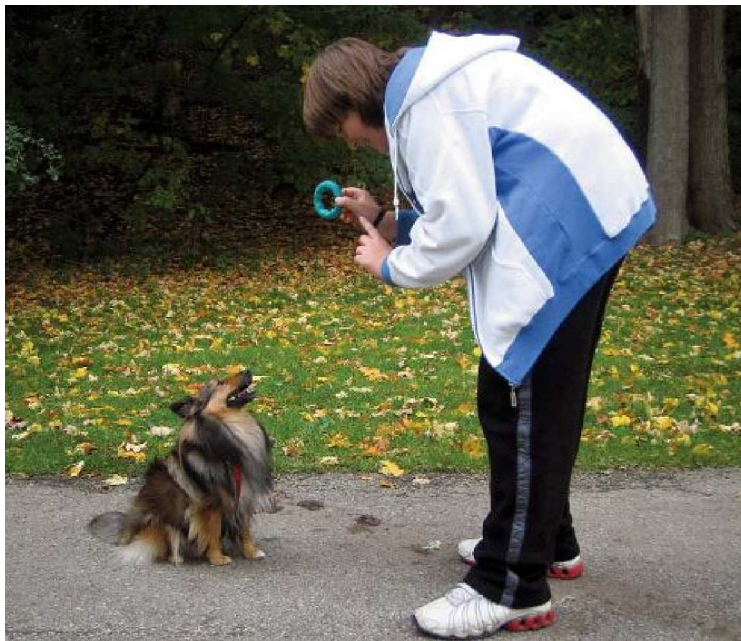


# paw'sitive TRAINING

LISA MCCLUSKEY TEACHES YOU HOW TO BUILD A BOND WITH YOUR PET THROUGH KIND AND FAIR TRAINING METHODS.

**m**any of you have been working on the relationship with your dog and are prepared to begin some hands on training exercises with your canine friend. Congrats! This article will focus on being fair, kind, and consistent in order to communicate to your pet your training expectations. It will also attempt to make recommendations that will assist you in training your dog with humane, gentle, positive techniques that your companion can learn from and comprehend. Through teaching your pet what behaviours are acceptable, you will

**ARE YOU USING PRAISE WORDS AND A RELEASE WORD IN TRAINING?** Remember, integrating praise words when your pet demonstrates the correct behavior is imperative. The release word lets your pet know that the exercise is done and he may now go back to doing the doggie activities that he wishes to do. When you are working with your pup, there should be real purpose. I do like to think each time I work with my dog (no matter how small) that there appears to be a beginning, middle, and an end to the interaction. I feel this personally provides clarity to me and more importantly to my dog in the obedience training process.



be able to spend more time strengthening your relationship with your dog and less time being frustrated with unacceptable behaviors that are difficult to control. Hopefully after reading our most recent training article in Woof! you have also acquired proper equipment that will assist you in getting off on the right paw in your dog's obedience education. You are then now ready to start specific exercises to practice with your pet such that your pup will be able to be successful and safe in his obedience training.

**NAME MEANS LOOK AT ME** During distractions, your dog's name recognition should still be strong. Try to practice your name recognition exercise while walking past other dogs, people, etc. Remember, you need your dog to make eye contact with you before requesting an activity from him. If your pet is not looking at you when you ask him to do something, the likelihood that he will carry out the task significantly decreases. Try very hard to set your dog up for success. If you are feeling the need to say your dog's name more than once in order to get him to focus on you, the situation you are currently training in may be too challenging for him at this point in his education. Try an easier setting for a few days and build up more slowly to various distractions.

