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Getting and Keeping Your Dog's Attention – the Key to Effective Training

By Justine Kay

Getting your dog's attention is one of the most important things you can do to accelerate all other training skills. And if, once you've got it, you can keep that attention, then you're really going to make some fast progress. Keeping your dog's attention is essential in competition work, in the obedience ring for example, but also invaluable in everyday life.

Okay, so we've established the advantages, now we need to look at how to attain this goal. It isn't necessarily going to be easy to keep your dog's attention, and some breeds are certainly more difficult than others but here are some tips on how to achieve this with most dogs.

Use the sit command and a tasty treat. Your dog must already have learned this command and it must be solid i.e. ½ the dog must understand what is required of him and respond quickly to the command. You can read my article on teaching your dog the sit command if you haven't already taught him this.

So, give the sit command, asking your dog to sit in heel position, and use his favourite tasty treat to encourage him to look upwards at your face. Praise him when he focuses his attention on you, give him the treat and release him from the sit command. Do this again and again, each time increasing the time where he is looking and concentrating on your face. You want to have his attention, so he is responsive to your next command.

Soon, your dog will automatically look at you when he sits, because he becomes accustomed to being praised and given a treat. As with all training, you can gradually replace the treat with praise, just giving him an occasional treat to maintain his interest. Whenever you are not giving your dog your undivided attention when he is sitting to heel and looking at you, remember to give your release command. He will quickly lose interest if you are busy, and you need to continually reinforce and reward this behaviour.

Once you and your dog are working well with this in a quiet location, you can gradually add other distractions, increasing these in small increments to allow your dog to adjust. Praise him when he gets it right, give the release command and play with your dog i.e. ½ he must know when he has done well, and training should be a happy, pleasurable pursuit for both of you.

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The next step is to extend this principle to heeling and other obedience training. Using the same procedure as above, gradually teach your dog that it is to his advantage to watch you, to be looking at you for your next command, during all obedience training. The key to this is to build his attention span by tiny increments and praise him when he has done well. Never get frustrated or angry with your dog if he loses attention. This will be detrimental to his training. Simply praise him when he gets it right and make sure, at the beginning, that the treat you choose is his absolute favourite. Praise, fun and patience are the three things that will gradually build obedience in any dog.

Justine Kay is an experienced dog owner and trainer. She is the webmistress at

Dog Training Tips

where she writes dog training articles and discusses the intricacies of dog psychology.

Dog Training Tips

By Fayola Peters

Dog training requires simple persistence to be a successful and delightful experience for you and your dog. Here are 8 dog training tips to guide you along the way.

1. Dog Training Tips – Get your dog's attention

Before you can start training your dog you first need to get its attention. You can do this by talking to him and offering him a small treat.

2. Dog Training Tips – Use the correct dog training supplies

If you have a well behaved dog a six foot training lead and a regular buckle collar will do. However if your dog is uncontrollable you should use a training collar. For the right collar size measure the dog's neck and add 2 inches.

3. Dog Training Tips – For safety in vehicles

Before you introduce your dog to the inside of a moving vehicle you should teach him the 'down!' and 'stay!' commands. This ensures that he spends the ride on the floor of the vehicle.

4. Dog Training Tips – Elimination

When your dog goes to go it goes to go. To prevent your dog from getting busy on the carpet you should train him to eliminate on command.

5. Dog Training Tips – Praise

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Always praise your dog when he learns a new command.

6. Dog Training Tips – Reprimand

Do not hit your dog! Any time your dog is engaging in bad behavior, use the opportunity to teach him the 'stop!' or 'no!' command. Using the 'stay!' command can also be effective in these situations.

7. Dog Training Tips – Play with your dog

This will help in building the bond between you and your dog.

8. Dog Training Tips – Do some dog training everyday

Don't rush dog training. Teach your dog one command at a time and don't move on until he gets it. A little dog training everyday is all that's needed.

Well that's it for my dog training tips. Enjoy training your dog and remember that it takes simple persistence.

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(

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Do you want to be able to take your dog anywhere, and KNOW that he'll listen to you... even if tempted by another dog, a cat, or even a piece of food??? Then check out: "Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer: An Insider's Guide To The Most Jealously Guarded Dog Training Secrets In History!" By Adam G. Katz, Owner of South Bay K-9 Academy and Dog Problems.com. For more information, go to:

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