

# Here Boy! -Teaching your Dog the 'Come' Command Plus Some General Dog Training Tips

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## Introduction

Owning a dog can definitely be a joyful experience. The old cliché 'dog is man's best friend' is certainly true. If you are a pet owner or you have owned a dog in the past, you know that there is just nothing quite like the relationship between a pet and his master. Unfortunately, there are times when owning a dog can be somewhat difficult. All dogs can be prone to misbehavior, especially if they are not well-trained. When a dog misbehaves it can be aggravating, frustrating and in many cases, even destructive. While no dog is perfect, there are definitely ways in which a dog's behavior can be redirected and he or she can be taught to behave in a more acceptable fashion.

In this guide we are going to explore the importance of training as well as how to understand your dog's psychology in order to provide better training results. We will also be looking at how you can teach your dog the 'come' command; an excellent training tool that can be used in a variety of situations in order to ensure your pet's better behavior.

There is no need to continue living with ill behavior from your pet. Even an old dog can learn new tricks, or in this case, become better trained!

## Section 1

### *Your Dog's Psychology*



Sometimes it can certainly seem as though your dog has a mind of his or her own. Actually, that is not too far from the truth. If it seems as though your dog has his or her own individual way of thinking and behaving, that is because they do. Sometimes their behavior can be somewhat amusing, but at other times it can be frustrating and can even be dangerous when their behavior is not reined and kept under control. In order to enjoy your pet to the utmost and ensure that he or she does not become a danger to themselves or others it is important to understand how they think, why they behave as they do and how they can be trained. Dog training is an important matter for any pet owner.

### **Importance of Training**

Whether you are just contemplating getting a dog, you have a brand new puppy or an adult dog that just won't seem to cooperate, you and your pet can both benefit from dog training. A good quality dog training resource can provide you with the tips and steps that you need to better understand your dog and teach

him or her how to behave appropriately. As frustrating as bad behavior can be at times, it is important to understand that even the most stubborn and ill-behaved dog can be trained and their behavior can be improved.

When training your dog you also need to understand some of the more common types of misbehavior or behavior problems that your dog is likely to exhibit. No dog is perfect and it is quite likely that your dog will exhibit one of these types of bad behavior from time to time. The important key is to take action and train your dog so that these behavior problems are corrected as quickly as possible. When you do not take the time to train your dog they become much like a spoiled, petulant child who has run of the home.

When this happens they can be a danger to others as well as to themselves. Imagine a dog that did not understand the 'come' command. If you were to take this dog out for a walk he could be in danger of hurting a child or another dog. He could also be in danger of being hurt himself if he were to get away from you and run out into the path of a car. As you can see, it is extremely important for all dogs to receive proper dog training as soon as possible. A dog that is well trained is much more pleasant to be around and will live a healthier, more enjoyable life. As a responsible pet owner, it is your job to see that your dog receives proper training. Purchasing a good quality dog training resource can make this process much easier.

## **Common Behavior Problems**

Below are some of the most common behavior problems that dogs commonly exhibit. While not all dogs may exhibit all of these behavior problems at all times, they do tend to be quite common among many dogs.

- Aggression

- Chewing
- Digging
- Barking
- Jumping up
- Begging
- Mounting
- Running away
- Biting/nipping
- Chasing cars
- Travel problems
- Separation anxiety
- Coprophagy

In order to ensure that the training process is a success you will need to first understand the mind of your dog. While his or her mind may seem to be a mystery, if you pay close attention to the way he behaves and act, you will be able to come much closer to understanding what triggers his actions and behaviors and more importantly, how to guide his behavior.

### **How your Dog Sees You**

It is also important to understand how your dog sees you. Many pet owners make the mistake of thinking that a dog is able to make the distinction between dog and human. This is really not possible. While your pet is certainly able to single you out from any other humans, he really does not see you as another human.

Your dog sees you as just another dog. A rather funny looking dog to be certain; but still just another dog. This is an important point to understand because it underscores why your dog behaves the way he does around you. The way your dog responds to you as another dog can often be the difference between good behavior and bad behavior.

Earlier we mentioned that much of a dog's behavior relates back to his wolf ancestry. Wolves, and wild dogs, run in packs. Within that pack there is a definite hierarchy with one dog assuming the role as Alpha dog. This dog is the leader and all of the other dogs follow him (or her) and defer to her. It is a natural part of a dog's makeup to follow the Alpha dog or if there is no Alpha dog around, to assume the role of Alpha dog. If you allow your dog to rule the roost, so to speak, he or she will quickly come to the understanding that they are the Alpha dog. As a result, you will likely have a dog on your hands that refuses to obey any commands, behaves inappropriately and is a general nuisance. Naturally, this type of behavior is not desirable. In order to avoid this issue, you need to make sure that your dog understands you are in the Alpha position. Once he or she understands this, they will be much more cooperative and will follow directions far more easily.

