



# THE DOGGY DIGEST

## TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

### The Day of the Doggy Door Dasher

As my husband and I were about to leave our house with our dogs, we did something completely normal for us. We asked our dogs to sit, and stay right outside of our front door, then continued walking to the truck. As we walked to the truck to open the door to release our two dogs from their sit-stay, a lady who was walking by exclaimed, "That is amazing!" Our boys promptly ignored her and jumped into the truck. We said our thanks and got into the truck ourselves. We hardly think of these behaviors from Rotto and Muri as 'amazing', but upon contemplation, they really are. However, at Mutts With Manners, we always tell people, you will get out of training, what you put into it. This skill set is especially important for my family, and I need to know that I can trust that my dogs will do as I ask. It is potentially dangerous.

The day of the doggy door dasher is over. Waiting at thresholds is a skill set that all dogs should learn. This could be as simple as not walking over the threshold of your yard when the gate is left open, or as complex as staying in your vehicle with the door open in front of the dog park. Either way, these easy steps should help you begin the learning process. Knowing 'stay' is not important for teaching this behavior.

Let's teach our dogs that an open door is not an open invitation to the great outdoors.

1. Put your dog on a leash to limit his choices and to stay safe, just in case he does door dash. Safety for people and dogs always come first.
2. Choose a door that has little to no excitement attached to it. For example, the bedroom door. In the end, this behavior will generalize to all other doors and thresholds. (Front, back, side, sliding glass, French, garage, gates, car doors, etc.)
3. Set your dog up for success by minimizing distractions, hence the reason we are choosing a boring door such as the bedroom door.
4. Open the door an inch and reward for anything close to what you are looking for. This could look like sitting, backing away from the door, or eye contact or attention to the handler. You may also consider reminding your dog what you prefer, for example, I prefer my dogs to sit. They can watch butterflies until I release them, as long as they are sitting.
5. Open the door another inch and reward for ignoring the door. Repeat this step until your door is completely open.
6. Repeat all of the above steps with other doors in your house, lastly the front door, or whichever door is most exciting for your dog.

The highest reward for your dog is getting to go through the door with you. During the training process, if your dog shows interest in the door or doorway, slowly and carefully close the door and start over. When you start over, work your way back to where your dog was still successful in ignoring the doorway. Hang here for a few more repetitions if need be before moving on. He obviously needed more time at this step. Repeat this training at all doors that lead to the outside. Practice at safe doorways without the leash once you are confident your dog can be successful. When practicing this in leash-free zones, be very, very careful not to ask for more than your dog is actually capable of doing.

This training should give you peace of mind and keep your dog safe. Using a leash or long line is always a good idea, and is the law in most cities.

**Until next time, keep it pawstive!**