

Our Role in Dog Behavior

Whether or not you want to make formal obedience training a way of life for your dog, owners should do their part to set a dog up for success when it comes to behavior and manners. There are several things we need to do in an ongoing fashion beyond food and water to give our pets the best chance to be appreciated at both home and in society.

Regardless of the level of training we are always responsible for controlling our dogs. Use a 5-6 foot solid leather leash. Anticipate interactions with other pets or humans and err on the side of safety and good manners for everyone. Give commands to let the dog know what is expected unless they are released for free walking/play. If necessary at home, leash, crate or confine your dog when you don't want them underfoot, looking for attention or knocking into guests.

Owners need to assert themselves and set reasonable expectations for behavior in our family 'packs' rather than letting the dogs make up their own rules. Keep in mind if you set low expectations for behavior, that's probably all you'll get. Dogs prefer structure, set the bar higher, challenge them and the dog will respond. Communicate your goals reinforced with praise for compliance and don't take no for an answer.

After formal training every owner needs to follow through by using commands and consistently putting that training to work to achieve long-term reliable obedience and good behavior. Practice commands for ten to fifteen minutes a couple times each day. If not formal training sessions then practice obedience during elimination walks or at playtime. If you use commands routinely, are consistent with your own discipline and reward them for obedience, over time your dog will learn that it is not a game or trick but a way of life and that you are worthy of their attention, trust and affection.