The Hands Off Dog Training Formula
Introduction: Special Dog Training Technique

My name is Chet Womach and I am the owner of thedogtrainingsecret.com. I’d like to discuss the use of a phenomenal training tool, called a clicker, which can totally transform your dogs’ behaviors.

Through my website, birdtricks.com, and my experiences from training with parrots, which by the way, is the foundation for my animal training background, I found after about six months of producing training materials that the most powerful tool, in any form of animal training, is a clicker. It is much stronger than any other device on the market, and quite simply one of the most effective and inexpensive ways to train any animal.

As I said, my background originally started in parrot training, and has expanded to developing training materials, which mostly utilize a clicker, to entirely shape behaviors in birds. But, the good news is that these principles not only work for birds, but they work on cats, on dolphins; they can work on any animal.

These basic principles are used by animal trainers all over the world. Clicker training principles have lots of benefits, so I want to spend some time specifically applying them to training your dog.

More than any other form of training, one of the greatest things about clicker training comes from the aspect of focusing on the positive side of training so that you are strictly rewarding only those behaviors that are good, rather than reacting to behaviors that are bad.

You don’t punish any wrong behaviors, but strictly use positive reinforcement throughout the training. You will never hear of methods involving choke collars or jerking on a leash.

There are courses out there using leash control only and involve off-the-leash control. They teach the dog to heal while walking. They train the dogs, alright. The dog learns to stay by your side because he quickly learns that if he does not, he will get hit with circle chains being thrown at him. He is essentially being whipped by these chains. Now obviously, this is purely negative feedback which teaches the dog to resent you, not to mention the fact that it is unpleasant for the dog. You also run the risk of being turned in by your neighbors!

Our training kit is designed in a way that might sound a little strange, or rather, in a way you might not be used to. The first section will introduce clicker training, give you some background, explain the benefits, show you how to get set-up and how to get started. It should flow quite smoothly.

However, the last portion is not designed to listen to from beginning to end. Had it been designed with that purpose in mind, it would be segmented. Instead, it has been created in such a way that you could use it as an index. So, if your dogs’ only problem is that he pees on the carpet, but you really don’t care about barking, or biting, or leash control, etc., you can accurately reference the chapter that pertains to the specific subject rather than wading through all the audio to find the relative material.
Just be aware that when going through the kit, some sections may be a bit choppy, since particular chapters on the audio CD’s are a breakdown of specific behaviors and how to correct them.

Shaping and Molding Behaviors: Using Clicker Training

Clicker training has a lot of other benefits that you may not be aware of, and which I think are extremely important to point out to you.

I first stumbled across this with parrot training; you may or may not own a parrot, but the benefits are the same. Even though I didn’t have this in mind at the beginning when I was trick training my birds and teaching them the behaviors that won them rewards, I began to notice that using clicker training to teach them a host of behaviors was also significantly increasing the bond I was creating between myself and my parrots, and the same holds true for dogs.

Not only that, but the birds were responding much, much, faster at the sound of the clicker. Instead of just saying “good” or using something else to bridge the gap between the time the animal does the behavior you want them to and the time you actually give them a reward, the clicker hits at the exact moment that the animal displays the desired behavior.

Now, that may not sound important, but we can put it into perspective by imagining you want your dog to walk over and sit on a map (which we will get into later) and you want the dog to first at least just look at the map. You can’t get that by using a verbal bridge.

If the dog looks at the map, you click and give a reward. If it takes a step towards the map, you click and reward, and by pinpointing every single move that the dog makes, you eventually shape and mold the exact behavior that you were looking for. This technique works for everything. Believe it or not, it even works with training goldfish! Yes, they are known to be clicker trained. Use the clicker to specifically reward every good behavior the dog displays, even in small increments and just watch the benefits come into play, rather than correcting the dog for bad behavior. The poor dog never really knows what he is doing right, only what he is doing wrong, so he feels confined in a bad relationship.

To further explain how this works and give you a better feel of exactly why it works, let me give you some background. I can’t say for sure that clicker training started here, but I do want to tell you a story about something called operant conditioning. You may hear this in some of my other materials, but I’d like to talk about Dr. Skinner. Around the 1920’s, Dr. Skinner was a scientist who completed a lot of studies on rats. Basically, to keep a long story short, he would take a hungry rat and put it into a cage in the laboratory. The goal was to see if he could train the rat to run over to a food dispenser with a little lever on it, raise its paw, put the paw on the dispenser, and push the lever down to activate the dispenser to drop a food pellet into the rat’s cage. Then, the rat would run back, and munch on the food.
It got so that every time the rat got hungry, he knew that he could just walk over, trip that lever, and he would get a pellet. Now, that seems very complex and the story has a long way to go, but Dr. Skinner proved his theory. The interesting part is that, just as I mentioned earlier, he made it possible by breaking it down into tiny, tiny, steps.

I am going to teach you, throughout this course, how to accomplish the same results for all sorts of behavioral problems with your dog. There are a ton of tricks you can use and games you can play. Dr. Skinner first had to imagine the rat in the cage with nothing else in the cage except the food dispenser. The rat would just wander around the cage, perhaps sniffing around different things until accidentally, the rat just happened to look at the feeder, and just at that second the rat took that first look, Dr. Skinner immediately hit a remote little button on the feeder and it dropped and went “click”. What I’m saying is that when the pellet dropped, it made a click at the bottom of the cage and that “click” perked up the rat’s ears.

The rat saw the food pellet, ran over and ate it. So, with certainty, that was surely the beginning of where all this clicker training came from. Using small steps, it didn’t take very long for that rat to know that every time he looked at the feeder, he got a food pellet that clicked in the bottom of his cage. Pretty soon, that realization would have that rat thinking, “gosh, I’m hungry and I get food from that dispenser when I look at it, so I’ll stare at it all the time.” But then, Dr. Skinner phased that out so that now, not only did the rat have to look at the dispenser, but take a step toward the dispenser. And once again, he would hit the remote and drop a pellet that clicked on the bottom of the rat’s cage.

The rat would then begin taking steps towards the dispenser to earn a reward, until he would eventually take all the steps right down to the point of actually bumping right up against the food dispenser, and all the while clicking and rewarding with pellets throughout the entire process.

Next, he waited for the rat to accidentally bump into the lever, again clicking and rewarding the entire time that each step moved toward the right direction of eventually stepping on the lever. Each and every time the rat got distracted and looked away or walked away, no reward was forthcoming.

Once he got the rat to the point of bumping up against the food dispenser so that the rat was constantly just touching the dispenser, he phased that out. He stopped rewarding until the rat got bored, started sniffing around the dispenser and accidentally stepped on the lever with his foot. But just as soon as he did, he rewarded him by dropping a pellet. Pretty soon, he was just repeating the steps over and over to a hungry rat. The rat got the picture that all he had to do was step on the little lever and he got a reward.

Basically, clicker training was born in a sense, but it has taken on many new levels since then and is now being taught. It is definitely a growing field as well it should be, because it is extremely effective. If a rat can be trained, then you should have a lot of faith in training your dog, your cat, your dolphin, and yes, even your goldfish!
Training Sessions: Clickers and Conditioning

To begin training, it is important to discover your dog’s favorite treat. Not necessarily his favorite food, but something he doesn’t get on a normal daily basis, not his dog food, but something he will get really excited about and work hard to get.

