



OHLONE HUMANE SOCIETY

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Obedience Training

One of the best things you can do for yourself and your dog is to obedience train him. Obedience training doesn't solve all behavior problems, but it is the foundation for solving just about any problem. Training opens up a line of communication between you and your dog. Effective communication is necessary to teach your dog what it is you want him to do. You can teach him: "stay" (don't bolt out the door); "sit" (don't jump up on the visitors); "off" (don't chew the furniture); or "quiet" (enough barking already!).

Training should be fun and rewarding for you and the dog. It can enrich your relationship and make living together more enjoyable. A well-trained dog is more confident and can more safely be allowed greater freedom than an untrained dog.

Some people debate whether or not it is possible to train puppies, while others ask if it is possible to teach an old dog new tricks. The answer to both questions is a definite YES. Whatever the age of your dog, the right time to begin training is NOW!

Enroll in a local dog training class to learn the basics. Then most training can and should be done in your own home. It is best to start teaching your dog in a familiar area with as few distractions as possible. Once your dog has a clear understanding of what you want him to do, then it is important that you practice in all places you expect to have control over him. Practice in every room in your house, in your yard, in your car, in your friend's house, at the park, at the beach; practice everywhere and anywhere you and your dog go together.

Socialization

Puppyhood is a crucial time in a dog's life. This is a time when experiences have a major effect on shaping the dog's future personality. One of the most important aspects of a dog's personality is how he interacts with other animals and people. Give your puppy plenty of opportunity to meet a variety of people during his impressionable, formative weeks. If he is expected to get along with other animals, make a point of introducing him to them while he is growing up. However, until your pup has received his full course of puppy shots, don't allow him on the streets, and only introduce him to dogs that have perfect vaccination records; otherwise he may get one of the more serious canine diseases.

During early puppyhood, it is important for you to keep an eye open for any signs of shyness or fearfulness. A little socialization during puppyhood will go a long way to bolster the dog's confidence. Don't delay. With problems such as shyness, the older the dog, the greater the challenge. A dog that has not had the benefit of a good early environment is not a lost cause. However, the amount of time, energy and patience required to train him will be much greater.

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