



# THE DOGGY DIGEST

## TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

### **The Magic of Management**

Are you staring into what seems like an impossible dog training feat? Every step you and Fido take forward, does it feel like five steps are taken back? If your dog keeps engaging in undesired behaviors, this article is for you. Let's get some management underway before the crazy howlidays get here!

Dog training and management are two different concepts. Since they are usually used together they can often be confused. Dog training is an active process where learning takes place, which either increases or decreases a behavior or event through consequences. With training, the dog is learning how to do something, or how to stop doing something. Basic obedience and not jumping are two easy examples.

Management is different from training in that the dog is not learning something new but unwanted behavior is being prevented from occurring by "managing" the dog's environment. Using this method there is not any true learning taking place. For example, if you remove the baby gate, once it is gone the dogs can just walk into the kitchen or baby room. The same is true if you remove the harness or head collar you have been using; your dog will probably not heel nicely by your side and begin to pull again.

This is where the two complement each other very nicely. For good training to occur, using positive consequences, the behaviors we like should be reinforced through a food reward, toy, or praise. The behavior we do not like should be prevented and not reinforced. Management is how we prevent these unwanted behaviors. An Easy Walk harness will prevent or reduce the dog's ability to pull on the leash. If this is all you ever do, your dog will learn when this tool is being used pulling cannot occur. If training takes place while the behavior is being managed, then you can slowly begin phasing out the training tool and eventually walk your dog on just a normal collar and leash. Training has taught the dog where you would like for him to walk (by your side), or at the very least, not to pull.

Risk analysis can be helpful when determining what form of management will be taken and if it is temporary or permanent. For example, a poster board taped over a picture window to keep your dog from barking at things passing by is fine temporarily, but you should also be able to enjoy your window as well. Over time, training can help modify this unwanted behavior and an incompatible behavior can be taught to the dog. However, in dogs who resource guard food from each other, management may be the safest option due to how serious the altercations can be. Some behaviors are very difficult to counter condition and can take a very long time. When risks of relapses are high in some circumstances, risk analysis is a part of the problem-solving process.

Behavior management is an important part of any dog training program. It is an important tool in preventing unwanted behavior while training is taking place and helps you set your dog up for success in the training program. While management is important to any complete training program, it is rarely the sole solution. Over the next few months, we will be exploring how management plays a role in annoying situations like excessive barking, counter surfing, and jumping.

If you have put off training, get with us on our upcoming classes, or book a private lesson.

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