

Training Tips for Large Breed Dogs

Below is info to help get new puppy owners started off right with their large breed puppies. This is not a complete set of information on how to train a dog, but an explanation of the basic obedience commands and establishment of authority by the owner to aid in whatever training method will be used going forward with your puppy.

****Remember with large dog breeds - They do not stay small for long!****

Some training methods do not recommend starting until the pups are 4 months old. With a large breed dog, you will definitely want to start before that or you will find yourself trying to control a wild 50-60 lb puppy. There are many age appropriate things a new owner can do to establish their authority over the puppy at a very early age.

****Train, Don't Re-Train!****

The best dog training advice that we have found useful when working with a large breed puppy is to identify disrespectful puppy behavior and to stop it while the puppy is young and small.

| Cute puppy behavior that is NOT cute when the dog weighs 50+ lbs: | Can lead to this type of rude dog behavior when puppy has grown: |
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| Barking, growling, snapping at you in play | Barking, growling, snapping at you or others when you do something it doesn't like |
| Jumping up on you, another person, furniture, etc... | Jumps on anything or anyone at will. Large dogs can knock someone over and cause serious damage |
| Pawing at you or others with their (now little) paws | Demands attention, bats at things/people with their (now big) paws and causes damage or harm. |
| Chewing on your hands, fingers, clothes, toes, furniture, etc... | Chewing, nipping, biting on pretty much anything |
| Butting you with their head | Pushing past you/others, knocking people down, greet people by shoving its head into them |
| Guarding their food and growling or snapping at anyone who tries to take it | Not letting you handle its food while eating. Aggressive towards other dogs/kids while eating |
| Completely ignoring commands | Running away, chasing things, escaping from fences and generally not listening |

Preventative measures for establishing authority:

Establish authority with your new puppy!! The independent large breed dogs, while naturally being gentle giants, will also easily walk all over owners who do not set boundaries.

- Never let the puppy growl, bark or snap at you, even in play. Say no.
- Pet the puppy more on the side or back rather than the head. Hard, but very effective. Puppy will learn to come to your side for praise or attention.
- Please, just don't let the puppy chew or jump on you. This will never be ok when big.

- Go in front when going through a door, up/down stairs, or through a narrow hall, etc... Gently donk puppy out of the way with your foot, knee or leg if needed.
- Stick your hand in or pick up puppy's food while pup is eating. Be careful - if pup growls say "No" and if it doesn't stop or snaps, take the food away and try again.
- Start leash training right away. Use age and size appropriate collar, do gentle and short periods to start. It is not necessary to use a choke, prong or other training collar when they are very young.
- Teach basic commands to start: Sit, Come, Down, Off (for when they jump up) and No. Puppy should consistently obey basic commands before advanced training happens.
- When saying "No", try to look for an alternative – Ex: Puppy is chewing on something not allowed. Say "No" and replace the item with something the puppy can chew on.
- Get everyone involved! All family members should be a part of training the puppy to show pup where it fits in in its new "pack".
- Don't forget to praise the puppy when they are doing well!

Our Favorite Methods for Discipline

One of the best methods we've found is to mimic dog pack behavior when training. For pups, think about a momma dog going after a pup who is being naughty (naughty meaning pup is doing anything you do not want it to do). The momma never hurts the pup. She'll give a warning growl and then, if the pup does not listen, she gets in the pup's face with pup on its back, growling and snapping. The pup is usually crying and yelping like they are going to die. She never leaves even a scratch on the puppy, just scares the living daylight out of it. The pups learn VERY fast this way.

We are not dogs, but can mimic this behavior as much as possible. As soon as the puppy does something naughty, say "No!" in a deep commanding voice. (For kids/women, lower voice as much as possible and add a growl sound if you can). If pup does not stop, take it down as follows: Grab pup and roll on its back. Put your hand over its muzzle (for protection for your face and also to show your authority) and growl "No!" again in the pup's face. Be consistent! Always say "No!" - Dogs learn by association and will hopefully, with consistency, respond to just "No!" in the future. Be firm and hold tight.

For dogs that run away when called: The best method we have used is to "stalk" puppy. Don't run after it, just fix your eyes on pup and follow it like you have no other purpose on this earth than to hound pup's every step. It really seems to unnerve puppies when you do this. You can usually then corner the puppy and grab it. Try not to call "come" when the pup is running away or to bring it over to punish.

Dogs by nature respect and follow a leader. When you establish with the dog that you are its leader, it will then show you what humans may call "love" - Loyalty, respect, obedience, and protection.

Most of all, enjoy your new puppy and make sure to reward all good behavior!

Please feel free to contact us with any questions:

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