

Managing, teaching and reinforcing are the essential keys to forming good habits in your dog's behavior.

1. Manage your dog until he is trained to prevent bad habits from forming.

Do not put him in a situation where he can make the “wrong” choices until you have taught him what the “right” ones are.

Walking

Use a head halter to walk him until you have taught him to walk on a loose leash.

Recalling / Coming to You

Avoid calling the dog to you with a formal command if there is no way to ensure that he comes: instead keep him on a leash until you have trained him to come when called.

Housetraining

Do not allow him full run of the house until he is completely housetrained: instead confine him to smaller areas unless you can give him *your complete attention* to teach him where to eliminate and where not to.

Creating a **habit** takes lots of **correct repetition** so don't be in a hurry to give him too many choices (free run of the house un-monitored, off leash beach walks...etc.)

2. Teach him what you DO want him to do instead of always saying NO.

You can interrupt and re-direct a behavior you don't want, therefore teaching the dog what you do want him to do.

Sit-Stay instead of jumping up for greeting

Heel (walk at your side) instead of pulling you down the street

Play with his toys instead of your toys. Let him loose in the house with “his” toys and “your” toys on the floor and be present to teach him which ones he can touch and which ones are off limits. Interrupt him when he has “your” toys and redirect him to “his” toys.

Teach a way to communicate with each other

YES = you just earned a reward

GOOD = keep doing what you are doing now – I like it!

NO = you are doing something I don't like

Timing is critical in teaching. Your dog will not know what he is being rewarded or corrected for if you don't react **immediately**.

Use the commands you are teaching your dog.

Have him sit for his meals. Make him lie down before he gets a treat.

If you take him for walks, a short stay until he settles before you go out the door teaches him the rewards of calm behavior.

3. Reinforcing makes the behavior you want stronger. Be aware of what you are **reinforcing**. Your attention is very reinforcing!

If your dog jumps up and you *look at him* or *push him off* you are reinforcing jumping up and making it 80% more likely he will do it again.

Going to the door to tell your dog to be quiet if he is barking to be let in, gets him attention which is what he wants and makes it more likely he will bark again to be let in.

Be careful of what you pay attention to so you don't accidentally train your dog to do something that you don't like.