**"SETTLE" OR "RELAX" AS AN EXERCISE** Double check your dog's ability to offer a "Settle" or "Relax" position. Remember, you must work on your pet being friendly towards being examined and touched all over his body by humans. Try to help your dog maintain a "Settle" or "Relax" position at other times daily. For example, while visitors are over at your home and they are speaking to you, etc. Attempt to always touch ears, feet, tail, body, teeth, etc. and remember to use soothing tones and a smooth petting motion when your pet is sitting, lying down, or lying on his side. At your next veterinary and/or grooming appointment, have your pet's professional demonstrate to you practising the concepts of a "safety hug" and "leg restraint." This will hopefully help your pup with future nail trims and blood draws (for veterinary chemistry analysis and tests).

**TRAINING THE "OFF" COMMAND** The command "Off" translates as "remove yourself from what you are touching, going to touch or are thinking about touching." Many owners tend to use "No" in this instance, but "No" is an

excessively used word in our culture and its meaning can be ever-changing. Initially, this word will be taught with food, but will quickly be applied to many situations and surfaces. If you have already taught the game to elicit eye contact (from our previous training articles), all you will need to add is saying the word "Off" firmly when you pet backs away from food, toys, the doorway, your lap, etc. Remember to praise when your pup offers the correct behaviour of backing up away from the desired item or situation.

### "STEADY" OR "EASY" WHILE WALKING YOUR DOG ON LEAD

The leash must never be tight; this only reinforces to your dog that a tight leash equals walking. If the leash becomes tight, try immediately turning and jogging backwards while saying your pet's name and the word "Steady" or "Easy." You may also wish to integrate noises (clapping, kissing sound, or clucking sound) to get his attention. Since your pet has already learned, name means look at me, this exercise simply builds on what he already knows. This may also reinforce the idea, "We walk where I wish to walk, forging ahead is more work for you and we do not go where you (the pet) want to walk unless I (the human) agree." In sum, "Steady" or "Easy" means put some slack in the lead.

**WALKING ON LEAD** Try to choose one side of your body for your pet to walk on and stick with it (unless you ask your dog to physically move to the other side, as when passing a distraction). If your pet does begin to pull on the lead, try to at the very least plant both your feet firmly and encourage him to return near you again. Your pet should return to where you would like him to be near your proper side and then you may

continue walking. If you need more control than what a sturdy collar can offer, consider using a headcollar for dogs that are very strong and/or quick to react to their surroundings.

### THE OBEDIENCE POSITIONS "SIT," "DOWN," AND "STAND"

Many of us have already been utilising treats, hand signals, and our voice to lure our pet into desired obedience commands. I would like to also recommend integrating quite a bit of handling and touch while teaching your dog these obedience positions. If you are already training your dog the "Settle" or "Relax," your pup is likely offering all three of these positions during your training sessions. Try to start saying the command for each position as your dog adopts it in his training so that you can capture and reward the appropriate position.



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**COME WHEN CALLED** The recall or "Come when called" exercise should be a good association for your dog. Coming to you must not necessarily mean the end of playtime. Your dog should always learn to come to you as the owner. Refrain from reaching out to your dog and physically pulling him in. Touch the collar once your dog is in close, praise, and feed him a treat (if desired) at the same time. Then release your dog back into play.

Three additional homework exercises:

1. Practice grooming and handling your dog with your grooming tools (i.e. rubber curry, slicker brush, rake, nail trimmers, if possible) and list in order what you had the most success with.
2. Work on teaching your dog to retrieve toys and play with you in a constructive manner. Record how things went during your training sessions.
3. Train your dog in three new places. For example: a pet supply store that allows dogs inside, yard/garden (yours or that of a friend), an outdoor park area. Write where you went and note next to the dash what you practice.

**REMEMBER FOR FUTURE REPETITIONS:** Repeat all tasks in different locations, with all family members, on different surfaces, at different times of the day, remembering to praise and to have fun with your canine companion.

Happy Training! 🐾

Lisa R. McCluskey has been training animals for the past 13 years. She is a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), and was the first Certified Pet Dog Trainer (CPDT) in the state of Illinois. She lives on a farm with her dogs, horses and family in Illinois and is always busy with her myriad canine training classes. Visit Lisa at [www.moongazer.com](http://www.moongazer.com)