We have found that our Golden Retriever will absolutely die for marshmallows or cheese. Now, while these may not be the healthiest treats, it is fortunate that clicker training is structured so that it doesn’t necessarily have to be a most healthy treat for your dog. But that’s not the point, although obviously, your dog’s main diet should be healthy. You are just looking for something that will make your dog willing to go that little extra step; you want to have his undivided attention when you have this treat in view. It should be pretty obvious how to find a good treat for your dog.

In fact, you probably already know by now that one way to do it is to just have several different items out on a table or on a tray. You could have cheese, marshmallows, strips of chicken or beef, or pretty much anything you could imagine that you think your dog may like to eat, and then let him see which one he goes for first. If it does not make a difference, then you are well on your way.

Depending on how you got this kit, you may have received a small training bag for treats, which can just hook onto your belt pocket or click onto the waistband of your pants. Unfortunately, this item is difficult to get hold of sometimes, so it may not be included with your kit, and it’s not a necessity. You can always just keep treats in your pocket. Regardless, you always want the treats nearby so that you are not fishing for them, since you will need to be able to get it to your dog immediately.

There is another point I would like to note about finding the right reward for your dog; it’s extremely important and many people struggle with it. The reward that you give your dog is going to vary based on different scenarios.

Starting out your dog’s training inside your living room with no distractions might get him to go for a small bite of most anything, whether it is a cracker or bit of bread. But when you get outside and there are a few more distractions, with new smells, trees to sniff, or the park to investigate, you might need a much more enticing treat.

You also might run into a scenario where your dog just doesn’t even seem to care about sniffing the tree, and when that happens, you may possibly need to focus on restricting the dog’s diet a little bit so that you are training him right before meals. By limiting his diet, so that he is hungry during training and you are treating him throughout the training period, he may be a little more motivated.

One other snare can be that he just might not be a fan of treats. You may find that he just really loves to be petted or maybe he really just wants to hold his favorite toy, or perhaps there’s something else he wants to do. You are in
the better position to be the judge. Maybe he wants a little scratch behind the ear or on his butt. Just be aware that food treats may not always provide the magic answer for how you need to reward your dog.

Now, let’s touch back on the subject of restricting your dog’s diet. I do not, in any way, advocate starving your dog. You are simply training in a way that you feed your dog treats during a time when he is hungrier, which would be right before a meal. I feed my dogs three small meals during the day, so they get breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

It is very important that throughout this training, you do not leave your dog’s food out the entire day. If the dog has a buffet available all day, why would he want a treat! Let me reiterate, this is not in any way starving your dog. You are simply taking advantage of the routine points during the day when he knows he is going to get fed. Besides, you are creating a bond with your dog because of the time you are spending with him. He can look forward to the interaction of playing with you each and every day.

There are a couple of things, which you might find will help you, especially if you don’t work at home or have to be away a lot of the time. There are automatic dog feeders that are basically electronic, that you can purchase. They measure portions of food and dump that portion in your dog’s dish at different time intervals that you can manage. The advantages are that you are not constantly trying to find the dog food bag, filling up the dog bowl, and you can regulate your dog’s portions even while providing food multiple times each day.

Like I said, I feed my dogs three times a day, but this is something I might not have thought about. There was an experiment (I might not get this story exactly right); I think it’s called the Pavlov, or something Pavlov. Basically, Dr. Pavlov, a scientist, was doing a study where he would ring a bell and the feed the dog, and again rings a bell and feed the dog. Throughout his scientific studies, he found that after a certain amount of time, when he would ring the bell, the dog would salivate.

The dog might not really have been hungry, but in the mind of the dog (even the human mind has a lot of power if you think you are hungry), he would think it was time to eat, so he’d be hungry. So now, if you are feeding your dog multiple small meals a day, he is going to get hungrier more often because you are also presenting him with treats, which will excite him to eat more often. I guess brings us to our next point of how many times a day do you want to plan on feeding your dog versus how many training sessions would you like to have.

It’s a common misconception. Most people think they must train their dog for at least 15-30 minutes at a time. It actually can vary from dog to dog, but with shorter training spurts, you are empowering your dog with lots of chances to succeed and the opportunity for them to have time to process what is happening.
I recommend about five to eight short and sweet training sessions throughout the day. Okay, I guess the first objection would be scheduling these sessions throughout your day. If you work, you obviously can't come home just to train. However, these short sessions don't have to be split evenly throughout the day. Let's say you wake up at 6 am, and while you are eating your breakfast, you do a quick training session. A half-hour later, you get out of the shower and do another quick training session.

For an adult dog, the training session should only be around three to five minutes, and no longer. It's important not to exceed a dog's attention span or they will quickly become bored with training and want nothing more to do with it. So, how old does a dog need to be to begin training? Quite honestly, you can train a puppy. However, a puppy’s attention span is going to be a lot shorter, so probably no more than a 30-second to 2-minute training session is advisable, or you will most likely lose your pup's attention.

Once your dog has obviously become a veteran at trick training and masters a lot of behaviors, the training sessions can be extended to longer intervals. Use these guidelines when you are first starting out, but grow with your dog’s learning ability.

Now, let’s talk about getting your dog used to a clicker. The first step in getting your dog to understand what a clicker means is simply to sit down with him, have your treats ready in your pocket, or somewhere nearby, and simply click the clicker and toss him a treat. Let him think about it just for a second. Click the clicker again and toss him another treat. You want to repeat this step quite a few times until he realizes every time you click the clicker, he gets a treat. One very important thing to remember here, and if you take away nothing else from this, is to keep in mind that you must never click the clicker around your dog unless you give him a treat.

The clicker is your verbal promise to him that you are going to give him a treat, 100% of the time, each and every time the clicker is clicked. There must be no exceptions or you will lose your dog’s trust and absolutely ruin your chances of training your dog. You will undo any progress you have made.

If you are at all familiar with training terms, this is also known as a “bridge”. The clicking sound bridges the gap between the time the dog performs the specific behavior correctly and the time he gets rewarded.

Let’s say your dog sits and you start to give him a treat and he stands up. Without a bridge, he does not know what it is that he did correctly. Was it standing up that earned the treat? The clicker allows you to capture the specific and precise second your dog correctly displays the behavior so that there is an immediate bridge to rewarding your dog. This allows you to be able to train your dog to perform the tiniest actions, such as raising his ears, wiggling his nose, or any kind of trick.
The Power of Targeting

You will realize you have made it to this point when you can click the clicker and give your dog a treat, click and treat, click and treat, and you truly know that your dog gets it. You can tell by his body language. After multiple repetitions, you will notice that his ears prick up and he looks directly at you. You can tell that he is expecting the treat as soon as he hears the clicker. Once here, you are ready to move on.

Now, you might run into a problem, one that I faced when I first began conditioning an Australian Shepherd to get used to a clicker. I found that and all of a sudden, he was very afraid of the clicker.

You have to remember that a dog’s ears are much more sensitive than ours. The clicker was extremely loud and so overbearing that the dog would get scared and run away every time he saw the clicker. There are a couple of things you can do so that this does not happen.

One option is perhaps always wearing the clicker on you. There are several clickers that come with belt clips and have retractable cords so that you can attach it to your belt loop, and it will extend much like an expandable leash that extends or retracts depending on the distance the dog goes.

There’s also one with a magnet which can stick to your belt. Either way, you want to have it in your dog’s view so that he gets used to seeing it.

