

NEW HANDLERS HANDBOOK AND CURRICULUM

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WELCOME TO THE SUNSHINE COAST DOG OBEDIENCE CLUB INC!

We trust that you will have a long, happy and rewarding association with our club. Handlers have a common bond, that of owning a dog and the pleasure of seeing their dogs become well behaved, acceptable members of the community.

All officers of the Sunshine Coast Dog Obedience Club (SCDOC), joined the club to train their dogs, just like you. Having achieved that, they now enjoy the challenges and rewards of sharing their knowledge. They do this VOLUNTARILY, asking nothing but to take part in the joy handlers experience as their dogs successfully complete their exercises.

To be effective in training your dog YOU must learn to be patient, no matter how exasperating it may become and to be tolerant and understanding of your fellow handlers. To keep a sense of perspective is vital as is the ability to laugh at yourself and your dog. Remember dog training to most people is an enjoyable hobby, NOT A WAY OF LIFE.

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS:

Children

- Children are not permitted in training areas during classes for safety reasons.
- The car park is not a playground and unsupervised children are not permitted in this area.
- Under no circumstances should a child approach or touch another handler's dog unless express permission has been granted by the dog's owner.
- Please do not allow children to interfere with training equipment.

Dog Behaviour

- Should your dog foul the grounds, you are required to clear the offending matter immediately. Please keep a plastic bag with you just in case. We do have a roll supplied, but you are encouraged to bring your own bags.
- Please do not allow dogs to mark on the posts around the Clubhouse or grounds.
- Dogs must always remain on a lead unless otherwise instructed.
- Dogs are not to be let loose to play before or after classes or allowed to play on lead with other handler's dogs.
- Owners are responsible for their dog's behaviour at all times. This includes any damage that may be caused by your dog to any person, dog or property.

PLEASE NOTE: The club is NOT liable for any damage caused by your dog.

Dress Requirements

- Sensible, closed in shoes are recommended (no thongs or sandals permitted).
- Long hair should be secured as it can become very distracting for you & your dog.
- Clothing should not be allowed to flap, e.g. flowing skirts, scarves etc.

Eligible Dogs

- All dogs on the grounds must be fully vaccinated against Distemper, Canine Hepatitis and Parvovirus (vaccination card to be sighted upon joining).
- No bitch in season will be permitted on the grounds.
- Dogs must be 16 weeks or older when commencing the Beginner class.

Instructors

Instructors are always happy to answer any training questions you have and help with any problems you might be experiencing, please don't hesitate to ask.

Handler Etiquette

- Please assist in maintaining the cleanliness of the grounds for the enjoyment of all.
- Please consider others when parking, as parking within the grounds is limited.
- If tethering your dog, please do so sensibly and safely.
- Dogs are not permitted in the Clubhouse.
- Smoking is not permitted on the grounds during training sessions, in the Clubhouse or the undercover area.

New Handler Information

- Beginners classes run for 8 weeks. Should the club cancel a session for any reason, a makeup session will be offered. If a handler is unable to attend, no refund is available.
- It is normal for training to go ahead during inclement weather, however, if conditions are too bad and you have any doubts please check our Facebook Group page (notifications for cancelled classes are always broadcast on Facebook. Check after 5 pm.) or contact the club on 0498 677 805.

Training Times

- The grounds are generally not opened to the public until 5:30 pm to give our committee time to set up the Clubhouse for the night's sessions, please do not arrive before this time.
- It is advisable to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your designated class to ensure you have time to settle your dog and sign in.

Trialling

SCDOC runs trial training in Obedience, Rally, Tricks and Scentwork pending instructor availability. Handlers intending to trial should make themselves familiar with the respective rules which may be found on the Dogs Australia website (<https://dogsaustralia.org.au/members/rule-regulations/rules/>). Trial training is available to members once they are in Black class and is by invitation only. Please let your Black class instructor know if you are interested in trialling.

DOG OBEDIENCE

Class Structure

Blue and Green class are effectively handler understanding classes. This is to ensure that you are getting the idea and applying the basic principles to your dog.

Not all handlers and dogs will graduate to higher classes immediately, there is no shame in this. As is true with people, dogs learn at all different rates.

