

ASK OUR VETERINARIANS



This time of year--while it's cold and snowy and you're stuck inside--it's the perfect time to work with your puppies and dogs on basic training. Teaching them to sit, stay, give paw and lie down are simple, primary commands which create a foundation for future behavior modification.

Remember the phrase "Reward the good and ignore the bad" and you'll have one of the most important concepts of training. First, set them up for success. Give a strong, short verbal command so it's easy to understand ("Sit", "Stay", "Down", etc). Also, be consistent. Make sure the whole family is on the same page with training so you aren't giving mixed signals. Second, dogs need immediate reinforcement when learning a behavior. As your dog performs the command, give them a treat and praise. If instead they respond by jumping on you, turn away and give them no attention until they've calmed down. Your reward not working? Find out what does. Maybe they prefer a different type of treat, or belly rubs instead of food, or they really want that ball. Not all rewards have to be food. Finally, BE PATIENT. They will eventually learn the command. While most puppies, and even adult dogs, can absorb things like sponges it still takes time and repetition. The other advantage of training your dog is that it is a great bonding experience. So, enjoy the time you spend with your dog and the benefits that come with it!

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