## **Your Dog's Memory and How He learns**

One of the first things that should be understood about the way in which your dog behaves is that many of his behaviors and actions can be linked back to his ancestor the wolf. Quite a few of your dog's behaviors are based on pure instinct. It is also important to understand that the way your dog's memory works can also play an important role in how he behaves as well as how he learns. In fact, a very large portion of your pet's psychological makeup is actually comprised by his memory. Many pet owners fail to realize that their dogs are actually only able to recall within a very short time frame.

At most, your dog is only able to recall a few hours. He certainly cannot recall what happened yesterday. On the opposite end of the memory spectrum is his associative memory. Compared to his ability to recall, his associative memory is much longer. Ever wondered how it is that your dog knows its time to eat when he hears the can opener? It is based on his associative memory. The same is also true for sounds that may frighten him such as the rumble of thunder.

## **Key Elements of Training**

In order for the dog training process to be successful, you must first begin by establishing a relationship of trust with your dog. He absolutely must know that he can trust you in order for any training methods to be effective. Above all, your dog desires your attention and love. Fortunately, that can translate into effective training.

When training your dog you will need to make sure that you are patient. It will take time. Remember that your pet's attention span is not very long. The most effective training sessions will only last for a few minutes at a time. Any more than this and both you and your dog will likely become tired and the training session will no longer be effective. Your training sessions should also be fun. Take advantage of the opportunity to have fun with your dog. Remember that above all he wishes to please you. Incorporate love and praise into training sessions but never hit your dog or yell at him. Not only is this cruel, but it is also counter-productive.

It is also important to keep in mind that your dog has no way of knowing whether he is doing something right, or wrong for that matter, unless you communicate it to him. You need to let him know when he is doing something right by praising his actions. Always make sure that you provide immediate praise whenever your dog

does something right. Do not wait any longer than a few seconds to provide praise to your dog. If you wait any longer than that, it is quite likely that your dog will have forgotten what he is receiving the praise for!

At the same time you also need to make sure that you are discouraging negative behavior. There are other ways to do this besides yelling at or hitting your dog. Remember that inappropriate behavior should be expected at times. Your dog may not be human, but he is not completely flawless. There are plenty of constructive ways that you can correct negative behavior in a constructive fashion.

One way in which you can do this is to utilize a verbal reprimand. In order for this method to work you will need to select a word that you can use when your dog does something inappropriate that he will understand to mean he should stop immediately. The word 'no' would work just fine in this instance. Whatever word you use, when you use it make sure that you do not yell it or even say it in a tone of voice that is angry. It is much better to use a tone that is short and somewhat sharp in order to capture your pet's attention. You can use this type of verbal reprimand any time you see your pet doing something that he shouldn't, such as chewing on a shoe, in order to redirect their behavior.

Another effective method is to simply ignore your pet. This can actually be quite beneficial. Remember that your pet craves your attention. This particular method is most effective when used in situations such as barking. Naturally if your dog is barking excessively, your first instinct will be to correct him but the best method is to show no reaction at all and ignore it. Once your dog learns that the barking, or whatever it is that he's doing won't get your attention, he will stop because he craves your attention above anything else.

Time-outs can also be an effective way of training your dog as well. Even though dogs are not children, giving your dog a quick time-out can be quite beneficial. You can use a crate or even a small room in order to provide your pet with a time-out. This method can be effective when other methods such as ignoring and verbal reprimands have not worked. You may need to do this several times before your dog takes the hint and understands that he needs to cease the bad behavior in order to avoid a bad behavior, but it does work when you are consistent in applying time-outs.

Finally, the importance of using rewards when training your dog should be stressed. The type of reward that you provide to your dog can vary, but it is critical that your dog have something to look forward to when he does something right. Small dog snacks can be an acceptable reward as can other types of small food. You might also even think about using your dog's favorite toy as a reward as well. This works well when teaching the 'come' command, which we will cover in the next section. Praise is also another excellent form of reward. Regardless of the exact type of reward that you choose to use, make sure that you do use them. The difference you will see in your dog's response to training will definitely be noticeable.

## Section 2



### ***Teaching the 'Come' Command***

The 'come' command is probably the most important command that you can teach your dog. The simple fact is that dogs will at times run away. The moment you open the door, they have a tendency to dart right out it. They are prone to chasing other dogs, cats, squirrels-you name it, and a dog is likely to chase it. If a noise frightens them, they will begin to run and never even think to look out for traffic. You can yell all you like, but if your dog is not well trained for the 'come' command, you could end up with a number of problems on your hands. First, you're likely to spend at least the next thirty minutes chasing and yelling for your dog. Second, your dog could be put into a dangerous situation where he could be hurt or injured.

