



TRAINING TIPS & TRICKS



Housetraining

- Crate training is the easiest and most effective way to teach a dog to eliminate outside. If the dog is properly introduced to the crate at an early age, many dogs learn to love spending quiet time in their crate. Other dogs never “love” the crate, but most can tolerate it. For most dogs, crate training not only helps with housetraining, but it can also protect the health of the dog and prevent destruction of household items. Some dogs may whine and bark in protest, but unless the dog is physically injuring himself, with a little time, patience and positive reinforcement, he will adjust.
- **EVERY DOG IS DIFFERENT**: Some dogs prefer solid, plastic travel crates because it feels more “den-like” and secure; others don’t like to feel confined and do better with a wire crate. Some dogs never stop barking if they can see a person, but quiet down immediately when left alone in a room; others freak out when left alone, but are fine if the crate is placed near other dogs or people. Try purchasing one of each variety of crate (wire and plastic) and placing one in the bedroom and one in the basement or other living space. Experiment with different intervals of time utilizing each crate and see which crate and which space the dog prefers. Escape artists or extreme chewers are typically more easily able to bend the bars and get out of a wire crate, so if your dog has no strong preference, plastic crates are more secure. Alternatively, try reinforcing the outside edges of the wire crate using cable ties or carabiner clips.
- **NEVER USE THE CRATE AS PUNISHMENT**: A common error novice dog owners make is to put the dog in the crate for a “time out” when the dog has a house training accident in the house. But try to think like a dog. The dog is thinking, “I have to poop. I have to poop. This person seems not to want me to poop, and if I poop, she puts me in the box I hate. So I’ll go poop where she can’t see me because I don’t want her to get mad and put me in the box.” Dogs have to poop and they need to know it is ok to poop, but that they have to poop where you show him it’s ok to poop. By putting the dog in the crate when he poops, you are sending him the message that he shouldn’t poop on the floor, he should poop in the crate. He knows he doesn’t want to poop in the crate, so he is just confused and doesn’t know what to do. You need to give him an acceptable alternative when he does a negative behavior. If you see the dog start to have a potty accident in the house, clap your hands or make any loud sound to distract him and take him immediately outside. If he resumes pottying outside, give the dog treats and praise and lots of positive reinforcement so that he knows outside is the acceptable place to potty
- **Only Correct Housetraining Accidents if the Dog is “CAUGHT IN THE ACT”**: If the dog slips away and after the fact, you discover a pile of poop or a puddle of pee in the other room, clean it up and pretend it never happened. DO NOT “rub the dog’s nose in it” or point at the poop and yell at him. Dogs do not associate the previous action of eliminating in the house with you disapproving unless you stop them in the act of eliminating in the house. Otherwise, the dog just knows you are mad, but has no idea why. In order to prevent housetraining accidents that you don’t see, NEVER let a dog that is in the process of housetraining out of your sight. If you are not watching the dog closely, put him in his crate or keep him on a leash even while in the house. Tether the dog to your chair, your wrist, or your belt so that he cannot sneak into the other room and poop while you are not looking. Also, if he starts to have a potty accident in the house, the leash is already on him enabling you to take him IMMEDIATELY outside and hope he continues out there. Each accident inside the house is not only an accident to clean up but a missed chance for positive reinforcement. The more positive reinforcement, the quicker they will catch on.
- **FEED ALL MEALS IN THE CRATE**: Feeding a dog in the crate accomplishes two things:
 - 1.) Dog will associate positive things (food) with the crate, which will make him less reluctant to go inside. You can further build this relationship by offering high value treats in the crate only.
 - 2.) Establishes a strict schedule and sets expectations: After each meal, crate the dog for about 45 minutes and then take him immediately outside. This will get him used to a strict potty schedule so that hopefully he has to go when you take him out and he learns that that is the routine to expect.
- **NEVER LET CHILDREN PLAY INSIDE A DOG’S CRATE**: The crate should be the safe place a dog feels comfortable in taking refuge (especially if he needs to take a break from little ones tugging on his tail and ears. Even the most patient dog has his limits. Respect those boundaries and teach children to respect the dog’s boundaries as well.
- **Smell is a Dog’s Most Powerful Sense**: Dogs poop where they smell that they or other dogs have pooped before. By picking up a bit of the dog’s poop and placing it outside, near the door where you want the dog to poop is a hint to let the dog know that the spot with the poop is where he should go. This may be gross, but it is highly effective. It is also important to remove as much of the smell of where he has eliminated in your house as possible. You need a cleaner that is specially formulated for biological waste (like Nature’s Miracle.) You can buy these products at any pet supply store.



