

Slow Dog Training

Be your dog's best friend



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Companionship

Does your dog sleep on your bed?
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Exercise

Make the right decisions when running
or power walking with your dog. Page 3.

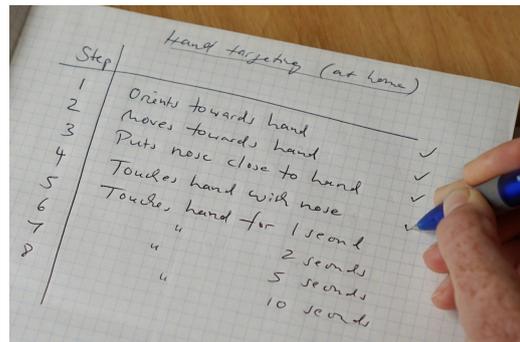
Training

Teaching with a plan leads to faster
and more efficient success. Page 2.

Do You Have a Plan? Get Better Results with Methodical Teaching

Training your dog is similar to teaching someone to play the piano, become skilled in wood turning or reliably hit the perfect drop shot. It is a gradual process that starts with groundwork and basic exercises until a level of high competency can be reached. Paradoxically, dogs are often expected to simply understand in an instant what we want from them. We expect more from dogs (a species which does not share our complex cognitive and language abilities) than we are able to accomplish ourselves.

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Running and Power Walking with Your Dog Get it Right

One of the joys of having a dog is being able to exercise with them. They get you out of the house even when your inner slob (we all have one) is reluctant. The health benefits for both you and your pooch are undeniable. While there are a whole range of physical activities you can do with your dog, running or power walking are two of the easiest and most popular workouts. However, just as you look after your own health and comfort, you need to consider a few important points if you want your dog to enjoy the exercise as well.



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Nail Clipping Horror

How to turn your dog into a manicure junkie with a step-by-step protocol. Page 3

How to Choose a Dog Trainer

Did you know that the dog training industry is entirely unregulated in Australia? This means no consumer protection for you and no protection for your dog from harmful training methods. Unfortunately not many people are aware of this and continue to fall victim to ill-educated or unethical trainers and self-proclaimed 'behaviourists'.

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Created by



Dog Training & Behaviour Consulting
www.crosspaws.com.au

Do You Have a Plan?

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Sadly, those unrealistic expectations feed the existence of businesses who sell quick fix solutions to change your dog's behaviour. They take your money to sell you products or techniques that suppress your dog's behaviour rather than help you teach your dog appropriately, efficiently and humanely. The fallout for you and your dog can be significant and even life-threatening for your dog.

Understanding exactly what dog training is - the development of skills - makes it immediately clear that we need a plan on how to go about it. When we teach someone to play the piano, we start with scales, not Beethoven's 5th. When we teach a dog, we similarly need to break down the final behaviour into steps that are manageable for the dog.

If we set the bar too high, our dogs may not learn at all and may start to resent training sessions. As a result, everyone ends up being frustrated.

For example, if you want your dog to stay on a mat whenever visitors come over, you don't start teaching them when you actually have visitors arriving. And you can't expect the dog to stay on their mat for even a few seconds after you send them there. It's asking too much too soon.

Repetition at a level where your dog can succeed, advancing in realistic steps, treats of high value and keeping training sessions short are key factors in a well planned approach to dog training. Note that your dog decides what counts as manageable steps, valuable treats and enjoyable length of training time. You can't make that decision for them. It is a perfect opportunity to get to know your dog better and strengthen the bond with them.

There is no way around it: Dog training requires time and patience. If



your life is too busy or you simply don't want to do it yourself, consider hiring a professional dog trainer (see "How to Choose a Dog Trainer", page 1) who can train your dog and then coach you how to maintain the learned behaviours.

While getting basic behaviours on board can be achieved quickly, there are usually no instant fixes to change your dog's behaviour without doing

considerable, and often irreversible, damage. But, if you arm yourself with plenty of ammunition (high value treats) and have a plan of attack (clear end goal, manageable training steps) you won't just reach your goal faster, but you will have taught your dog solid behaviours which they engage in voluntarily, happily, reliably and despite distractions in a any environment you want.

Plan for success

Let's look at an example plan for teaching your dog to lie on their side. The starting position for the dog is lying down on their belly, so this plan requires that your dog has already been taught how to drop. If your dog automatically rolls on a hip when lying down, start with step 2.