Instruction

- Dogs learn by consistent repetition.
- The only correction necessary should be done with voice and the correct use of a check chain, flat collar or a Halti.
- The bulk of the training must be done away from the class situation. At least 10-15 minutes of training should be done each day, followed by an equivalent amount of play.
- If you do not understand an exercise, ask the Instructor to go over it again, step by step so that you and your dog may experience success. We want you to be successful!
- You may at times hear Instructors say things that seem contrary to what you have previously heard. Don't worry, it may be that a technique should be changed, or another method tried because of a dog's reaction to the club's preferred method.
- Do not try to teach your dog more advanced exercises before they are performing the easier ones correctly every time. The class you are in will determine the level of performance expected from the handler and the dog.

Always be patient, firm, consistent and loving.

Never lose your temper!

Never strike your dog in anger!

- When the training has finished let your dog know. We suggest the words "Break", "OK", "Free" or "Off you go" and then have a small game with the dog.
- Never over train your dog, he will become lazy in class or worse, bored with the game of obedience. To you and your dog training should be fun, fun & more fun.
- Dogs have an instinctive ability to learn. If you use logical, motivational training techniques and work with your dog daily, it can become the pleasant obedient companion you've always wanted.

There are many keys to training but the most important is... you will get out of this exactly what you put into it.

YOU AND YOUR DOG

Establishing Leadership

When you first brought your dog home, he was no doubt a cuddly irresistible puppy. He howled at night, chewed your shoes and wet on the carpet. Somehow you lived through all this knowing that someday he would grow out of it all and eventually become mature, calm and well behaved. Now he's getting older and you ask yourself when will he start to settle down and become well behaved? Not only is he not well behaved, but he also thinks *he's* the boss.

Fido's Background

If Fido has taken over, let's analyze why. His ancestors lived and hunted in packs. Each dog has a position in the pack and his very existence depends on the cooperation of its individual members for survival. As a pup, each learned the rules of the pack and his position in it. Fido has inherited an instinctive aptitude for absorbing rules and following leadership. He WANTS a leader. If you don't assume the position of leader of the family, he will. If Fido does not come when you call, if he chews the furniture, gets into the garbage etc, he is testing his limits, looking for rules. He needs your guidance and direction.

Why Fido Doesn't Take Notice

Fido has an instinctive ability to learn, but he doesn't have a conscious sense of right or wrong. Don't expect him to use his reasoning skills to solve problems. He needs you to be his teacher. Whatever the reason that he is ignoring you, whether it is fear, confusion, insecurity or laziness, just remember that there is still help. If you use logical, balanced training methods guiding him daily, he will gain all the tools necessary to become all you wish him to be.

Steps Towards Being the Leader

- Never allow your dog to rush or push through doors or gates before you.
- Always ensure your dog works for what he wants. Get him to sit and wait before being fed, before having the lead put on or removed, before a ball is thrown, before going out or coming indoors, getting in the car etc. Nothing in life is free.
- Never play equal games with your dog e.g. don't lie down on the floor and play at his level or play tug of war if you eventually give up and let the dog win.
- If your dog eats inside the house, never feed it before yourself. If your dog eats outdoors, make sure that you take some human food outside and eat it first before putting the dog's dinner down. Leaders always eat first.
- Never allow your dog to be in an elevated position. If you have stairs, don't allow the dog to run up them and then look down on you. Dominant dogs should not be allowed to sit on your lap or jump up to greet you.
- Always make sure that the dog moves out of your way, not the other way around. If your dog lies across your path, don't step over it, make it move out of your way.
- Teach your dog to "drop" (lay down) and use this command whenever you have a person

or another dog approaching.

- Practice taking your dog's dinner away during puppyhood so that he never becomes possessive about food. The dog should always be aware that it is *your* food until it is in *his* tummy.
- Do not allow a dominant dog on the furniture. If your dog *is* allowed on the furniture, then it should get off immediately when commanded to do so.
- Behave like a leader. Always be consistent and therefore successful.
- Never ask your dog to do something and then give up without seeing it through.

Praise

- Praise is a prime motivation and is your dog's reward for improving, it's what makes training a pleasant experience for your dog.
- Praise should be given the instant the dog does what it has been asked to do – within one second.
- If you don't praise your dog for a job well done, it is the equivalent of you going to work and not being paid. This is especially true if you praise the dog for learning something and once learnt, you don't praise it for repeat performances. Imagine a workplace that paid you while you were an apprentice, but once you mastered the job the pay stopped coming. Would you want to work there?