TRAINING TIPS & TRICKS



Introducing Dogs & Cats

- Even if you are introducing dogs and cats that are accustomed to living with other dogs and cats, transitions are very stressful on animals. Cats and dogs are both territorial creatures and each has an individual personality. Just because a cat lived with a dog before or vice versa does not mean that introducing a new animal is guaranteed to be smooth sailing.
- If a cat has never lived with a dog before, sometimes it can take several months for the kitty to return to normal behavior. Dogs are big, loud, scary creatures which will take time for kitty to get used to (even if the dog is not behaving in a threatening manner toward the cat.) EVENTUALLY the kitty will accept the dog and everything will calm down. You'll see improvement gradually over that time, but for the cat and dog to totally ignore each other and accept living together, several months is not an unusual time expectation. As long as you are not concerned about the physical safety of the cat (ie dog is trying to attack and kill kitty) do not be overly concerned about kitty's mental health. Animals are resilient and kitty will come around eventually. It may be distressing to watch, but it's not so stressful forever.
- Make sure kitty has a space in the house that is away from the dog where kitty can go to relax and not have to worry about the dog following her at all. Putting a baby gate at the top of stairs works best or installing a "cat hole/cat door" so that the kitty can have access to a room while keeping the dog out. You should put the litter box and cat food in this place. As long as she has a sanctuary, give her time and she'll come around eventually.
- Begin introductions slowly using the following steps (the timeline after day 1 is suggested but some animals may progress faster or slower. When in doubt, remember slow and steady wins the race):
 - Day 1: Coming into a new home is a stressful and exciting experience for any dog. This is NOT the best time to introduce dog and cat because the dog is already highly stimulated. Introductions are most successful when everyone is calm and comfortable. On day one, confine kitty to one area of the home and dog to another completely separate area of the home. Rub a towel or blanket on kitty and place it where the dog sleeps. Rub a towel on the dog and place it where the kitty sleeps. This will get both animals used to the smell of the other. Give everyone 24 hours to calm down.
 - Day 2: Introduce cat and dog on opposite sides of a door by letting them sniff each other under the door or crate the dog and allow kitty into the room so they can see each other and kitty can explore the dog safely.
 - Days 3-7: Keep the leash on the dog at all times in the house for the next week or two. This is only temporary but keeping the dog on leash, accomplishes two things. First, it is a precaution in case the dog goes to chase the cat, you have the ability to correct him and prevent him from harming the cat. Also, tethering reduces a dog's urge to react to the cat because it makes him focus on the person and not the cat. If the dog barks at the kitty, stares intently at the kitty, or starts to chase after the kitty, give him a vocal correction "LEAVE IT" in a firm voice, grab the leash and walk him in the opposite direction of the cat. Take the dog out of the room, ask him to sit, stand with him and wait for him to calm down, then give him a treat and let him accompany you back into the room. If he starts looking for or barking at the cat again, repeat until you walk back in the room and he is calm, or interested in something else.
 - Day 7+: You can also practice the command "WATCH ME." Point to your eye and encourage the dog to sit and make eye contact with you. When he sits and makes eye contact, say WATCH ME and give him a treat. Once he has learned this command, you can transition away from using the leash and if he starts paying too much attention to the cat, you just say "WATCH ME", and refocus his attention on you instead of the cat.
- Even if cat and dog interaction is going very well, NEVER leave them alone together for at least several weeks. Animals act differently when we are around than when we are not and you don't want to risk someone getting hurt when no one is around to help. Keep cats and dogs in different rooms while you are out or crate the dog.
- For the lifetime of both pets, make sure cat food and kitty litter are in a place inaccessible to the dog. Not only is it important for cats to have a private place of their own, but many dogs enjoy eating cat poop from the kitty litter. In addition to being really gross, if you use clay kitty litter, it is very hazardous for dogs to ingest clay because it can cause intestinal obstructions.