Another option is clicking in your pocket. This muffles the sound so that it is not as piercing to your dog’s ears. You can also try clicking behind your back, or cover the clicker bead with tape, anything that helps your dog get used to the sound. Just be very careful to not click in your dog’s ear.

Make sure that you keep your clicker out of the reach of your children. If you have kids in the house, or a spouse who is obsessive-compulsive, make sure it is kept away from them. You wouldn’t want your child, or anyone for that matter, to go around clicking the clicker. Your dog will become desensitized to the sound because he is not being rewarded, or in some cases, your dog may just freak out and only make the problem worse. Again, if the dog hears that click, make sure he is rewarded.

Depending on the type of dog you have; for instance, whether he is very timid or very calm or perhaps he is a very aggressive and hyper dog. My Australian Shepherd is a little on the hyper side, so that when I began training, he just ran in circles. I had to come up with a way to calm him down.

Here’s what I did. I would hold a treat in my hand and get down on the dog’s level to show the treat to him. But when the dog tried to get at the treat by gently gnawing or pawing at my hand, I would close my hand and wait until he settled down a little. Then I would click the clicker and give him the treat.
Soon, he realized that if he would relax and calm down, he would get rewarded. It became so natural that he was no longer even paying close attention, but automatically became controllable.

On the other hand, if your dog is like my Golden Retriever, he is a little too docile. This type of dog makes the case to make sure you are training just before his meals and his attention span a little keener.

Another technique, called targeting, can work with either a shy dog, or a hyper dog that has gotten to the point of calming down easily enough.

I used this technique with my parrots and found it to be extremely effective in getting very scared birds to come out of the cage and it will work well with dogs too. I don’t necessarily mean that the dog is scared, but in order to teach your dog to obey commands, you can use what is called the ‘targeting stick.’ It can be any sort of stick, a yardstick, a pointer, just most any kind of stick. The idea is that you would put the stick in front of your dog, perhaps if he is sitting, and wait for your dog to touch the stick with his paw. You would immediately click the clicker and throw your dog a treat.

The dog gets the treat and you repeat the process. Soon, the dog realizes that every time he touches the stick with his paw, he gets rewarded.

Then, try backing the stick an inch or two away to see if the dog is sharp enough to figure out to move to touch the stick. If this does not work, and the dog moves away because he is bored with waiting for you to do something else, then try moving the stick into his path so that he accidentally bumps into the stick with his paw. Then, you would click and immediately reward. At some point, he will start understanding that, “gosh, every time my paw touches the stick, I get a reward.” Once he gets to that stage, then start backing off two inches, three inches, six inches, a foot, two feet, and all over the house, each time clicking and rewarding. Yes, this requires multiple repetitions, over and over, but you need him to understand that he must go certain places to get the reward. This will come into play in later stages of training when, as an example, you need to teach him to crawl and come to you. It’s important that he understands the basic steps, so you want to make it fairly easy.

If you feel a little overwhelmed at having so many things to juggle, as mentioned earlier, get yourself a treat pouch you can hang on your belt or some easily accessible way to get to the treats quickly.

Also, if you are using a yardstick, attach the clicker to the stick. You can use glue or you can tape it onto the stick. You can even hold it on with rubber bands. The point is, making the stick and the clicker one so that you can just grab them both at the same time and are not having to try to hold the stick in one hand, the clicker in another, and still have a free hand to throw treats.
Teaching Your Dog to Sit

Teaching your dog the ‘sit’ command is the first of three major tricks that you want to teach. Sit should be the first, the ‘stay’ command is second, and last is the ‘lay down’ command. These are the three core tricks to train your dog. All of these commands can be taught without ever touching your dog. You should begin with the clicker in your left hand and the treat in the right hand.

When taking the treat out of your pocket (or whatever means you are using to store your treats), you will immediately notice that your dog is looking at you because obviously, you have something that it wants.

Start walking toward your dog. As soon as he sits down, click the clicker and toss the treat out to the side. The reason you do this is so that the dog has to get up out of the sit position to get the treat. This is very important.

Continue doing this, each time making sure that you hold the treat just a little above the dog’s nose and raise it a little over his head, which is going to force him to sit down. Again, as soon as the dog sits, click the clicker and toss the treat to the side.

If your dog doesn’t naturally sit down when you try this, here’s another approach. You can just simply take out the treat and just wait and wait, and as soon as the dog finally sits down, click the clicker and toss the treat out to the side making sure the dog has to get out of the sit position to get it. Repeat the process until the dog gets it.

There are a couple of more things that are important to know.

You are going to want to incorporate a verbal cue, so that when you put the treat above your dog’s head and he sits, you should also say the word ‘sit’ along with clicking the clicker, so that you are attaching a cue to the behavior. You could also use a hand signal, if that is what you want to be your cue.

Keep in mind that the cue itself does not really matter as long as the click and reward is forthcoming. The point is to get the dog to understand that every time he sits, he gets a click and reward. You could be watching TV or just walking around your house, and if you notice him sitting and you have quick access to the clicker and treat, go ahead and use them; it will make the training process go much faster and not take a lot of extra time out of your life. You could even do it during feeding times, or just any opportunity that arises.

The next important thing we’ll discuss in teaching your dog to sit is that you want to focus on getting the dog to sit longer than just one or two seconds. Whether it’s 10 seconds, a couple of minutes, sitting in the corner for any hour so he is not bugging a guest or bothering someone who may be allergic to dogs, you will need to work on lengthening the sit time to a longer duration.

To accomplish this, give the same sit command, but wait an extra second or two before you click the clicker and give the treat. Keep
extending the period of time so that your dog eventually learns that now, he has to sit until you let him know he can move.

Now, you are also going to incorporate a release command. Perhaps you can just say the word ‘okay’ which combined with a click and a treat lets the dog know he is allowed to now move.

Later in training, you can eventually phase out the clicker. I don’t have to worry about the click anymore because my dog understands the verbal rather than having to rely on the clicker.

You will also want to use what I call variable length training. This means that you will want to have the dog sit for 10 seconds, the next time 30 seconds, the next time 5 seconds, the next time 20 seconds, and so on. The point is to get him to always wait for the release command, no matter how long that might be. Hearing the ‘okay’ command and the clicker before he moves should become routine and not just sitting for the period of time until he begins to feel uncomfortable and gets up. He should sit until he is released.

This process should be repeated throughout the training session and not confined to individual sessions where you do 30-second sits in one session and in a separate session you do 15-second sits. You want the dog to understand the sit command consistently and not move until he hears the release, or until you start throwing other commands at him.

**Teaching Your Dog to Stay**

The stay command is another very important command to teach your dog. It can keep your dog safe when you are near a busy road, at a park, or while you have to go grab onto your kids to keep them from running in the street. There’s a wealth of reasons for teaching this trick, but another good reason is simply to have a well-behaved dog.

You will begin by having your dog sit. Give the sit command but in addition, you tell it to stay.

You click the clicker and say okay, and toss him the treat. Once you do this, take a step back, tell him to sit and again, and say stay. Pause for a second, click, say okay, and toss him the treat. Remember, the reason for saying okay is to give the release command, as discussed previously. It’s important the dog can understand when to stay and when it is okay to move.

