

inappropriate chewing and separation anxiety

dog training basics

Training a pet takes time, understanding, patience and consistency. Here are a few of the more common training challenges pet parents of dogs face, and some suggestions for working with them.

How training works:

Proper training is essential for a long, happy and safe relationship with your dog, setting the foundation to ensure your dog stays physically fit, mentally alert, socially engaged and emotionally happy. To make dog training an enjoyable and fulfilling activity, a great choice is to use a positive reinforcement approach that is rewards-based, fun and effective.

Dog training based on using positive reinforcement helps pet parents understand how dogs think, learn and communicate. In turn, the pet parents will understand how to encourage and reward appropriate and polite dog behaviors for real life situations. This builds and nurtures the bond between the pet parent and their dog.

It is scientifically proven that animals will learn a new behavior faster and more successfully if they are allowed to voluntarily participate in the learning process and are rewarded for correct behaviors. Families have the best relationships with their dogs if they act as kind, benevolent influences for the family and help their dogs understand their role in the household. Dogs feel safest and most confident knowing their pet parents are making the decisions and setting boundaries. Puppies that work for all the good things in life are more confident, attentive, polite, respectful and connected to their family.



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

Inappropriate chewing:

Many dogs love to chew. It is as natural as barking or digging. Puppies, like young children, explore the world with their mouths. Dogs between six and 12 months old are getting their adult teeth and chew to relieve teething pain and itching gums. Adult dogs chew for a variety of reasons: boredom, loneliness or just because it's fun.

Teaching your dog to gnaw on appropriate items while preventing them from inflicting serious damage to your home can protect both your dog and your possessions.

When you catch your pooch in the act, take the item away. Teach them to bring things to you and reward them for that. If you yell and chase your dog it will become a game of keep-away. Give them something they're allowed to chew on instead. Praise your dog when they start to chew on the proper toy.

Your dog may chew out of anxiety while you are gone, and may unfortunately choose an inappropriate item, such as the couch. When you leave, crate your dog when you aren't able to supervise activity. Provide special chew treats that your dog is only allowed to enjoy while in the crate.

There is no point in punishing your dog once the damage is done. The damage may have been done hours ago, and your dog will have no idea what you are so upset about. Your dog will learn that when you come home you are mad, and they'll start cowering and looking guilty even when they haven't done anything wrong. Be sure your dog gets adequate exercise every day and plenty of time with you, even if it is just lying at your feet. Boredom, loneliness and excess energy often trigger destructive chewing. Keep a regular routine. Provide your dog with lots of acceptable chew toys. Try rotating out chew toys to keep interest high.

Separation anxiety:

Does your dog hate to be left alone? Is your dog frantic to get to you when left outside? Are you unable to leave your dog alone in another room? Separation anxiety is an emo-

tional disturbance where your dog is frantic when left alone, even for short periods of time.

Start to wean your dog from constant attention by limiting physical contact. Work with your dog so they have to earn your attention. Gradually teach your dog to sit happily across the room from you.

Teach your dog to relax alone by putting them in a room where they are comfortable and offering them a toy or puzzle to distract them from your leaving the room. Wait a short period of time and reenter the room with your dog for the first couple of minutes. You do not want to enter the room if your dog is whining or scratching at the door, so to be successful, start out with only a couple of minutes and shorten the length of time you are absent from the room if necessary.

Crate train your dog so they will be in a safe, confined place while you are gone. Your dog will feel safe and can relax. Start by teaching your dog to be in the crate when you are there, while you come and go from the room a number of times.

When you leave or come home, don't make a big fuss over your dog. Ignore your dog until they calm down, then a quiet hello and a brief pat will do. When you leave, just go... no good-bye or anything. Practice going through your getting-ready-to-leave routine without going anywhere. Pick up your keys, purse, jacket, etc., and ignore your dog. Walk to the door and then turn and come right back in, ignoring your dog. Soon those visual cues will not have meaning and your dog will not react to them.

Leave a TV or radio on so the house doesn't seem so empty. Classical music can help, too. Dog training classes will also improve your dog's confidence. If all else fails, work with a behaviorist and ask your veterinarian for recommendations.

Give the solutions presented here plenty of time to work. It takes several weeks for a dog to learn a new behavior pattern and make it a habit. A few weeks invested in training will

result in many happy years with your well-adjusted companion.

Ask a store partner about Positive Dog Training classes, workshops and seminars.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, contact your veterinarian.