TRAINING TIPS & TRICKS



Introducing Dogs & Dogs

- Even if you are introducing dogs that are accustomed to living with other dogs, transitions are very stressful on animals. Dogs are territorial creatures and each has an individual personality. Just because a dog lived with a dog before does not mean that introducing a new animal is guaranteed to be smooth sailing.
- Dogs that get along well with other dogs at dog parks and other public locations also may not be so welcoming of another dog entering their home. Sometimes the new dog is seen from the beginning as an intruder and sometimes a dog starts out ok with a temporary “house guest” but after some time, jealousies develop and conflict may arise. Every animal is different.
- You will need two adults to safely introduce two new dogs. Recruit a friend, relative or neighbor to help you. Begin introductions slowly using the following steps (the timeline after day 1 is suggested but some animals may progress faster or slower. When in doubt, remember slow and steady wins the race):
 - Day 1: The very first introduction of two dogs should be on neutral territory. Ideally, it is best to select a parking lot, yard, or park area which is not a place that the resident dog regularly spends time (off the usual path you go for daily walks.) Keeping both dogs on leash (DO NOT USE RETRACTABLE LEASHES), allow the dogs to greet by walking in a circle so they meet “nose to butt” and allow them to sniff each others’ rear ends. Next, take both dogs on a long walk around the neighborhood side by side. Finally, walk the dogs back to your home, allowing the resident dog to enter the home first. Coming into a new home is a stressful and exciting experience for any dog. This is NOT the best time to proceed with the introduction because the dogs are already highly stimulated. Introductions are most successful when everyone is calm and comfortable. Take a break. On day one, confine each dog to a separate area of the home. Give the new dog some time to get used to the new surroundings and to chill in his crate. Rub a towel or blanket on each dog and place it where the dogs sleep. This will get both animals used to the smell of the other. Give everyone 24 hours to calm down.
 - Day 2: Introduce the dogs on opposite sides of a door by letting them sniff each other under the door or crate the new dog and allow resident dog into the room so they can see each other and resident dog can explore the new dog safely. Feed the dogs on opposite sides of the door so that they associate the smell of the other dog with the positive experience of food. If these encounters go well, and you have a fenced yard, you can take them outside for some supervised playtime. Leave the leashes on both dogs, but let them go. Have a hose, bucket of water, or strong spray bottle on hand just in case the playing gets too rough and turns into a fight. If the dogs begin playing too rough, start with a verbal command, “Enough” or “Leave it” in a firm voice. Have each adult grab hold of the leash and walk the dogs away from each other until both have calmed down. If the verbal command is not successful and the dogs are too entangled to safely grab the leashes, dog fights can be interrupted with water from the hose, bucket or spray bottle. NEVER PLACE YOUR HANDS OR BODY IN THE MIDDLE OF A DOG FIGHT. If a dog fight does occur, make sure that no medical attention is required for either dog and contact us so that we can recommend a professional trainer to assist you with future introductions.
 - Days 3-7: If the outside encounter has gone well, you may begin to integrate both dogs inside the home. PICK UP ALL BONES, TOYS, TREATS, AND FOOD BOWLS BEFORE BRINGING BOTH DOGS INTO THE HOME TOGETHER. ONLY ALLOW TOYS, FOOD, AND BONES UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION AND INITIALLY ONLY WHILE ONE DOG IS CRATED. Keep the leash on the new dog at all times in the house for the next week or two. This is only temporary but keeping the dog on leash, accomplishes two things. First, it is a precaution in case the dogs start to growl or fight, you have the ability to correct the dog and prevent them from harming each other. Also, tethering reduces a dog’s urge to react to the other dog because it makes him focus on the person as his leader. If the dog barks or growls at the other dog, stares intently at the other dog, or starts to “hump” the other dog, give him a vocal correction "LEAVE IT" in a firm voice, grab the leash and walk him in the opposite direction of the other dog. Take the dog out of the room, ask him to sit, stand with him and wait for him to calm down, then give him a treat and let him accompany you back into the room. If he starts looking for or barking at the cat again, repeat until you walk back in the room and he is calm, or interested in something else.
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- Even if dog interactions are going very well, NEVER leave dogs alone together for at least several weeks. Animals act differently when we are around than when we are not and you don’t want to risk someone getting hurt when no one is around to help. Keep dogs in different rooms while you are out or crate one or both dogs.