Each time you tell your dog to sit and stay, move back a little further. Repeat the process until you are five or six feet away. Once your dog has mastered this part, then you will start working on duration. Up to now, you have only had the dog stay for a couple of seconds. Again, say sit, stay, then focus on duration, click, say okay and then reward. You work on this until the dog really understands the idea behind it.
If your dog begins to whine when you give the stay command, do not reward him. If you give the stay command and once you move back a foot, the dog starts to walk off, don’t reward him. Simply go back, tell him to sit, stay, then step backwards, click, give the okay and toss the treat.

It is very critical to never reward a behavior that is undesirable. Do not reward whining or barking. You might not want him to move at all during the stay command but be frozen into one position. If that’s the case, make sure you don’t reward even if he is moving his head. You can really shape and mold behavior by rewarding only a behavior that you desire, or by just ignoring the dog for behaviors you do not want.

Let’s get back to the focus on duration. Once you are able to move back several feet, the next step is to start stretching out the length of time your dog sits and stays in one spot.

From the beginning, tell him to sit, stay, take a few steps back, but instead of just clicking and rewarding after a second or two, give it three seconds, four seconds, and so forth, click, release and reward. Keep varying the intervals between the command and the reward so that he does not get used to always staying for exactly five seconds and up and decides to run off.

If that happens, do not reward the behavior. Only reward the behaviors you want. Eventually work up to 30 seconds, a minute, two minutes, and keep working at it until the dog stays as long as you want him to.

Obviously, there will be some obstacles. I found this out quickly when I first started training parrots. But, if you begin teaching your dog to sit, work through that command one step at a time, inch by inch, until the behavior is understood completely by your dog before you begin teaching the stay command. Also, if you are working on the ‘sit’ command, do not try to teach the very basics of learning to sit and also focus on duration at the same time. What I’m trying to say is, work through each step until you are fully satisfied the behavior has been learned before you move on; do not try to teach multiple steps at the same time. It just will not work. Take things in order, no matter how long each step takes and do not get ahead of yourself, or your dog’s ability to learn.

You will also find that there are distractions, depending on your training environment. However, that is just fact and you should use those distractions as part of the training. As an example, perhaps you have your dog sit near an open door and then allow him outside. Especially if going outside is something he likes to do before dinner time. It can also be rewarding to have a full bowl of food nearby during a training session, or take him to the park and make him sit with the car door open for a bit before you allow him out, or have him sit while in the park.

Now there is a trick to this. You don’t want to say, “come on boy, get in the car” and then punish him for not holding the stay, but you’ve got to be smart about it. You shouldn’t trick your dog, but use the distraction so that the dog has to make a choice on his own, without further commands, as to whether he holds the stay or not.
You also want to teach the dog to stay within boundaries. For instance, use the stay command far enough inside the door and reward for not crossing the boundary from inside to outside, otherwise you might find yourself going out one day to get groceries out of your car or you might be carrying something heavy inside and have your dog run out underneath you and cut your legs out from under you.

Keep these things in mind, when training behaviors. As an example, when your dog has mastered both the sit and stay commands, go stand next to a door. It doesn’t have to be a door that opens outside, but it could be any door that you do not want your dog to go through. I have a parrot in my home, so I don’t want my dogs going through the door where my parrot stays, since my dogs could eat my bird and I wouldn’t want that.

I could open up the door to that room and walk in but tell my dog to stay outside. If he stays outside the room, I will click and reward him, but if he comes into the room he does not get a reward. If he is on a training diet or it is close to meal time and he is a bit hungry, then he will want that reward, along with petting and attention. If he is told to stay and he crosses the boundary, he will not receive the reward. He will soon learn that he is not to go past the boundary and I could leave that door open and he will not go into that room.

One of the biggest obstacles I’ve found with my Golden Retriever, regarding distractions, is meeting up with other dogs, or other animals, at the park or anywhere I happen to be walking my dog. Dogs get very excited when they see another dog.

We will cover this topic some more later, but one of the hardest tests for training success is putting out your dog’s food and giving him the ‘stay’ command while allowing another dog to run free around the room.

The challenge of teaching your dog to sit and stay, and then throwing your neighbor’s dog in the mix as a distraction, all the while telling your dog to stay will be worth it if your dog will still obey the command. At that point you can feel confident that your dog has mastered this trick.

**Mastering the Down Command**

Getting your dog to master the ‘down’ command or ‘lie down’ command is a much needed behavior, and fortunately it is simple for your dog to learn. It’s basically as simple as catching your dog lying down, with the key being that your dog already fully understands what the clicker means.

Your dog should already know the ‘sit’ command and understand that for every time you click the clicker, he has done something right and that he has a treat coming.
With that being said, you should go about your regular business in the morning, so you are not actually taking extra time out of your day. Just be aware of what your dog is doing, and if he happens to lie down, click and toss him a treat. Trust me, by now he will understand what the clicker means.

He will understand that he did something right, and most likely will come over to you and begin offering other commands he has learned, but do not reward him further. Just wait for him to get bored and go lie back down again, then click and reward. Do this over and over again until he basically understands the command.

Now, there are a couple of issues that may be a factor. Perhaps you have a very large room, or maybe your dog does not hang around with you during breakfast time.

If that’s the case, go to a smaller room, perhaps a bathroom or a small bedroom, any place where the dog is somewhat confined, so that you can see him no matter where he is in the room. The point is not to let him run away or be distracted. He has to hang out with you, and eventually, since most likely the dog is not going to stand forever, he will get bored and lie down. Make sure that each time he does, you click, and by now, he is going to perk up and get excited because he knows there’s a treat coming.

Once he eats his treat, chances are he might lie back down again. Odds are that he is going to be staring at you, eager and just hoping that he is doing the right thing so that he will another reward. Once you get him to this point, it’s time to attach a cue to the behavior.

Your dog has basically formed a rhythm of lying down, you click and treat, and he immediately lies down again, you click and treat, and so on. Use that rhythm so that after you click and treat, before he has the chance to lie down again, give the command ‘down’ (or hand signal, if you wish) right before he lies down, then immediately click and reward. Make sure you attach the cue, even though he’s doing it without your saying it.

In training, the word (or signal) must always be associated with the behavior. Once your dog has gotten the command pretty well mastered, then you back it off and stop saying ‘down’ each time. I have found that parrots, dogs, and most any animal will offer the behavior over and over, even though it is not the behavior we want. Animals do resort to the behavior they like to do the most.

You will want to start mixing commands so that he recognizes he can’t just do the behavior he likes best and still expect a reward. He must have the cue before expecting a reward.

Another important thing I want to mention is that it is important to only give the command once.

I know you have probably seen this happen. And if you haven’t, I am sure you will begin noticing it very frequently. You will hear someone say to their dog, “sit”, “come on – sit”, “sit boy, sit”, and after about the
fifth time, the dog finally does it. That person is basically undoing all of the training that has ever been done.

Make sure that you do not reward your dog unless he obeys the command after you saying it only once. If you are going to have to repeat the command, don’t do it, just ignore the dog, walk away and then come back and try it again. He must learn to do it after you have given the command just once, in order to receive a reward.

Keep in mind that you must train your dog to behave exactly how you want them to behave, because in the end, they will only behave as they have been trained, so take it one step at a time and make sure you are getting the results you want before moving on.

Conclusion (Part 1): What Comes Next?

I certainly hope you have enjoyed this section. On the second training CD that comes with the kit, we discuss more advanced techniques, and go over topics such as biting, aggression toward children or strangers, being territorial with spouses, barking at neighbors or the postman, begging, and teaching the ‘come’ command.

