

Working Together – basic dog obedience tips

A well behaved dog will have a much better quality of life, as its owners will want to spend more time with it and it will be much better behaved out in public. You should teach basic obedience to your dog from a very young age, as it will help you to manage your dog so that it does not create a nuisance or danger to other people, animals and wildlife.

It is a good idea to attend a gentle, positive methods obedience class with a certified trainer. Your dog will learn to listen and develop social skills with other dogs.

Dogs learn from rewarded repetition; by you teaching them to do something right and then rewarding with praise, a pat and/or a treat.

Here are some basic commands to teach your dog.

Walking on a leash

All dogs should know how to walk politely on a loose leash. Take your dog for a walk, as soon as the dog pulls ahead of you and the leash goes tight, stop walking – don't speak, don't jerk the leash, just stand still. Your dog will realise that nothing is happening, stop pulling, and turn to look at you. Then you can continue walking, either in the same or different direction. Praise your dog when the leash is loose and repeat every time the leash goes tight. Your dog will soon learn that if it pulls, it won't be going anywhere.



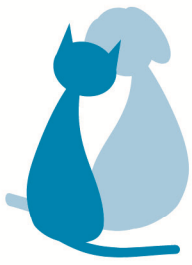
“Come”

When you feed your dog, have someone hold the dog a distance away from you and the food. When you say “come” get them to release the dog. When your dog gets to you, feed it immediately.

When you are walking in a public place, this command must be taught on a leash because if your dog gets distracted, you will just get hoarse from calling out and your dog will learn to ignore you.

Walk along with your dog on a leash (a long retractable one is best), then run backwards a few steps while calling “come” in a polite but definite tone of voice. If your dog is turned away from you, give one light tug and release the leash to get it to turn and come towards you. Praise your dog all the way, reward and resume walking. Repeat this command 10-20 times per walk.

As your dog responds, gradually increase the level of distraction, while still on a leash. Try calling your dog while it is playing with another dog, reward and release to play some more.



YOUR PET YOUR RESPONSIBILITY



Once your dog consistently comes on your call, you can take it to one of Council's off leash areas. If your dog does not respond immediately, retrieve your dog and leash it.

Remember to always make it a pleasant experience when your dog comes to you as you don't want your dog to ignore you or avoid you.

“Sit”

Hold a piece of food close to your dog's nose, and slowly move it back and forth over its head so your dog will rock backwards into a sitting position. Reward your dog instantly with the treat and praise. Repeat this action several times.

As your dog responds, continue the same action but without food. If your dog follows your empty hand into a sitting position, praise immediately and give it a treat from your pocket.

Now say the word “sit” and move your hand so the dog follows it into a sitting position, then give a treat. Repeat until your dog starts to sit when it hears the command and gradually phase out the hand action.

“Drop”

Hold a piece of food close to your dog's nose while in a sitting position. Slowly lower your hand down to the ground and away from your dog. When your dog drops down to take the reward and its body length is on the ground, praise immediately and let it take the treat.

As your dog responds, continue the same action but without food. If your dog follows your empty hand into a drop position, praise

immediately and give it a treat from your pocket.

Now say the word “drop” and move your hand so the dog follows it into a drop position, then give a treat. Repeat until your dog starts to drop when it hears the command, and gradually phase out the hand action.

This is a useful command as a dog in a drop position finds it hard to bark or show aggression.

“Stay”

Start with your dog in the sit or drop position, facing you and make eye contact. Raise your hand in a stop signal and say the word “stay” and take one step away. If your dog stays in position, step back to your dog, praise immediately and give it a treat from your pocket. Repeat until your dog starts to stay when it hears the command and gradually phase out the hand action.

Now teach your dog a release word to let it know that it's free to change position. Say the word “OK” at the end of each stay command to release the dog for some play time.

As your dog responds, gradually increase the distance and time that your dog stays in position, then give a treat. Gradually increase the level of distraction, so your dog learns to comply even if there is something else going on.

Remember to be consistent and keep training on a regular basis until your dog understands and responds to these basic commands.

**For more information contact
Council's Customer Service Centre on the below details**