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Resource Guarding

- Resource guarding (when a dog exhibits a protective or aggressive behavior around food, toys, treats, or even people) is a very common behavior in rescue dogs because they often have not received proper nutrition and come into rescue literally starving. In the past, they may have had to fight to protect their food from other animals in the shelter or as stray dogs on the street. Dogs may even see people who are kind to them as a resource worth guarding because they have not had a person to “call their own” before. Typically, as dogs begin to realize that food now comes at regular intervals and is not in short supply, resource guarding behaviors resolve on their own with time. Meanwhile, it is important to keep children and other dogs safe around dogs with resource guarding tendencies and to avoid reinforcing negative behaviors.
- Many people are under the impression that the best way to correct resource guarding behaviors is to “show the dog who’s boss” by taking food away while he’s eating or sticking your hand in the bowl, but this will only make the dog MORE prone to resource guard. Think about this from the dog’s perspective. Imagine you haven’t eaten all day and you sit down at the table to eat a nice big hamburger. All of a sudden, some guy you barely know comes over and snatches the burger out of your hands. Your instinctive reaction would likely be to grab it back and say, “What do you think you are doing? That’s mine!” A dog has no hands, so he would grab it back with his teeth and growl which in doggy language means, “What do you think you are doing? That’s mine!” **WHEN A DOG IS EATING, LEAVE THE DOG ALONE.**
- Establish a regular feeding schedule twice a day, every day at the same time. Dogs thrive on consistency. If they know when food is coming, they will not worry that every meal could be their last. If the dog does not eat all of the food within 10 minutes, pick up the bowl and put the food away until the next meal time. **DO NOT LEAVE FOOD ON THE GROUND ALL DAY.**
- Teach the dog the “DROP” command: **NEVER TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF A DOG’S MOUTH BY FORCE.** Instead, “trade” the dog for something more valuable. If the dog has a shoe, pillow, bone, piece of trash, or whatever other inappropriate thing in his mouth, take a piece of cheese or other high value treat or toy, show the dog that you have it and wait for him to drop what is in his mouth. As he drops the item, let him take the more valuable treat as you pick up the item you are trying to retrieve. As you make the exchange, say “DROP.” Eventually, the dog will learn to drop items when you tell him whether you have a treat or not.
- **TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL:**
 - **LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE: NEVER ALLOW CHILDREN TO INTERACT WITH A DOG WHILE HE IS SLEEPING, EATING, OR CHEWING A TOY.**
 - **NEVER LET CHILDREN PLAY INSIDE A DOG’S CRATE:** The crate should be the safe place a dog feels comfortable in taking refuge (especially if he needs to take a break from little ones tugging on his tail and ears). Even the most patient dog has his limits. Respect those boundaries and teach children to respect the dog’s boundaries as well.
 - **WHEN GIVING A DOG A TREAT:** Instruct children always to place treats in the middle of their flat, open palm
 - **WHEN A DOG IS JUMPING UP:** Instruct children to cross their arms and turn their back to the dog
 - **CLOSE DOORS BEHIND YOU:** Most of us don’t live in a Donna Reid world. It’s tough to keep a house neat and tidy everywhere, all the time. Encourage all family members to keep bedroom and other doors closed and allow the dog access only to the main living space. Instruct children to keep toys, socks, shoes and other items, off the floor in the main living space and keep clutter confined to area the dog has no access to. In addition to teaching your children good housekeeping and preventing the destruction of your child’s favorite teddy bear this will prevent the dog from swallowing ingesting inappropriate items which can lead to expensive surgeries and death.

If you have any difficulties or questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Dogs XL. The sooner we know about the problem, the easier it is to resolve. Dogs XL volunteers have years of experience interacting with dogs and we’ve learned a lot along the way. We are happy to share information about what has worked for us. For more serious concerns, Dogs XL can also assist you in recommending a certified canine behaviorist in your area. Thank you for choosing rescue!