

## Impulse Control for Dogs

Begin by realizing that your dog's entire genetic makeup screams "take IT NOW". De-installing that takes diligence and repetition. With several impulse control exercises and a general adherence to the 'rules of engagement' you can teach your dog that patience is a virtue.

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:

If you give your dog something he likes/wants while he is doing a behavior YOU dislike [barking, jumping, whining] you are increasing the likelihood the dog will repeat that behavior in that situation and others in the future.

#### YOU MAY BE INCREASING UNWANTED BEHAVIOR IF:

- You are fixing your dog's dinner as he jumps excitedly at the counter and barks or whines.
- When you approach your dog's kennel or baby gated area, he is jumping or standing up on his hind legs while you approach and is jumping WHEN you let him out.
- When your dog barks in the kennel, you approach it and say "hey, quiet!"
- When the dog jumps up you either
  1. push him off gently/firmly and say "off"
  2. pet him 'sometimes'-after all, he's been alone ALL day.

In ALL of the above scenarios, your dog's undesired and impulsive behavior is being rewarded. Let's examine how.

Simply LOOKING at your dog when he barks, whines or jumps, is giving him attention. Most dogs will accept any attention whether positive or negative over NO ATTENTION. This is often why when we "THINK" we are punishing a behavior, it isn't working. A much better approach to jumping, whining and barking is to ignore it or cease giving them what they want until the stop [even momentarily] the behavior you dislike.

For whining/barking/jumping at food, simply say "sorry", and walk away from the counter [be sure he cannot scavenge the food from the counter himself], until the dog ceases the yucky behavior, you can approach the counter as soon as he is quiet and relaxed, but you must STOP again if he jumps/barks. It may take several repetitions of this until your dog realizes he must sit/stand quietly while you fix his food if he'd like you to continue.

The more of a quick response YOU can give based on his behavior, the more quickly and easily he will learn. Think of yourself as giving feedback by being a Jekyll/Hyde sort of trainer.

### SAMPLE EXERCISES TO CALM AND CONTROL YOUR PUP

- Hold a treat about 1 foot above your pup's head. When he sits begin lowering the treat. If he jumps for it, snatch it away until four paws are on the floor, and when he sits begin lowering it. Imagine his REAR END is controlling whether or not you lower the treat. Repeat moving the treat up and down until the dog holds it's rear end down until you can place the treat on the floor and take your hand off it for a brief moment. If the dog pops up to get it before you release him, grab it back or cover it with your hand until he backs off and sits again. Release the dog with "OK, get it"; Repeat with ALL treats, toys and chew bones.
- When your dog is tethered, baby gated or kenneled, approach based on his sitting/quiet behavior, the idea is to teach him the way to make you move forward is by being quiet/calm. If he barks, whines or jumps, you immediately stop moving and take a step backward, wait until he sits and begin moving forward again and repeat.
- Hold a handful of treats in your fist. Practice squatting down on the floor. If dog jumps, or paws you, immediately stand up. Repeat until dog DOESN'T jump on you. Give the dog a treat, move to a new location and practice again. This one is a little hard on the knees but well worth it.
- Practice the same exercise as above, but sit on the couch, sofa or chair. If dog comes over and jumps, barks or paws you, immediately stand up and ignore him for several seconds, sit back down and repeat until you both can sit quietly for several seconds. Give him a treat for getting it right.

REPEAT these exercises when you are interacting with your dog during the course of the am/pm. When outside of the kennel or confinement area, your pup should always be leashed if he is not yet housetrained or doesn't understand what behavior is expected of him in the