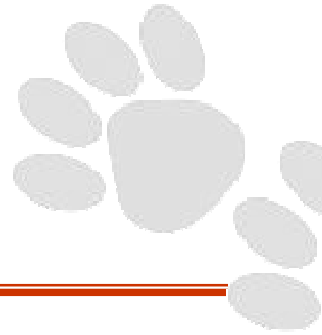




# SAN TAN CANINE TRAINING NEWSLETTER

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## Why training and happiness go hand-in-hand

Many people don't realize that the same parenting principles that keep us safe and helped us learn, grow and shape our behaviors as children also work with dogs. All unwanted behaviors in dogs can be relieved by applying some good, proactive parenting skills.

Good parenting is all about maintaining health and safety, setting realistic goals, being consistent, using a nonviolent discipline, stimulating mental and physical growth with play and exercise, and making sure your dog has quiet time and a place to get away from it all.

### TOP 7 DOG PARENTING TIPS

1. Take care of his health – Successful training depends on you and your dog's developing skills; however, his health must always be first and foremost. Make an appointment with your vet to ensure your dog has a clean bill of health.
2. Use restraint and confinement – Restraining means putting a dog on a leash or cable. Confining means placing him behind a barrier such as a baby gate, exercise pen, fence or dog run. Think of a parent holding a child by the hand. Until the child becomes responsible, he or she must be protected. Similarly, until your dog is reliable and no longer running into the street, chewing up everything in the house, or eliminating on floors and carpets, management is required.
3. Have realistic expectations – Older or larger dogs can't always do what younger or smaller ones can do, and vice versa. Train at your dog's individual learning rate and take his physical and emotional abilities into account.
4. Install routines and consistency – Being consistent includes establishing daily routines. A dog's temperament and his ability to handle stress are directly related to his ability to "predict the future". If you feed your dog at set times, play and walk at set times, groom and massage at set times, he will learn to relax and remain calm at other times.

This doesn't mean you should become a prisoner to a schedule or that spontaneity is lost; dogs have to learn to roll with life's vagaries just as we do. It simply means that doing some things routinely through the day can dramatically improve his stress management skills.

Inconsistent human behavior results in sloppy and inconsistent behavior from the dog. A good example is getting a dog to "stay". For example, don't say "stay" then walk out the door without releasing the dog. The dog will quickly realize he can get up whenever he wants because there's no one around to tell him otherwise. It's important to give a clear signal when asking for a behavior – and another clear signal to complete

it. "Stay" must always be linked with a release signal such as "okay". Also, every family member needs to use the same signals. If everyone isn't consistent, the dog won't be either.

5. Give him exercise and employment – Effective training includes providing your dog with sufficient exercise and employment. There are two times during the day when your dog's afterburners kick in and you'll see him running and sliding across the kitchen floor, jumping and bumping into you and the furniture, chewing, stealing and more. This happens early in the morning and up to around 11 a.m. and again in the early evening between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. If you don't give your dog something to do to redirect this energy, he will find something to do on his own. Employment is important because it not only provides stimulation but also promotes and develops a sense of self, purpose and pride. The objective of giving your dog a job is to establish yourself as boss. When you become his employer, you tell him when and where he should do all these behaviors...or not. And with that leadership role established, everyone lives happily ever after.
6. Incorporate play and discipline – Having fun and playing with your dog are the cornerstones to developing the happiest, healthiest relationship possible. All training is a game and all behaviors are tricks. If it's not fun for you, it is not fun for your dog. Discipline means setting boundaries and enforcing rules. It does not mean using physical punishment. The answer lies in learning the difference between correcting the behavior and correcting the dog. The deal you make with your dog includes a promise of no hitting, kicking, shocking, pinning, or jerking. However, the dog must earn everything he wants. So rewards such as affection, tug games, fetch, going for a walk, getting on the furniture, getting to sniff on a walk, and so on, are given in abundance if the dog earns them. It's simple. Teach your dog to sit, lie down or stay or walk by your side, and if he does these things, he gets everything he wants.
7. Give him quiet time – Imagine constantly have your senses bombarded with the sights, sounds, touches and smells of the world. If you didn't have the opportunity to get away from it all now and then, you might get really grumpy. It's important to keep training sessions short, and play times structured for duration and intensity.

Dogs are supposed to relieve stress, not increase it. Incorporating and practicing these seven suggestions will ensure a safe, happy, lifelong relationship of peace with your number one fan – your dog!

Resource: *Animal Wellness*

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