Training To Come On Command

Teaching your dog to come on command can be pretty fun, and not at all hard to do. Puppies generally learn the trick a little faster than older dogs, but they still be taught also. You want to basically train your dog to understand that he should come to you whenever you call his name, and he will be rewarded and not just with food this time.

So far, the tricks we have taught have primarily used food as a reward; however, petting and praise, along with food, should be used with this command. And, you want to use your dog’s most favorite treat in the world.

For the other tricks, you may have gotten away with a mediocre treat, one that your dog would accept even if it was not his favorite, but it was better than dry dog food. However, with this trick, the best treat is required.

By the way, you wouldn’t ever want to ever call your dog’s name and then grab him by the collar and shove him into his dog kennel. That is no fun for your dog, so I want to show you how to teach him to come when called, just because you want him near you.

I will teach you separate commands for calling your dog to put him in his crate or kennel, with words such
as ‘go into your kennel’ or ‘go into your crate’ but it is very important not to confuse those with this trick. When you call your dog’s name, it should be something that will make him happy. Never call your dog’s name for negative reinforcement.

Again, this command should be learned using the very best treat as a reward. It is also a trick that you will eventually want to get a few other people involved with to help reinforce the behavior.

You will want to start in a controlled environment, such as your living room. As an example, your puppy is sitting and you walk up a few feet away, clap happily, and say, “Sparky, come.” Sparky gets all excited and runs over to you just to play, so you click the clicker and give him a treat. Do this repetitively. Do it in different situations, in different parts of the house or in your yard. Start increasing the number of distractions, whether it is smells or sounds. Perhaps he is in the yard sniffing something and you choose that instant to tell him to come. Stay fairly close during this time and have those treat ready.

My Australian Shepherd loved to play a game. Rather than calling his name, I actually trained to come to the sound of a high-pitched whistle. I would walk off while he was busy playing, go hide in another room, such as the bathroom or bedroom closet. I’d blow the whistle, and it was such a hoot just watching and listening to him.

He would run around the house trying to find me. Once he found me, he was rewarded with lots of petting and praise, and of course, that favorite treat. It should always be a positive experience, never punishing.

Properly Crate Training Your Dog: How and Why

It is very important to properly crate train your dog for several reasons. You might have an emergency where you have to take the dog to the vet, or even just for regular checkups. You may have guests that are allergic to dogs or they might be afraid of dogs. Or, perhaps you have small children come around who are afraid of dogs, big dogs especially. It is just a smart decision to teach your dog to go into his crate each time he is given the command.

There are two ways of doing this. If your dog is a puppy, it’s a great time to begin the training. I started putting my Australian Shepherd into his crate at night, to go to bed. I fed him in his crate and he had to sleep there. Every morning I would let him out, play with him and he just was taught that his kennel was a safe place to be. After a while, I started saying, “go to your crate (or kennel)”, and he would just go in of his own free will. If I left the door open, I would catch him sleeping in there just because he felt comfortable, because he had used it since he was a puppy.
If you have an adult dog, obviously it's a little too late to use that method, especially if your dog is afraid of the crate. However, there are a number of steps you can take to get your dog used to the crate and be willing to go into it.

To start, be sure to click and reward anything that shows the least bit of progress towards the crate, especially if your dog is definitely afraid of the crate. As an example, let's say you decide to keep your dog's crate in the laundry room. Go into the laundry room with your dog and shut the door behind you. If you have a decent sized laundry room, it doesn't really matter as long as the dog is in the room with the crate. If the room is smaller and your dog is panicking, you might want to take a few steps back. The point here is to reward the dog for any small, positive step. If he even glances at the crate, click and reward. Any step he takes closer to the crate, click and reward. If he sniffs the crate, click and reward.

You may find that he will set a boundary that he will not go past. For instance, he will not get nearer than two feet of the crate. Whatever the hurdle, as soon as he breaks through, give him a huge reward so that he understands he did something good. Be sure to click and reward, but some praise and petting never hurts. Another tip is to put your dog's meal in the crate. This will only work if the dog is not terrified of the crate. If he learns to eat in the crate and then you allow him out to play after eating, he will soon get into the routine of going in there.

One side comment is that he should be allowed out to do his business. His crate is a place to feel safe and secure. The final goal is to teach him to stay inside the crate for a long period of time.

Let's get back to the training process. You want to set goals. So, if the first goal was, let's say clicking and rewarding for looking at the crate. Then, Step 2 was sniffing the crate. Once the dog has completed those steps, do not keep rewarding the same steps. If the dog has completed Step 1 and Step 2, and Step 3 is he must put one or both paws inside the crate, then do not reward any behavior but Step 3. When that step is completed, move on to the next step, but no longer do you reward any of the previous steps. In other words, only reward the step that you are working on.

There are lots of other ways to get your dog comfortable with the training also. For instance, you can use things like Kong toys.

You can find these at your local pet store. Stuff them with peanut butter or a favorite treat and toss into the crate, so that your dog is a bit distracted because he wants to get at the peanut butter. Utilizing this distraction can help your dog overcome his fear of eating inside the crate. This technique generally works well with older dogs.

Now that you have finally gotten the dog to go into the crate, the next step is being able to close him in and walk away. Your dog is probably going to be terrified because all he knows at this point is that you are leaving him
locked up. You want to teach him that you will come back for him. If he will allow you to close the door, click and reward. Then leave for 10 seconds, come back and click and reward. Try it for 30 seconds, come back and click and reward.

Keep repeating the process until your dog learns it is okay with being in the crate for as long as you want him to. Don’t come back just because he whines or barks; don’t even let him see you. If you come back, you are basically teaching him that barking brings you back. If he is barking persistently, just wait it out and stay out of sight. Wait about 15 seconds after the barking has ceased, then walk back into the room and click and reward and let him out to play. This will teach him that he is only being rewarded for being quite.

If you ever give in to letting him out because of whimpering, barking, or whining, you can expect it to be very annoying around 1 a.m., when all you want to do is sleep after a long day of work but the dog won’t stop yapping because he wants you and he knows this will get your attention. You must never let him know these behaviors affect you.

Now, some points especially for puppies. Puppies, particularly smaller ones, are going to have a little bit of a bladder control issue. You are not going to want to leave a puppy in a crate for eight hours and expect him to hold it because he just cannot do that. He is going to have a problem right at the start.

The great thing about crate training a puppy is because he generally has no stigmas associated to the crate. Feed him there, let him play with toys there, and click and reward him during each step. If he’s about to fall asleep, go ahead and put him in the crate, perhaps petting him a bit. You might leave the door open until he falls asleep, then shut the door and leave him until he wakes up, come back and click and reward him every time he gets up. Or, you can just put him in there while he’s awake and distract him with a toy so he can amuse himself all alone.

Just try things to see what works. When you put him in and shut the door for 10 seconds, if he doesn’t whine or bark, click and reward and let him out to play. Put him back in the crate (don’t forget to start attaching the cue such as “go to your crate”) and let him get comfortable with the fact that he is going to be okay in there. Always click and reward, and you will help him through every hurdle.