Punishment

Punishment is not to be used in dog training. Never use the lead to hit your dog, never knee your dog, just don't hurt your dog, period. Physical punishment focuses his attention on you, not the mistake.

Depending on the dog, physical punishment may incite it to either fight back or run away and become nervous. Ask our Instructors the best way to reprimand or correct the dog if this becomes necessary.

Repetition

Your dog learns by repetition, consistency, positive reinforcement and the occasional correction. Don't expect your dog to learn during class, these sessions are for us to teach *you* how to train your dog. If possible, work with your dog twice a day for 10 to 15 minutes each session. Practise a command and least twice in a row but no more than 10 times. This will make your training segments enjoyable and productive.

Remember, if you start to lose your patience, STOP and try again later.

Timing

It is important to correct your dog the moment it begins to make a mistake, not afterwards. When your correction is immediate your dog will associate the correction directly with the mistake. This is also true of praise and rewards, *timing is everything*.

BEGINNERS CURRICULUM

8 WEEK BEGINNERS COURSE (BLUE CLASS) – CONTENT AND TIPS FOR TRAINING

Good luck and happy training!

Week 1 – Orientation Session

During this course you will be shown motivational and compulsion training methods. Motivational training is using food or a favourite toy to motivate your dog to do what you want. Compulsion training is showing the dog what you want by using your hands and the lead. Your Instructor will be able to advise the best method for you and your dog. This session is for the handlers and is dog free.

Week 2 – Heel, Sit, Right About Turn, Attention & Coming When Called

This the first time with your dog at the grounds, don't despair if his behaviour is worse than at home, this is only natural. The atmosphere is a lot more for the dogs to get used to, most have probably never seen so many dogs at one time before. Give them time to settle, please do not let them approach strange dogs, this will not help relax them. Some dogs are just NOT friendly, they are not required to like every single dog they meet anymore then we are required to like every person we meet. It would be a very bad experience for both you and your dog if it was attacked on its first outing at dog training.

Here are some reminders when doing your homework:

Getting Your Dog's Attention

- Have a little treat tucked discreetly in your hand. Say your dog's name in an animated tone of voice, as soon as he looks at you, praise and give him the treat.
- If your dog takes food gently from your hand, try putting the treat close to your dog's nose and slowly taking it up towards your chin. When the dog makes eye contact, praise and reward. Don't do this if your dog is a snatcher, he could grab your hand or chin by accident.

Coming When Called

- Fill a small container with treats (preferably something the dog doesn't get every day). Call your dog's name in an animated tone and as soon as he looks, shake the container and call "come". When he gets to you treat (reward) immediately. This must be practised regularly until the dog understands that "come" means good things will happen.
- Never call the dog to you and then punish it. If you need to reprimand the dog, go and get it.
- Do not let the dog off lead in strange places until you're are 100% certain he will come back every time.
- Do not take your dog out for a play or free run, having lots of fun and then call him back to you to put him on the lead to go home. He will soon make the connection that "come" means fun time is over. Instead, call him to you numerous times, reward then release him again throughout his free run. This way that association doesn't build and 'come' remains positive.

- Involve the whole family in teaching the dog to come. Sit or stand in a circle, everyone with some treats, call the dog in turn. Be careful of greedy dogs and children. Dogs have powerful jaws and can inflict damage without intention so close supervision is a must, as is teaching your dog to take food gently.

Week 3 – Stand, Right & Left Turns

Try to practice all you have learnt in the last 2 weeks for about 10 to 15 minutes twice a day when you take your dog for his daily walk, don't expect him to stay at heel position all the time, the walk is his fun too. Do the 'let's go' exercise and practice heelwork during the walk.

Remember the 'stand' exercise is a very important command to teach your dog. It is particularly relevant for during vet appointments, when the dog is being groomed, and even during conformation shows!

Week 4 – Sit Stay & Step Back to the Dog

When doing the 'stay' exercise, your dog must remain steady. This is why we insist the handler move directly in front of the dog (nose to knee) in the early stages. If you move away too quickly, the dog will learn that you cannot correct it as you are too far away and that opens a whole new can of worms.