- Start by holding the treat in front of your dog's nose and then move your hand as described in each step. If the dog follows the treat with their nose to the desired position, mark the behaviour immediately with a cheerful "yes!" and give the treat.
- Cancel immediately (withdraw the food) when the dog gets up or stops following the lure.
- Repeat every step until the dog masters the requested movement fluently and at least 80% of the time. Only then move on to the next step (the next level of difficulty).

1. Lure your dog's nose towards their shoulder (almost 180 degree head turn) until the dog rolls onto one hip.

2. With the dog rolled on one hip lure the dog's nose towards their backside as far as they can reach until they do this fluently.

3. Lure the dog's nose even further until their shoulder is on the ground.

4. Once their shoulder is on the ground, lure the dog's nose to the ground so they lie entirely flat. Note: Some dogs don't like eating in that position, so just mark it and then feed after they raise their head again.

5. – 10. Increase the duration of lying flat on the ground to 2 seconds, 3 sec, 5 sec, 15 sec, 30 sec.

Depending on your dog, you may need more or less steps until you reach the goal behaviour. Variations in learning speed are mostly due to previous learning experience and breed differences. Do not use physical manipulation to force your dog to roll on their side. Learning is more powerful and fun if the student moves voluntarily.

Running and Power Walking with Your Dog

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First of all, ask yourself if your dog is physically and emotionally suited for the exercise. We may push ourselves to run or march in hot conditions, through a busy shopping strip or during wild weather, but just because we are able to do it doesn't mean our dogs are.

Consider your dog's fitness level and physique. Is your dog short-nosed and already has trouble breathing, even when not exercising? Is your dog very little and would struggle hard to keep up with you? Is your dog large and heavy-boned and would run the risk of injury? Certain breeds are simply not meant for running or joining a human exercise regime; neither are older or overweight dogs.

The other very significant factor is your dog's mental health. If your dog suffers from fear, anxiety or phobia, a seemingly harmless outing can turn

into a nightmare for your dog. It may sensitise your dog even more and make their fears worse.

Dogs who are fearful of things you might encounter on your run or walk (cyclists, kids, noises etc.) should not be forced to share your workout.

Once you have firmly established that your dog is a good fit, select the right gear (see box) and give it a try.

Also, don't forget to allow your dog toilet stops if necessary (of course running does not excuse you from carrying poo bags!).

And, since sniffing and exploring the environment is one of the most enjoyable and important activities for dogs, you need to make time for this either before you start your run (or power walk) or at other times of the day.

The Right Gear

For the comfort of your dog and yourself it is important to choose a proper harness or collar and leash. Ideally your dog has already learned how to walk on a loose leash in which case you can have your dog on a flat collar (never use any collar that constricts around your dog's neck). Otherwise use a comfortable harness with a clip on the back. Do not run your dog with the lead clipped at the chest (front-clip harness) as running while having their body pulled sideways may cause health problems. As for leashes, there are a range of hands free and shock absorbing options (check out waggle.com.au). If you decide to hold a regular leash, consider the consequences if your dog suddenly stops or you happen to step on the leash. This can end in nasty falls for either you or your dog. An option is to hold the leash loosely so it can easily slip out of your hand (only where this is safe and if your dog has a reliable recall).

<http://www.crosspaws.com.au/blog/dog-training/running-or-power-walking-with-your-dog>

Nail Clipping Horror

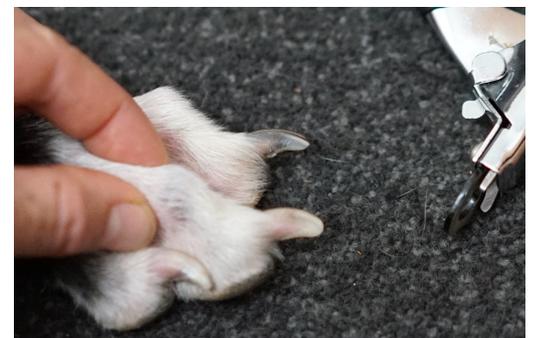
How to turn your dog into a manicure junkie

Having their nails clipped isn't exactly an enjoyable experience for most dogs. To begin with, dogs are naturally reluctant to have their paws handled let alone squeezed. Being restrained during the procedure usually puts extra stress on the dog and can sensitise them to hating it even more next time. Before you know it your dog is on a path of anxiety and possibly aggression and resents anything and anyone related to the dreaded nail clipping torture. There is no reason it has to be like this. You can teach your dog to not just tolerate having their nails trimmed but actually enjoy it. Having a proper training plan and breaking the process down into manageable steps (see "Do You Have a Plan?" on page 2) will make sure your dog has a positive experience throughout the training. With some dogs it may be necessary

to start with handling of the paws before introducing the nail clippers. You can easily test this by trying to grab your dog's paw. If they try to avoid you or pull back the paw, you need to start with brief paw touching, then grabbing, then squeezing and so on. And all that before you introduce the clippers!

