



APBC

ASSOCIATION OF PET  
BEHAVIOUR COUNSELLORS

Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors  
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## ADVICE SHEET 9

# Training Your Dog

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A well trained dog is a happy dog. A dog that is well behaved can take part in family life and is welcome in more places.

### For example:

- A dog that greets politely rather than Jumping up will not need to be shut out of the room when visitors arrive
- A dog that walks on a loose lead is much more likely to be taken for more walks
- A dog that is under control and comes back when called can be let off the lead and enjoys more freedom and exercise. This ensures the dog has more mental and physical exercise and will be better behaved in other situations.
- Giving your dog food or toys to reward the behaviour you want makes it fun for both of you. You will also get to know each other better, which in turn ensures you have a strong bond.

### How dogs learn

Dogs learn by association, so if your dog does something and is rewarded, the action is much more likely to be repeated. For this to be effective the reward must be linked to the action. When training, this means the dog should get the reward within one second of the action.

### Things to remember

Make learning fun. Your dog will respond much more quickly. And if you do make mistakes the dog will not be afraid of trying again. If the dog does make a mistake it is your fault. Try again, but this time ensure

you are in a position to help your dog to get it right. Keep sessions short (about two minutes) and practice about five to six times every day.

Practice in different areas, for example in the house, out on walks and in the garden, but keep distractions to a minimum until your dog understands your requests

### When to reward:

- All the time for the right movements
- Then for the whole action
- Then for best attempts

### Rewards can be:

- Food (can be part of your dog's dinner or small treats)
- Praise
- A toy or game

Remember it is only a reward if you dog wants it.

### Equipment

A correctly fitting flat buckle collar or "Gentle Leader" head collar, long lead, tit bits, toys and a list of the commands you are going to use (to ensure consistency).

### Training for life

Remember you need to repeat these exercises a few times a day, every day, until your dog is trained. Once trained, you can maintain your dog's response by occasionally going back to basics and rewarding the behaviour you want.

### Come when called

- Show your dog the toy or food
- Run away a couple of paces



- Call your dog's name and say come in a happy voice
- As the dog comes to you, hold the collar and either feed or play with your dog
- Gradually increase the distance that you are from your dog, until eventually you can call your dog in and out of the garden or from room to room
- Only call when you are going to praise your dog - do not call your dog if you are going to punish or shout at it. Recall your dog regularly when out on a walk and give a reward.

Don't call your dog just to put it back on the lead.

### "Sit"

Lure your dog into position with a tit bit just above its nose, then move your hand over the dog's back. As the dog's head tilts up and back the dog will sit. As your dog actually sits, say the command "sit". Don't say it before the dog moves into position or your dog may associate it with the wrong movement.