before we get started you should be aware of the following general guidelines for dog training.

## **Use Positive Reinforcement.**

This entails praising the dog when it does something good as opposed to punishing your dog when it does something wrong. Praise should come in the form of making a fuss of the dog and giving occasional dog treats. When first learning a new command the treats can be given whenever the dog successfully performs the process or the part of the process that you are teaching. Once the dog begins to perform the process consistently then the treats should be stopped and praise should be given in the form of a lot of fuss.

In general, the giving of treats should be occasional or random. This will teach the dog that when it does something right there is a possibility of receiving a treat but not guaranteed. This actually improves the dog's performance. If treats are given always then apart from becoming fat from eating too many treats the dog will soon learn to only perform for treats.

## **Try not to confuse your dog:**

It is very easy to confuse your dog. You should therefore:

- Voice your commands clearly
- Where possible choose one-word commands
- Always use the same word for a particular command
- Never allow more than one person to give commands to your dog at one time. Only one person can control the dog at any given moment and the dog has to know who is in control.
- Don't give conflicting commands
- Only teach one command at a time. Once the command has been learned and thoroughly practiced should you proceed to teaching another. This will take time and requires a certain degree of patience on your part but will be most beneficial in the long term.

All of your commands should consist of vocal orders and hand signals. A clear signal with the hand and arm should be made for each command. This will give your dog an added aid as it will be assimilating the commands with two senses instead of one. This will also make the dog learn faster and with time you will be able to give your dog commands silently which in some situations might be useful.

Make sure you give your commands in a stern but cheerful voice. You should make the training fun for your dog. If not, you will probably in time dominate your dog but through fear and the dog's spirit will be broken. Dogs can be coaxed by your voice. They can also be startled by shouting and become unresponsive.

Give each of your commands a name and when you are praising your dog, you should use the name of the command. For example, when your dog sits on command then you should say, 'GOOD SIT' as opposed to 'Good Dog' or when lying down 'GOOD DOWN' and not 'Good Fido'. Doing this will reinforce the dog's learning and will assure it as to what he has done right to deserve the praise.

Dogs are intelligent but not as intelligent as us. It will take many days or weeks of repeated training for the dog to learn a command but once learned it will not be forgotten especially if used regularly.

Try training your dogs in a variety of places because the dog might easily associate one place with what it has learned. For example your dog might behave very well in the park where you have your training sessions but might be totally disobedient along the street. Training sessions should be done at any time and in any place so that your dog will learn the commands alone and not associate them with any particular place, time or person.

Keep training sessions short. If you are training a puppy, keep your training sessions to under 10 minutes. It is best to have several short training sessions per day so that your dog will not get distracted.

Before we can start with the 5 basic commands we need to teach the dog the concept of training and what we will be doing. The 'ground rules' of training if you like. We will do this by teaching the dog to pay attention when its name is called.

## **Teach your dog its name:**

The very first thing we will teach our dog is to respond to its own name.

The dog must be able to recognise its name and to pay attention to us when we call it.

As with all of the exercises we will be doing, this will be taught by using positive reinforcement as described above. So a bag of doggie treats and a place with few distractions is required.

- Start off by calling the dogs name in a clear manner.
- Keep doing this at intervals until the dog looks at you.
- When the dog looks at you make a huge fuss of it telling it what a good dog it is and give it a treat.
- Then let the dog go about its business again. (if the dog hangs around or starts looking for more treats then just ignore it... don't even look at it)
- Once again, call the dog and reward it when it looks at you.
- After a few times of trying this you might want to stop giving the treats and just give praise. If the dog insists on a treat, searching, nuzzling or barking then just ignore it. Once the dog has given up and gone away then you may repeat the exercise again.
- Once you have managed to get the dog's attention more or less every time, then you can start increasing the attention span. Call the dog and try to get it to look at you for 5 or 10 seconds. If it looks away, just call it again and start counting again (not out loud). When it reaches the desired time span reward once again with a treat. You can go on increasing the attention span of your dog up to about 20 - 30 seconds.

As before, once this has been achieved the treat giving should become random so as not to have a dog that only performs for treats and to differentiate between being a 'good dog' and being a 'VERY good dog.'

Once your dog has learned to respond well to its name then you have won the battle to dog training. The rest is all downhill because the dog now has learned

the training technique. It will have learned that when it does as asked then it will receive praise and maybe even a treat.  
The next step is to learn the first command.

## **SIT**

It is important to teach this command first as the following commands require the dog to have mastered this.

Start to teach this command with the collar and leash on the dog. Stand with the dog on your left side and have a short taut leash.

Hold the leash in your right hand along with a dog treat. With your left hand, place your thumb and forefinger on the dogs back near its hind.

The action is to place the treat and leash hand a short distance in front of the dog's nose, then move this 'bait' hand up and over the dog's head. The dog should follow your hand and start to look up. As the dog looks up you should gently press down on its hind so as to make it sit. This will be easy because as the dog looks up it will be off balance and in a position to sit down. Once the dog is sitting say 'GOOD SIT' and praise the dog.

Do not push too hard. You should not have to force the dog to sit against its will. If the dog won't sit then start the exercise again until it sits down voluntarily. Do not repeat the command as the dog must know that when you say sit you mean it the first time.