Week 5 – Down & Recall (Turn Back)

You will be shown a couple of different methods for getting your dog to go down on command, different methods work on different dogs.

The recall is the follow on from teaching your dog to come when called at home. It is also one of the most important things you will ever teach your dog. Remember to praise/reward your dog the second he comes to you.

Week 6 – Down Stay & Socialization

'Socialization' is not a doggy play session; it is teaching your dog to listen to you even when there are other dogs, people and distractions around.

'Down stay' involves the same procedures as the sit stay. Stay is the only exercise where it is advisable to repeat your command to remind the dog what is expected of him.

Week 7 – Extension of Stays, Return Around the Dog, Recall from the End of Lead & Preparation for Graduation

Duration of stay is extended; this is only done if the dog is 100% able to do the exercise. Some dogs will be able to stay longer than others and this is okay. How long they can stay can be extended over time, it is not as important at this stage as their stability.

Do NOT return around the back of the dog if the 'stay' cannot be maintained for at least 30 seconds.

When stating recalls from the end of the lead the word WAIT is used instead of stay, the dog starts to get the idea that when you use WAIT he must wait for another command, but STAY means he has to stay until you return.

Week 8 – Graduation

This is where the fun begins, Blue class are automatically graduated to the next class, Green!
In Green class you will build and expand on the foundations you have created in beginners. You will be further challenged as you work through the classes.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed your 8-week course. Don't forget if you would like to get involved with the club, we would welcome you with open arms. Our volunteers do everything at the club from instructing to stewarding to cleaning and everything in between and there is always room for more.
We are very proud of our club, some of us have been here for over 20 years, I know, that's crazy!

He Just Wants to Say 'Hi'!



Sitting quietly on the mall bench beside my husband, I was minding my own business when the man approached. I glanced up as the man sat next to me. He was a bit close for my comfort, so I edged a little closer to my husband who, busy reading a book, ignored me. Still feeling a bit uncomfortable with the strange man so close, I then turned my head slightly away from him, politely indicating I was not interested in any interaction. To my horror, the man leaned over me and began licking my neck while rudely groping me.

When I screamed and pushed him away, my trouble really began. My husband angrily threw me to the ground, yelling at me "Why did you do that? He was only trying to be friendly and say hi! What a naughty thing you are! You're going to have to learn to behave better in public."

People all around us stared and shook their heads sadly. I heard a few murmurings that they thought my husband should do something about my behaviour; some even mentioned that he shouldn't have such a violent woman out in public until I'd been trained better. As my husband dragged me to the car, I noticed that the man who had groped me had gone a bit further down the mall and was doing the same thing to other women.

This is a silly scenario, isn't it?

More seriously, no rational human being would consider my response to the man's rudeness as inappropriate or vicious. By invading my personal space, the man crossed the lines of decent, civilized behaviour; my response would be considered quite justified.

Fortunately for *me*, this scenario is completely imaginary.

Unfortunately for many dogs, **it is a very real scenario that is repeated far too often**. Inevitably, as the owners who have allowed their dogs to act rudely retreat from the situation, there are comments made about "that aggressive dog" (meaning the dog whose space had been invaded) and the classic comment, usually said in hurt tones...

"He only wanted to say hi!"

WHEN WILL MY DOG BE TRAINED?



"I can't wait till my dog is TRAINED!"

When will "TRAINED" be?

When he sits?

When he lies down?

When he always comes?

When he doesn't jump on people?

When he stops getting into the trash?

When he can heel off-leash?

When he can do a directed retrieve?

When he can track a missing person?

When he can herd sheep into a pen?

You must decide what TRAINED means to you and your dog.

TRAINING doesn't end – it's a lifelong journey

Kind of like our education - we learn new things daily.

Training is not magical - it won't happen without outside influence.

If YOU are not that influence, other things WILL be. The dog won't wait for you to train him!



- You put old bread out on the ground for the birds - *your dog finds it and eats all of it.*

He has just been trained to eat the bread - food is a strong reward for behaviour.

- One of his toys is partially under a bush in the garden. He uses his paws to get to it and digs a hole in the process.

He gets his toy and the garden gets a hole.

He was just trained on how to reach a hard to get object. The object itself (the toy) was his reward.

- A delivery person comes to the door with a package while you aren't home.