The correct procedure is to follow every step (every variation of handling) with a very tasty treat (something your dog loves). Until your dog has been conditioned to enjoy nail clipping, it is best not to use those very tasty treats for anything else.

The general rules for desensitisation & counter conditioning apply (which you can read more about at www.crosspaws.com.au/vet-visits):



- Present the food after the handling (not before - the order is important!)
- Follow every handling with tasty food (i.e. never handle without giving food afterwards)
- Rule out that the dog might associate anything else with receiving tasty food, such as you reaching for the food before the handling.

Note that the dog is not required to do anything during this training, i.e. getting the treat does not depend on the dog's behaviour.

Watch a nail trimming video under "Videos of Interest" at <http://www.crosspaws.com.au/training>

Does Your Dog Sleep on Your Bed?

Why snuggling up with your dog in bed is perfectly fine

Ever heard anyone say if you allow your dog to sleep on the bed you are risking your "alpha" status? Well, fear not. This is just one of many myths about the human-canine relationship that firmly needs to be put to bed. Your dog does not waste their brain power to mull about dominance or who's boss in the house. All they want

is a comfy place to sleep and to be close to their favourite person which is hopefully you!

The risk of catching a disease from your pooch is very low. In fact, close contact with dogs may even have health benefits for humans*.



Unless you suffer sleep deprivation or allergies from your dog, or your partner threatens to move out, there is no reason to ban your dog from your bed.

And just in case your dog gets grumpy when someone approaches them while launching on the bed, you are most likely dealing with a case of 'location guarding'. This is perfectly normal dog behaviour and in most cases relatively easy to modify (and yes, your dog can continue to sleep on your bed). Sweet dreams!

If you prefer matters to be a bit more under your control, teach the dog that it's perfectly fine if the bed is off limits or if the door is shut at times (and provide them with their own comfy bed). Training 'on' and 'off' cues can also be useful (start with the hand touch cue - see box).

* Check out the study on dogs and human health: <http://www.uadogstudy.org/>

The hand touch cue

Teach your dog to touch your hand on cue and use this to move your dog around, e.g. on and off the bed. Start by holding out your hand about 30 cm from your dog's face and reward any orientation towards your hand (immediately say "yes" and give a treat). Once your dog does this reliably, selectively reward closer and closer approaches to your hand until the dog finally touches it. Remember to train with a plan (see page 2)!

How to Choose a Dog Trainer

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In a worst case scenario, bad advice and out-of-date training methods and equipment could result in serious, life-long psychological (and sometimes physiological) problems for your dog. Your money is not just wasted but paid for making your dog worse and there is nothing you can do about it.

Until Australia joins other progressive countries and introduces mandatory knowledge tests for dog trainers and training schools you have to rely on your own research and decision making.

Here are a few things you can do to minimize the risk when looking for a dog trainer, behaviour consultant or training school.

1. Search the directories of force free organisations, such as the Pet Professional Guild Australia (PPGA) or the Australian Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). The

organisation should have a clear no-force position statement, meaning their members pledge to only use training methods which are free from force and coercion and do not risk causing fear or pain in the dog. Sometimes these methods are called "Least Invasive Methods Available" (LIMA). However, there is no guarantee that each member adheres to the policy or that they have the appropriate knowledge to help you and your dog, so do not solely rely on this.

2. Read through a prospective dog trainer's website. If there is no 'About' page (or similar which discloses their training philosophy), leave. Every trainer and training school should be

absolutely frank about their training methods. If there is any hint that dog training is about establishing a dominance-submission relationship between you and your dog, leave. It is a sign the trainer is not up-to-date with their methods. Beware of pseudo-scientific language which is often used to give credibility where there is none.

3. Ask the prospective trainer for a clear explanation of how your dog will be trained, i.e. when being trained:

- How is my dog rewarded for "correct" responses?
- What happens if my dog gets it "wrong"?
- Are the methods used the least invasive methods currently available?

Check out this video on 'transparency in dog training' for important advice: <http://www.crosspaws.com.au/about-dog-trainer#consumer-power>

Are you worried or frustrated about your dog's behaviour?
Book a comprehensive behaviour consultation now!

Make your dog happy. Be happy.

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A good dog is a happy dog