You should repeat the exercise several times a day during the course of a week. After a few days the dog will learn sit with little or no pressure on it's hind. At this point it should be weaned off the treats by giving it treats every other time it performs the command correctly, then after a while one treat in every 3 or 4 times until after a week the dog should be sitting on command without being pushed down and with the leash hand further away or even without the leash on at all. The hand command (a raising of the hand, as when moving from the nose to above the head) should be maintained by you bending over close to the dog at first but later you should be doing the hand command without bending at all. You should be giving only occasional random treats. Do however keep praising the dog each time it performs the command.

For most dogs, learning this command shouldn't present too many difficulties and within the space of a week should be dominated. If the dog is still having difficulties after a week then persist a little more but do the practice sessions a little more often.

# STAY

The natural progression from the sit command is the stay command. This command should not be taught until the dog has well and truly learned the sit command.

First, make the dog sit by performing the sit command with the dog at your left side.

Then say 'STAY' as you turn to face the dog... wait 2 seconds or so and return to your original position. If the dog doesn't move then praise it with a treat and say 'GOOD STAY' enthusiastically. If the dog gets up then start the exercise again. Each time you repeat the exercise you can gradually move right in front of the dog and then over time you can work towards walking backwards away from the dog. Always wait until you are back in your original position before praising the dog. Repeating this exercise several times a day it should only take a week or so to master.

# COME

Now that your dog knows sit and stay you can now begin to teach come.

With its leash on, get the dog to sit and stay and walk about 3 feet in front of it. Give the command 'COME' in a bright tone, give a gentle tug on the leash and start to take a few steps backwards. When the dog comes to you reward it saying clearly 'GOOD COME'. If the dog will not come do not attempt to pull it using the leash. Simply start the exercise again. The dog should soon catch on.

When the dog becomes reliable in the exercise you can try doing it from ever increasing distances until you are at the end of the leash... then you might want to try it without the leash. This exercise should only take a few sessions to learn as most dogs are only too pleased to go running to their handlers to receive a praise or a treat.

You should be sure that the dog remembers the stay exercise and you may have to spend a little time reinforcing that.

# HEEL

This command will teach your dog to walk with you, at your pace with its neck at your knee and its feet at your heel.

Before you start with this command you may want to just refresh to make sure that your dog still responds to its name and looks at you when you say it.

The command will be taught at first with a short leash.

Have the dog on the leash on your left side, say the dogs name to get its focus and then say the command 'HEEL' as you briskly step out with your left foot.

At first you may have to show your dog by giving a very gently tug on the leash. When the dog has walked by your side for 2 or three paces praise it saying 'GOOD HEEL' so that the dog will get the idea.

Then you can gradually increase the number of paces before the praise.

If the dog starts to pull forward just say 'EASY' and pull back gently on the leash. If the dog doesn't immediately fall back to your side then stop walking and wait for your dog to stop too. Then go to your dog's side and start the exercise again always praising when you reach the current distance you are working on.

Once longer distances have been achieved and it appears that you could walk for several minutes in this way then practice stopping. Just before you stop slow down your pace slightly and say 'SLOW' and then stop. Once at a standstill give the command to sit and praise.

This command is actually quite easy to teach if you are getting your dog's attention from the start and especially easy if you have taught it to sit, stay and come beforehand as your dog by now should be used to learning new commands.

Once the heel command is mastered then you will be able to put it into action whenever you take the dog out and eventually you will even be able to do it without the leash. Do not however overdo it - let your dog run free as much as possible and still try to keep practice sessions down to 10 - 15 minutes at a time.

Short but often is the key.

# DOWN

This is the last command we will be showing you here. Learning the down command after the previous commands should be relatively easy and will show you how simple it is going to be to teach your dog other new commands later such as roll over, shake a paw, wave, fetch etc.

Start by having the dog on your left side on the leash and put a treat in your right hand with the leash. Give the dog the command to sit and then put the treat a few inches in front of the dogs nose, give the command 'DOWN' and bring the treat in your hand to the ground.

If the dog tends to stand up to reach down for the treat then try placing a hand on its hind as it is sitting to prevent it from standing (do not force this however just enough to show it what you mean).

When the dog does lie down then let it have the treat and praise it saying 'GOOD DOWN'.

Repeat the exercise several times until the dog has got the hang of what it is being asked to do. Within a short while the dog will be performing the exercise on its own without you having to tug downwards on the leash.

Once the dog is going down without assistance from you then try giving the command from in front of the dog and gradually each time it does it you can try starting from further back until in the end you will be giving the command from as far away as up to 10 feet without a leash.

When the dog lies down correctly walk up to it to praise it... only praise it if it stays down.

## **The Next Step:**

The commands we have outlined here form a basic foundation for you to train your dog.

With your dog obeying these simple commands you have opened the door for the learning process to continue and will be able to train your dog with ease to a much higher level teaching it how to;

- Shake a paw
- Wave
- Roll over
- Fetch
- Speak
- Be quiet
- Wait
- Walk politely
- Not pull to greet other dogs or people
- Not to Jump up
- Not to bite
- Not to get on furniture
- And much more

There are plenty of good dog obedience books, videos and courses on the market today if you wish to continue your dog's training. Check out some of the dog training books and videos available for immediate download on the internet now.

For more information visit

<http://dogtrainingbook.net>

Here are some online training Videos and Courses that we recommend;



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