**How to Stop Your Dog’s Annoying Barking**

How can you stop your dog from barking? It is crucial to know how to combat this because it is so maddening for a dog to relentlessly bark to come in, bark to eat, bark when it is begging, barking at gnats flying in the sky, barking at cats that stroll by, barking at neighbors that walk by, and the list goes on and on. First, you need to know why your dog is barking.
One thing that can cause your dog to bark is boredom. Unfortunately, you can’t really fix boredom with a clicker so you need to adjust the dog’s environment so he has plenty of things to occupy him. Take him on runs or walks. Perhaps you might need to hire someone to walk him regularly, if you don’t have the time to do it yourself.

Do anything that you can so that there is more interaction with your dog. Physical activity can relieve boredom. Having lot of toys can relieve boredom.

Other reasons for barking may be begging to be let in or begging for something else, and those are generally treated the same way.

This behavior is very similar to parrots. I have done extensive training with parrots to overcome screaming for their owners to come when they call. The dog barks to get something they want. If you react by getting excited or yelling or the barking gets you to come and give them the attention they want, they will continue doing it. You must stand firm and not react. For example, if your dog barks a few times and you jump up and run over saying, “what’s wrong, what’s wrong”, if I were a dog I would bark a lot because my owner came running. However, if I barked a hundred times, a thousand times, and my owner does not come, well, you get the picture.

An animal never continues to act on something that does not bring a positive response for the animal. The animal will phase out its own behavior, which is why you need to stand firm.

If you are sitting in your chair and your dog is barking at the door to let him in, you need not even look at him. Don’t make eye contact or make a move towards the door, do nothing. Sit and wait it out until the dog has stopped barking, then go to him, click and reward and let him come in.

If you are preparing food and your dog is barking, let him bark until he is blue in the face. Once he stops barking, wait a few seconds and then click and reward. It’s simply a matter of repetition. The problem is that too many dog owners have trained their dogs to bark because it brings food gets them let in.

You are beginning to understand what your dog is doing and how he is trying to communicate with you.

It is important to reiterate though, and may have been a little confusing. Do not click and reward immediately after the dog stops barking. Wait a bit in between or else you are still teaching him that barking gets the results he wants. In most cases, I would recommend 15-30 seconds later. Again, clicking and reward immediately after the barking stops on reinforces the barking behavior.

Another unpleasant situation is your dog always barking when someone walks by. You might try limiting the dog’s visibility. Dogs think they must alert you to any changes, not necessarily because they want to accomplish something, but they think they are doing a good thing; it’s a natural instinct. Try to make it so they cannot see strangers coming up to your door or into your yard. In addition, do not reward him when he barks by coming over and patting him, asking what is wrong.
If the dog is outside, make sure that he stops barking before you give him a reward and before you let the stranger come inside.

Let’s try looking at this from the dog’s perspective just to give you an idea of how quickly the situation can go from being tolerable to being intolerable. Say you are watching TV and the dog is outside.

The dog barks for five seconds, and you worry about the barking upsetting the neighbors, so you get up out of your Lazy Boy and let the dog in. Congratulations, you have just taught your dog that if he barks for five seconds, you will let him in. The next day the dog starts barking. He barks the five seconds, but you decide to ignore him. He barks and barks and barks. Finally, you can’t take any more so you go out and start yelling at the dog, “shut up you bad dog.”

The dog understands that you are excited, but he doesn’t understand that the words are meant to be punishing. He just hears your yelling and screaming, but now he has learned it took 30 seconds of barking to get your attention, and he still got what he wanted.

You continue on this path, each day a little longer, and pretty soon, the situation is intolerable. He went from barking for five seconds to five minutes. This moved on to 10 minutes, 15 minutes, and you now have trained your dog to bark relentlessly.

Depending on how you handle this problem, you can totally confuse your dog. Since the yelling and screaming did not work, you now resort to spanking or some other form of punishment. All you are doing is damaging the relationship with your dog.

Here’s something that works great with clicker training, both with parrots and with dogs. Put the behaviors that you don’t want on cue. With parrots, we would be talking about screaming, with dogs it’s barking.

Here’s what I mean. If your dog barks and the last method didn’t work for you, when your dog barks, click and reward. Each time your dog barks, click and reward. Just as in our earlier methods, you will then want to attach a cue. So, for instance when he barks, you say “speak” and then click and reward.

There is a little timing here. He barks, your tell him to speak, and you click and reward. You say ‘speak’, he barks, you click and reward. You are reinforcing the behavior so that he will learn to only bark when you tell him to. Keep working at it until you eventually phase out the barking being used as a begging action, and rather doing it on command. Obviously, the dog will learn that he does not want to bark if he knows you are only going to leave the room and ignore him.
Now, I want to jump back just a bit and talk about hitting your dog. From the dog's point of view, he knows that so far, barking has brought you running and giving him the attention he wants. So he decides to bark. He sees you coming and thinks you are coming to play with him and give him what he wants, so he runs up to you and you hit him.

The dog doesn’t understand that barking is bad because you have trained him that it is good. Up to now, you always rewarded him by giving him attention. You suddenly throw him a curve because instead of just yelling and screaming, which he only saw as excitement before, he is being hit. Now you are training him to resent you and a dog that gets beat cannot be trained from any angle. Don’t hit your dog for barking, or wetting the carpet, or any of those bad behaviors. Not because you might not feel a spanking is deserved, but because it just does not work.

Besides training your dog to speak on command, you can also train your dog to do other things to alert you besides just bark.

You could set up a little bell on your front door and train your dog so that when someone new comes to the door, if the dog rings the bell, he gets a fantastic reward which is a good incentive not to bark. I have a friend that my dog didn't particularly care for. My dog would put up quite a fuss when he came over. I asked my friend to participate in the training process. Now I had positioned a bell on the door so that when my friend would walk up to the house and the dog would run to the door, he would accidentally bump into the bell. I would click and reward the dog and let my friend in. I'm talking about using the exact same methods we have previously been using, slowly progressing through steps using the clicker. You could train your dog to perhaps run and find you and paw your foot if someone comes to your door. Or you might have him spin in circles or jump in the air, it really doesn’t matter what the action is. The point is that your dog is communicating with something besides barking.

**How to Stop Your Dog’s Destructive Chewing**

Stopping a dog from chewing is not that complex of a behavior to cure. It normally gets phased out, just like kids go through phases. How do you set your dog up for success? Try to look at it as though you had a toddler around.

Put up gates so your dog can’t get to areas with furniture, create areas or rooms that are just his space, give him lots of toys that he really likes, which means lots of toys of every sort. If you walk in my house, my dogs have a toy pile. There are at least 15 toys in this toy pile and the dogs play with all of them. Some toys are for chewing, some are for pulling, some are meant to be fetched.
There are toys especially designed for puppies so they can do their teething on something that excites them and they make their gums feel better for when new teeth are coming in.

Also, if you have a puppy that is nipping or chewing on your hands, simply stop doing whatever you are doing, get up and leave the room. Give him some time to think about and then come back and play with him. As soon as he starts nipping or biting you again, get up and leave the room because the last thing you want to do is give any kind of reinforcement.

Some people will suggest you should yell at the dog and say ‘no’ but I would strongly recommend not doing that. I believe to do that would just be reinforcing the dog for wrong behavior because to them, it’s just exciting noise. It’s best to ignore it, when he stops, click and reward.

This is also a behavior that you obviously wouldn’t want to put on cue since you wouldn’t want your dog biting anyone under any circumstance. By simply ignoring the behavior and rewarding him for doing well, this will quickly be phased out. This might require a little negative reinforcement, but let me go ahead and clarify that by using the term negative, I do not mean physical punishment.

