



How Dogs Learn

Leadership

Dogs need a leader to help to guide them. Leadership consists of **conveying information clearly, being consistent** with rules and structure and **providing both physical and mental exercise**. Dogs learn through patterns, whether they are good or bad, therefore, you must ensure the patterns you are teaching your dogs are setting them up for success. You can effectively demonstrate leadership by teaching your dog the right answer (pattern). This means **rewarding behaviours** you **want** so they happen **more frequently** and **correcting** the behaviours you don't want (such as jumping up) so that you can show them the right answer.

Rewarding

Rewards help your dog to learn. There are many different ways you can reward your dog including **food, touch, verbal praise, play, toy and enrichment activities**. Regardless of the reward, what is essential is the **timing** of the reward. A reward must be given within **2 seconds from when the dog performs the behaviour** in order for it to be effective. When you first begin to train your dog (learning phase), you will always use food as a reward. After the learning phase you can use food intermittently and introduce other types of rewards. Rewards given in a timely manner help your dog to learn.

Exercise

Dogs need both physical and mental exercise in order to avoid problematic behaviours. As every dog is different, you must practice suitable physical and mental exercise based on the dog you have. Training which provides both physical and mental exercise is essential to help fulfill your dog's needs. There are a wide variety of training including Obedience, Agility, Scent, Tricks, interactive toys or simply teaching your dog to relax on their own. Any physical and mental exercise enriches your dog's life and will help to avoid problematic behaviours.