



A dog owner is responsible for their pet in public places, so if your dog misbehaves you could be in trouble. A poorly trained dog can also be a danger to himself. Imagine the consequences if your dog ignores you and runs across a busy road. In order to have the perfect pet you will need to start training when your dog is very young. The rewards of this are clear - there is perhaps no greater pleasure than owning a well-behaved dog.

What are socialisation classes?

When your puppy is very young you will probably want to attend puppy socialisation classes. These classes are often run by veterinary practices and if you ask your vet they should be able to put you in touch with a local group. The main aim of socialisation classes is for your puppy to meet many other dogs and people however most classes will offer some very basic training as well.

What is basic training?

Basic obedience training is important for the well-being of your puppy. Training is about your dog learning to respect you as 'leader of the pack'. If basically trained a dog should respond to simple commands such as 'sit' and 'stay' and 'down' and come back when called. It is a huge advantage if your dog learns to walk properly on a lead.

When can I start training my puppy?

You can start simple training with your puppy as soon as you get it home - it is never too early. The sooner you start the easier it will be. The key to successful training is consistency. Initially training sessions should be very short. Puppies cannot concentrate for more than a few minutes at a time - integrate training into your daily routine and make them fun. If training is done properly it will be as much a rewarding experience for your dog as for you. Most dogs are desperately keen to please their owners and there are few other opportunities for your dog to have your undivided attention.

How do I train my puppy?

Good training is all about REWARD. Dogs do not know the difference between GOOD and BAD. It's humans that divide a dog's behaviour into desirable and undesirable. Nearly all behaviour problems are perfectly normal canine activities that occur at the wrong time or place. Reward your dog, with food or praise, for behaviour that you would like repeated and he will be likely to remember. Many people make the mistake of ignoring their dog when he is lying quietly and paying them attention only when trying to stop them doing something.

It is important to be consistent in your training - a puppy needs to know what behaviour is allowed and what is unacceptable. It is unfair and confusing if you change the rules every day! Remember, your puppy cannot be expected to know the difference between chewing an old slipper (good behaviour) and your best shoes (bad).

Do I need to attend classes?

Obedience classes are not really about teaching your puppy they are about training you to handle your dog. The most important skill for successful dog training is reading your dog's body language.

What other things can I do?

There are a number of more advanced options once your dog has social skills. Agility, specialist training for gun dogs and fly-ball are just a few of the options. Lifelong learning can be fun for both you and your dog.

Where can I find out more?

Your vet will probably be able to recommend a local dog training group. Alternatively ask friends, neighbours or owners of well-behaved dogs that you meet out on a walk for recommendations. Always go along to a class for yourself and watch a whole lesson before signing up. Classes are all about teaching you how to train your dog - you will have to practice when you get home in order to have a well-behaved dog.

Basic training for dogs



There are books and videos that can offer advice on training however if you have not had a dog before you will learn more quickly and have more fun if you attend a class and mix with other people.

If you want any other information on health issues concerning your dog please contact Unicorn Vets on 023 8034 3434 and we will be happy to advise you.