What I mean by negative reinforcement is immediately giving the dog a negative reward for the action so that you decrease the number of times that he will display the behavior. In this case, the negative reward is leaving the room or not giving the dog the attention he wants.

The instant he nips, bites, or chews on your fingers, as most puppies love to do, then leaving the room will quickly teach the dog that, “gosh, this isn’t any fun because every time I do it, they leave me alone. So, I don’t think I’ll do it anymore.” This same technique works will all sorts of animals.

How to Stop Your Dog from Jumping Up on People

So far, all of the training we have discussed has been done from the standpoint of not having to touch your dog to train. However, for this topic you may have to break form and actually touch your dog. If your dog jumps up on you, there’s already touching going on. But there are a couple of different approaches to accomplish breaking the habit.

If your dog likes to greet you by excitedly jumping up on you when you come home from work, try using a glass door in your home if you have one somewhere. Have the dog in a spot where he can see you approaching. For example, my dog can see me coming through the window.

When you approach the door, give your dog the ‘sit’ or ‘stay’ or ‘lie down’ command. When he obeys, open the door. If the dog jumps up on you right after you open the door, go back out, close the door and start over. The dog must learn that he will not be greeted until his butt is firmly planted and that you are going to continue to
shut the door every time he gets up. Do not give him the chance to jump up on you but if he does, I’ll tell you in a minute how to get out of it.

As with other training, if the dog displays the behavior by not jumping up on you, be sure that you reward as well as give plenty of petting and praise.

Okay, let’s say you messed up and the dog has actually jumped up on you. Now, don’t knee your dog in the chest or anything like that, although that has worked to stop the jumping and many people have used it. It also trains the dog not to like you because you hurt him, which can lead to other behaviors you would not want.

Here’s another, much friendlier option. When the dog jumps up, try to catch his paws and stretch up his front legs a little bit so he feels just a little awkward and a little bit off balance. It’s an unnatural position, though you are not really hurting him whatsoever. You don’t want to stretch to the point that you hurt the dog or tear something. Just hold him up a little longer than he wants to be held up so that he will soon begin realizing that jumping up is not a pleasant experience because you are making him stay up in that position.

Obviously, if at all possible, my first choice would be the first method I described. If you can fit it you’re your daily routine, it is much more positive; however, the second option does work and is not a bad substitute, if necessary.

**Potty Training Your Dog**

Potty training your dog is much easier than most people think, especially if your dog already understands the purpose of the clicker.

If you have skipped forward to this section, make sure to go back to the beginning where I talk about clicker training. It is best to go back and train the ‘sit’ command first, using the clicker. If your dog has a good understanding of what a clicker means you will see your dog progress in leaps and bounds with house training.

Start by taking notice of your dog ‘business’ habits. If he starts to go or actually does go, inside your house, which is highly likely, don’t make a fuss, or yell at him. Don’t tell him no; no words are needed. Just take him outside to the particular spot you have selected that you would like him to use as his ‘bathroom’.

The next time he starts to go inside the house, give your cue. You might use ‘go potty’ or some other clever term of your choosing. Again, take him to the selected spot and as soon as he takes care of business, click and reward, and make a big fuss over him.
There are a couple of important points I need to make. Make sure you clean up any mess inside your house very thoroughly, because dogs have a strong sense of smell and will tend to go back to the same spot every time. It is very important that they cannot pick up their own scent. There are a number of products on the market that work very well, or you can find it in your local pet stores. You can also use a 50:50 mix of white vinegar and water and use a spray bottle to help eliminate the odor.

If you clean up after your dog’s does his business in his selected spot outside, be sure you leave enough scent so your dog is able to pick it up next time. It must be a familiar place to the dog, especially during training.

Each time your dog starts to go, give the cue, click and reward. Just remember to make a big scene so the dog knows this is a good behavior.

Another point worth mentioning is that you should be very aware of your dog’s cycles throughout the day. Obviously, puppies will go to the bathroom more often and especially when they have just eaten. If you notice your dog always goes to the bathroom two minutes after you feed him, then give the cue and take him out before the two minutes are up.

Then click and reward so that the process runs much smoother. They also usually need to go as soon as they have gotten up from a nap. Set your dog up to succeed by catching him before he has the chance to fail and going ahead and taking him out.

It is beneficial to keep a chart of the times he goes to the bathroom so that you are always aware, or so that a pet sitter could be aware of it.

**Curing Your Dog’s Irrational Fears of Objects/People**

It’s quite possible that your dog has a fear of something, perhaps the vacuum cleaner.

I have a dog that was afraid of a TV dinner tray. It had accidentally fallen over one time and really spooked him. Actually, he had some fear associated with several different objects.

Let me take you through the steps to acclimate your dog to something like a vacuum cleaner, or most any object. In 10 seconds or less, let me spell it out. Basically, it is just clicker training; the same things we have been talking about.

Put the object in a room, perhaps a confined room, but not necessarily too small, like the bathroom, that would cause the dog to be afraid. Just have the object tucked over in the corner and bring the dog into the room. Allow the dog to roam freely around the room. Wait for the dog to look at the object, then click and reward. Wait for him to take one step closer to the object, then click and reward. Continue to coax the dog closer and closer to the object, not by pulling him toward it,
but by consistent rewarding with clicks and treats. When he gets close enough to touch the object, perhaps the next step is to get him to touch it with his paw or nose, or even just to stand near the object for a few seconds. Whatever the step, be sure to click and reward.

Once you have gotten the dog used to the object, move to a bigger room. If the object is a vacuum cleaner, turn it on. Go through the same process of bringing the dog closer and closer with clicking and rewarding. You want him to get the idea that no matter how close he gets to the object it does not hurt him, so it must be okay.

There is one possibility with turning a vacuum cleaner on. It might actually hurt your dog’s ears and if that’s the case, he will not want to stay around, but not out of fear. You might have to start with a less noisy object, like a dust-buster.

The methods are the same; the steps are your choosing.

Curing Your Dog’s Dangerous Aggression

This topic is probably the most important one that we have covered. Even if you use nothing but this section, it will have been well worth the money spent on your kit. It might even save your dog’s life. Did you know that your dog can be put to sleep if it bites someone? I certainly wouldn’t want that to happen!

If your dog already has some serious biting issues, very serious, then please take them to a professional dog behavior consultant and not one over the phone, but one that will do an in-house session. You can get a very accurate analysis of why your dog is doing this.

If you are noticing your dog’s aggressive behavior in the early stages, let’s put a stop to it right away.

Remember my friend I mentioned in an earlier topic, the one that my dog did not like? My dog would actually growl and bark very loudly at him. My friend was willing to participate, so I would put the dog on a leash. He wouldn’t attack my friend, but you could definitely tell he was not happy with his presence.

One key thing to remember… you cannot corner a dog.

I couldn’t just tie my dog up because he would lash out. But I kept him leashed and clipped, even though when someone would come to the door, the dog would bark wildly. He would do this whenever the postman came, any stranger that came to the door. But since he was on the leash, I could open the door.

Now, it helps if the person on the other side of the door knows what is going on. Have them stand there for 30 seconds. Stand with your dog and wait for
them to calm down, at least to the point where he stops barking or tugging on the leash, or any form of progress that could give you a reason to click and reward.

This can only be successful if your dog is acquainted with a clicker, so if he is not, please go back to earlier sections that explain clicker training.

