

The Value of Training your Dog

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Get S.M.A.R.T dogs
Delta Behavioral Trainer

The Oxford Dictionary describes "value" as: "worth, desirability, qualities on which these depend (e.g. the value of .a friend)". A very appropriate definition, for anyone who has ever trained a dog will testify to the value of spending time training a canine friend. Indeed once you have trained a dog it is virtually inconceivable that you would ever own a dog again without taking the time to train it .

There is value in training your dog not only for yourself, but for your dog and for the wider community. A dog that is under control, is not a threat or danger to anyone. A dog that will speak and be silent on command is not a nuisance to anyone. A dog that is attentive to its owner and obeys all commands is a first rate ambassador for 'canine familiaris' and helps to improve the image of dogs to the general public. Dogs that undergo specialized training are of value to the community in unique ways, serving as search and rescue dogs, security dogs, guide dogs, assistance dogs, pets as therapy dogs and hearing dogs to name just a few. These are all benefits of training to our society but what about the value for each individual dog and handler?

The degree of training desired will vary from person to person however a minimal degree of training is essential even for pet dogs . These are:

1. Housetraining - Dogs who do not learn quickly where to toilet may soon find themselves relegated to the backyard. This relative isolation deprives the dog of social interactions with the human pack and may quickly lead to other nuisance behaviours such as hyperactivity, barking, digging, destructive chewing, and possibly aggression – 'the backyard syndrome'. Because of a simple training issue, the dog is now far more likely to land up another statistic in an animal shelter.
2. Walk nicely on a lead – if your dog has learnt to walk nicely on a lead it is easy to satisfy his needs for exercise and exploration. If not, he may again fall victim to the 'backyard syndrome'.
3. Come when called – so your dog can safely run free at the off leash park with other dogs and people. This is the best way to ensure your dog becomes well socialized and can accompany you to as many places as possible.

Training these three simple behaviours may be enough to own an enjoyable pet however there is so much more that can be achieved!

Training is really about opening up the channels of communication between you and your dog. Your dog already knows how to sit, stand and down, what he doesn't know is the human words for these behaviours and why he should do them? With training, your dog learns how to get what he wants (attention, praise, rewards) by pleasing you – a win/win situation for you and your dog. It really doesn't matter what you train your dog to do as long as you have fun together. You might train at home or you might consider taking up one of the many new exciting canine performance sports such as agility, flyball or obedience competitions.

The value of training for your dog.

No matter what type of training you are interested in, your dog will benefit in many ways.

Training = attention . Dogs thrive on positive attention from their owners. Time spent training should be the best time you and your dog spend together, a time when your dog enjoys your full attention.

Training = physical and mental stimulation which combined is far more tiring than physical exercise alone. As most dogs were bred to do a job rather than sit quietly in a backyard , training will give your dog a constructive outlet for his mental and physical energy.



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Training = communication. Learning new things gets easier and easier the more training you do and is exciting for both you and your dog.

Training = a closer bond and enhanced relationship. Modern reward based training methods are not only effective ways to train, but they do so in a way that strengthens the trust and understanding between you and your dog.

Training= a chance to socialize. A dog that is well trained is more likely to be social and more likely to be invited to join you on family social outings such as sports days or picnics. Should you join a dog training club, both you and your dog will be able to enjoy the company of people and dogs enjoying the same special interests you do.

The value of training your dog for YOU.

- A trained dog is a **pleasure to be with**, to walk, and take on outings – a valuable member of the family.
- A trained dog is far less likely to become a legal liability.
- A trained dog is more likely to see **you as the leader of the pack** because training reinforces your benevolent authority. A dog who has learnt to defer to you is both more co-operative and content.
- Walking, playing and training a dog is a **great 'time out'** from the stresses of modern living. The peace and tranquility of being with someone who wags a tail but doesn't talk is immeasurable.
- **Canine performance sports can be an inexpensive and enjoyable pastime.** A pastime you can share not only with your canine partner but with other dog enthusiasts who share your interest.

A final word.

Like anything in life, the more effort you put into training your dog the more enjoyment you are likely to derive from it. Your dog wants to have a special and close relationship with you, but he'll need your time and help to understand how best to fit into our crazy human world. Should you accept the challenge, I hope you will experience the same delightful satisfaction I have had from owning and training my dogs.

Whether it be tracking a scent, jumping over hurdles, charging through tunnels or simply coming when I call - I get a surge of pleasure knowing my dogs have listened, understood and agreed to be my partner in what ever task we undertake. What value can you put on a feeling like that?