Your dog, who is learning to alert when strangers come to the door, jumps at the window, barking and banging on the glass.

The delivery person leaves the package and walks away.

Your dog has just learned that the barking and lunging "chased" the stranger away.

LACK of training on your part is STILL TRAINING!

- Your dog always tries to get you to play by jumping on your lap and depositing a toy.

This time, you are reading the paper and your dog jumps up with his toy and crumples the paper. "NO! I don't want to play!", you say as you toss the toy away. Your dog retrieves the toy and comes back. He thinks "that throw was OK, but let's try for a better one!". This time, he doesn't jump on your lap, but nudges under the paper at your hand. You push him away several times, telling him "NO!" until finally, you get angry, take the toy, *throw it* and tell him to go away. ***Your dog has just learned that patience is a virtue. If he pesters you long enough, he'll get to play!***

- You meet up with a friend on your walk with your dog, and you stop to chat for a while.

Your dog is impatient and starts to pace and prance. You are busy talking and want him to sit quietly at your side. Telling him firmly to SIT, you go back to your conversation and don't realize he never sat. ***Your dog has just learned that he can ignore your commands.*** Seeing later that he didn't SIT, you tell him again. Again, he ignores your command. Finally, you break away from your conversation and angrily command him to SIT. ***Well, now he has learned he can ignore your commands UNLESS you chuck a hissy and get mad!***

- Eating dinner, or even snacks, causes your dog to sit at your feet, drool and stare.

You wish he wouldn't be such a beggar. After several minutes of enduring the stares and getting no response to your commands to "go and lie down", you give in and hand him some food from your dish. ***Dogs learn very quickly to be patient (and persistent) to get what they want.***

TRAINING means ***consistency*** and meaning what you convey both verbally and non-verbally.

TRAINING means ***following through*** with your commands.

YOUR DOG SHOWS FEAR OF THUNDERSTORMS & FIREWORKS



During a nasty thunderstorm, his eyes bug, ears go back - he paces and pants with his mouth wide open.

You go to him and stroke him calmly, murmuring, "It's OK buddy, it's ok."

The next thunderstorm happens a few weeks later, and he acts worse. He tries to dig under the dresser or hides in the tub.

You go to him, hug him and pet him and again tell him "It's OK, you're alright, I'm here."

You wonder why his fear reaction has increased when you are working so hard to calm him.

He IS learning and you ARE teaching him! You are teaching him to be afraid of storms.

Petting, stroking, hugging, soothing talk - all are ways to PRAISE your dog.

In this example, the dog is being inadvertently praised for his fearful behaviour.

By patting, holding, stroking him you are assuring him that something is wrong.

“HE ACTS JUST FINE AT HOME. I DON’T KNOW WHY HE GETS SO CRAZY HERE AT DOG SCHOOL!”

This is why: when you do your training sessions at home, you chase the kids outside, turn off the radio and TV (because it distracts you), go to a quiet area and just train. Then, when the dog encounters all the external stimulation at dog school, he can't handle it because he wasn't TRAINED with it. To have a TRAINED dog, he must be taught to behave correctly in ALL situations he will encounter: crowds, groups of dogs, vet clinics, groomers, front of your house, down the street, in your backyard, at the park during a ball game, when it is sunny, rainy, snowing, blowing, cold, hot, with birds, or cats around - ANY situation or place you can think of.

TRAINED is what you accept, promote and control.

"If I leave him outside for a while, what can he get into that he shouldn't?" *Clothes on the line, rubbish bins, the flower beds?*

"If he isn't crated when I'm not home, what can happen that I can't control?" *Chew the couch pillows, eat the trash, toilet on the carpet?*

"I know if I leave food on the counter, he will eat it when I'm not looking. How can I work to change this?"

"If that loose dog runs up to us in the park, how can I handle the situation?"

"I see a cat ahead on our walk and I know my dog will want to chase. How do I control his actions BEFORE he gets out of control?"

TRAINING means working and thinking one step ahead of your dog.

When your dog does what you want, when you want - LET HIM KNOW!

You certainly let him know when he is bad - you need to concentrate on when he is GOOD, so he will know and learn.

TRAINING means praise when something is correctly done.

There is a law in dog training that says: YOU HAVE THE DOG YOU WANT

Think about it...