Over time, and with many repetitions, this aggressive behavior can be cured by simply getting your dog to realize that if he will relax, he will get a treat. He will figure out that everything is okay. It might even work out so that eventually, you can let the person at the door offer the treat. Your dog will think, “If every stranger gives me a treat, how bad can they be?”

You could begin with just stopping the barking and go from there to work toward getting him to calm down. If you have a hyperactive dog, you might need to put some extra effort into getting him to understand what calming down means.

Put him on a leash and just observe. Wait for him to calm down by just standing very still. When you see sufficient progress, then click and reward. You can attach a ‘calm’ cue so that if your dog gets out of hand, you simply say ‘calm’ and teach him that he will get rewarded for settling down.

Again, if you already have serious biting problems, please be proactive and get the dog professional, in-house help.

**How to Train Prolonged Stays**

If you have a problem with your dog begging at dinner or you simply want to train him to have his own spot to go while you eat a meal, or even while you have to run an errand, use this technique. It is very similar to crate training and takes just a little bit of time and repetition.

If your dog has already been crate trained, this will be a lot easier to teach, especially if you did it using our methods. You simply have a designated place for your dog. It might be a pillow or rug, your bed, whatever you like.

For the sake of explanation, I’ll use a little red rug. With clicker and treats in hand and my dog in the room with my little red rug, as soon as the dog looks toward the rug I will click and toss him a treat.

When the dog takes the slightest step toward the rug, again click and reward. Every step the dog makes closer to the rug, make sure you click and reward. As in crate training, stop rewarding for previous steps or any backtracking. Only reward steps that make some progression towards the rug.
As soon the dog will stand on the rug, either give him the ‘sit’ command or wait for him to sit, click and reward. About this time you should start attaching a cue, such as ‘go to your rug’.

Now it is simply a matter of repetition. For each step click and reward. One comment, clicker training is not always about the animal getting the behavior right. It is just as much about him getting the behavior wrong and not being rewarded.

You tell your dog to go to the rug, he goes and lies down, so you click and reward. You tell him to do it again, but this time he does not go. It is important that you completely ignore him. Don’t keep trying to persuade him to go, don’t keep giving the command. You want the dog to think through the process of realizing he was getting a treat for doing what you asked, but no treat when he didn’t obey.

Let him think about the fact that not going to the rug did not earn the treat that he so dearly loves. This reinforces the training all the more.

I also want to make it clear that it is very important not only to train your dog to go to the rug, but you should start adding duration so that your dog will stay put for 30 seconds, a minute, 10, 20, 30 minutes. If you want to have a nice, quiet dinner, you don’t want a dog under your feet begging for table scraps. You want him to be nicely tucked away, being well-behaved.

Have your dog stay and leave the room for five seconds, come back. Continue this for 10 seconds, and so on, until you build up the duration the dog is staying put. Make sure you stay completely out of sight so your dog doesn’t think that he only has to hold the stay while you are in the room and as soon as you leave, get up.

**Leash Training Your Dog**

Clicker training can be very effective for leash training so that your dog is not always yanking and pulling when you are trying to take a nice walk or run.

I find it funny when I see people being pulled down the sidewalk by 200-pound dogs. But it doesn’t really look like they are having much fun. However, this problem is not that hard to cure and you can soon have the dog obeying your command.

It is very natural for your dog to want to pull on the leash. It is also not very effective to yank on a leash to get your dog to stop pulling; it actually just makes him want to pull harder. Have you ever tried to pull your dog towards something he did not want to go to; he instead just pulls harder.
It is like pulling a donkey. He is stubborn and does not want to go where you want him to. You are only fighting yourself.

I do have some quick tips on how to get around this problem. Before we talk about clicker training, you need to get your dog to pay attention to where you trying to get them to go. To do this, set up four cones or something that can create a large, imaginary square. With a 15-ft. leash, I would around the square. Then, I would let the dog get distracted and I would turn and walk fast-paced in the other direction. It would give him a little tug, but not a jerk that yanked him off his feet.

It made him yelp, but just a little nudge the other way that let him know, ‘hey, my owner has gone that way and I forgot to pay attention so he is leaving me. Now I am going to run over and pay attention.” After doing this a number of times, he got the point and all of the sudden, he was watching me.

It is important to not make eye contact with your dog during this period of time. You want the dog to realize that it was his mistake for not paying attention. Making eye contact might make him think you are punishing him by jerking the chain, and I do not advocate doing that, but I think you get the point.

During this process you will want to make the leash a little shorter and shorter, so that the dog is always paying attention and keeping his eyes on you. This will make the training easier when trying to corner with the dog. Just maneuver so that you are not always going in the same direction.

That being said, stopping leash pulling is very simple. Have the clicker, a treat, and just go out for a walk. Use a decent-sized leash and by that I mean a 4-6-ft. leash. Start walking, and as soon as the dog starts pulling, just stop and wait. It doesn’t matter if it is a minute or five minutes, wait until the dog stops pulling. Click and toss him a treat and go on. Again, if he pulls, stop and wait, click and reward. Don’t make eye contact and don’t pet him.

It won’t take very long for him to realize that if he pulls on the leash, he doesn’t get a reward. Of course, this will only go so far. You also need to reward good behavior. Try jogging for a few steps and if he doesn’t start pulling, stop, click and give him another treat.

Repeat this for longer durations in between stopping, clicking and rewarding. After awhile, you will not need to worry about it since the dog will have mastered the behavior and realize pulling is unacceptable. Hopefully, your dog will just be happy and well adjusted to the new habit.

By now, this should be a simple trick to train since your dog should fully understand clicker training.
Final Thoughts

Before I go, I want to give you a couple of final tips on training your dog which will lead you to greater success.

The first is, try changing things up during training sessions. What I mean is, train your dog in different clothing; don’t always wear the same outfit when training.

Next, incorporate distractions and train in different rooms, not right at the very beginning but once you move towards some of the more advanced phases of each step. Provide distractions such as having another dog walk by or by being within earshot and sight of neighborhood kids playing. Use everyday things that would distract your dog.

If your dog can still master the desired behaviors in the midst of these distractions, you are going to have an incredibly well-trained dog.

You can also let other people get involved in the training. Get your family and friends involved. Have them watch you do the training and get a grasp on exactly what you want them to do. Then, have others do some training so that the dog learns to accept commands from them and not just you. This could be helpful in many situations.

On a side note, it might be helpful to keep a training log so that anyone doing training knows exactly where you are in the process as far as duration or distance, etc.

Just make sure everyone is on the same page. Make sure everyone uses the same cues. You wouldn’t want to make negative progress.

Provide the best possible environment for your dog to succeed. This includes everything I have already mentioned, as well as things like different lighting, different times of day, any variables that might come into play. You will notice that you have a much happier, healthier dog and you will have built a much stronger bond.

In closing, I want to give you a resource that you may already have gotten an email about. We have conference calls with vets on a weekly basis. We will be happy to provide you the numbers to call in and get some free information on pet health.

Just by changing your dog’s diet, you can realize major differences in behavior and health, length of life, and the effects of diseases such as arthritis and allergies.

There is a key ingredient, which I will not talk about here, but I will make it available to you if you take advantage of those sessions. I hope you have enjoyed this discussion and I hope you take this information and transform your dog’s behavior in an incredibly short period of time. I look forward to hearing about your success and wish you the best of luck.