



## NEW DOG OWNER TRAINING PROGRAM

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# HAND FEEDING AND TRAINING

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*This information is intended as a general guide only*

If your dog is pushy, bossy, or rude, hard to motivate, disinterested, or has its own agenda (or even if it isn't), hand feeding your dog for a short time during the initial stages of training will improve your relationship.

### **Why Hand feed my Dog?**

From the day your puppy was born, his mother controlled a resource that kept him alive: food. When mum appeared, so did dinner. When mum left, so did dinner. It was critical that the pups knew where she was at all times and that the litter remained close to her. They would die if they didn't. Puppies are careful not to bite mum too hard or act disrespectfully to her, because if they did she would leave abruptly - and so would their life line.

Hand feeding your dog for a short time means that every morsel your dog eats throughout the day should come from its leader- you.

Hand feeding will improve your dogs:

- Work ethic
- Manners around food
- Regard for your leadership
- Ability to drop everything and come when called.

Rationing meals and making delivery contingent on a selected behaviour increases value of the reward and your importance in the dog's life. Suddenly your dog's world revolves around you - he's looking for ways to please you instead of demanding what he wants for free. He WANTS to work! He WISHES you'd call him!

## **Not forever, but to set the stage and get the training**

**ball rolling...** For the first week of training (or longer if you have a hard to motivate or bossy dog) stop feeding your dog from a bowl and use the dog's entire day's ration for short and frequent training sessions throughout the day. At the end of the day whatever is left in the container can be fed in the dog's bowl - but be aware that this amount reflects just how little training you did that day! In the weeks to come you will gradually use less food in training and will go back to regularly scheduled meals, but you must still deduct the amount of food that you will use in daily training sessions from what goes in your dog's bowl so you don't create a fat dog.

**Measure out the day's ration each morning and put it in a container and leave it in plain view or put it in a bum bag or pocket and carry it with you. This will:**

- **Make sure you make time to practice!**
- **Keep you from over or under feeding.**



## **The following will upset the balance of your training and relationship – avoid:**

- Free feeding - a full bowl on the floor all the time
- Responding to begging or bossy barking -don't train when you are eating- no food from your plate.
- Doling out goodies (and attention) for just being cute.
- Letting the dog dictate when it needs to be fed, played with, petted, and played with - and when it's through. That's your job!

## **Food is not free**

You control the food and hence the behaviour that earns it. Reward, don't bribe. The food appears AFTER the dog has earned it.

- Don't show the dog what you have to offer before giving a command. (You may show him what he missed if he doesn't and then leave or ignore him!)
- Always call the dog for a training session when he isn't bugging you - don't let him decide when it's time. Polite dogs get to work! Work will become reinforcing in itself!
- Sometimes call the dog when it is engaged in doing something else but only if you are sure he will respond. If he doesn't, don't bribe him. Run away, play with a toy, and become more interesting than what he was doing at the time. NO NAGGING. Never call him to do something he finds unpleasant.
- Give a simple command or two and then dismiss him - don't respond to impolite pestering to continue. Gradually call him away from more interesting activities as his responses become more reliable. This is how you teach him to come no matter what!

## **Food rewards and the picky eater**

If your dog is a fussy eater, reluctant to take food from your hand or has to take it off and examine it to make sure you aren't trying to poison her, try putting her on a 'hand feeding' regime to increase her desire and motivation for the food. Instead of feeding her from her bowl, measure her day's ration into a plastic bag and tuck it in your pocket. Randomly call and have her sit and give her three or four pieces of kibble and then send her away "all done" and ignore her. If you offer it and she declines, fine. Wait awhile and call her again and make a big whoop de do and offer her another three or four pieces of kibble like you are giving her gold. It's her choice if she doesn't want them, don't beg or try and cajole her into eating. Probably by tomorrow, she'll be taking them more readily and by day three of turning down more than she eats, she may be really excited about those few pieces of kibble!

## **In summary**

Using hand feeding in your initial stages of training is a great way to encourage attention from those dogs that seem to have selective hearing, or simply ignore the owner. The more you train your dog and interact with him in an appropriate way the easier it is to be able to change undesirable behaviour to desirable behaviour.