You can avoid these types of situations by ensuring that your dog is well trained and that most importantly, he understands and will respond to the 'come' command. Teaching your dog to come when you call for him is the single most important thing you can do to ensure his safety and your peace of mind.

Unfortunately, many pet owners see the prospect of training their dog to come on command as quite daunting. The good news is that it does not have to be

daunting at all. With a bit of time and patience as well as good quality dog training resources, the entire process can be successful.

## **How to Teach the ‘Come’ Command**

The first thing you need to know about teaching the ‘come’ command is the importance of dedicating time to it. You cannot expect your dog to learn the ‘come’ command in one training session. As we discussed in the previous section, dogs do not have a long-term memory. They have short attention spans. You will need to work with your dog every day, but keep the training sessions short. Essentially, you will need to teach your dog to come at your command, a little bit at a time. For example, you might start by teaching your dog to come to you on command when you are just a short distance away from him. Little by little, you can then build that up to even longer distances.



In addition, you need to make sure that you start out training your dog and teaching him the ‘come’ command while he is on the leash. You should absolutely not let your dog off the leash when you are teaching the ‘come’ command. This is particularly important if you are in an open, public area such as a park. You just never know when your dog may see something that will catch his fancy and he will dart away from you. Even if you are at home you may have an urge to let him off the leash, but this should be avoided. Even if your yard is

fenced, it is important to keep the leash on so that you can reinforce the command and the training if your dog proves to be somewhat stubborn. So, keep that leash on.

Consistency is vital when teaching a dog any command and that is true with the 'come' command as well. You should set aside some time to work with your dog on a daily basis to teach this command. There may be some days when you simply can't make the training appointment, but don't try to make up for it on another day. Keep those training sessions short. The idea is that you will be establishing a routine that will over time establish a new way of thinking for your pet.

In the beginning, as mentioned, you are going to start out using short distances, but once your pet has mastered that, you will be able to extend it to further distances. This will establish a new rule for your pet so that he or she will understand that they must always come at your command regardless of the situation or where you happen to be. As a result, regardless of whether you are at home, you are out among other dogs or other people, whatever the situation may be, your dog will respond to the 'come' command.

Before we get into the actual step by step process of teaching the 'come' command, it is important to point out that in the beginning you should only use the 'come' command for positive experiences. We discussed in the first section that while your dog's recall memory is relatively short, his associative memory is much longer. This is an important point to remember. If you use the 'come' command when you are first training your dog to point out some mess or accident that your pet no longer even remembers making, then the only thing that is going to be accomplished is that your dog will then associated the 'come' command with something negative. As a result, the next time you try to use the 'come' command, your dog will probably ignore you. So, only use the 'come'

command for positive experiences in the beginning, such as to praise your dog or provide a reward.

Begin by standing on the other side of a room or about ten feet away from your dog. Say, "Come." You can even add in your dog's name if you wish. "Spot, come." When he has come all the way up to you, be sure to praise him enthusiastically. You must make sure that you wait until he has come all the way up to you. Do not praise him when he is only halfway there. If you do he will think that is acceptable.

Repeat this process as frequently as possible, but make sure you do not tire him out by extending the training session too long. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually the ideal length of time for a training session. You always want to make sure that you end a training session on a positive note. If you extend the training session for too long and your dog becomes tired, things can go downhill quickly and next time he might not have such a positive attitude about training. The moment you see that your dog is losing interest or is becoming tired, end the training session right then.

Once your dog is consistently coming at your command from the same distance, you can begin to lengthen the distance. If you are training indoors, try going to another room and calling, "Spot, come!" Or, if you are training outside, extend the distance up to about fifteen feet.

Keep in mind that you always need to have some type of positive reward waiting for your dog or puppy when he comes to you. You can use treats, but you do not have to. Verbal praise as well as a rub on the belly work just fine as well.

## **Teaching the 'Come' Command to the Stubborn Dog**

The training method just described works well for both puppies as well as adult dogs. There may be times; however, when you find that your dog simply does not respond as well as you had hoped. Some dogs, just like people, can be somewhat stubborn. These dogs can take longer to train. You can do it, but you will need to be patient and realize that the process will take longer.

When teaching the 'come' command to a stubborn dog it is even more important than ever to make sure that you have him on a leash and collar. This method can be used to reinforce the behavior that you desire from your dog.

Remember that until you are absolutely sure you can trust your dog 100% of the time (which may take a year or longer) you should not let your dog off the leash in a public area.

If you see that your dog is not responding when you are training, you can actually utilize the leash to reinforce the command. By no means should you drag your dog on the leash. Instead, you can use short or sharp pops or jerks of the leash in order to encourage your dog to come. Make sure that you alternate the pops of the leash with an ample amount of slack so that you do not accidentally drag your dog or puppy, which would be counter-productive and could hurt him. Using short snaps of the leash is a very common method that is used in many forms of dog training in order to communicate to the dog that you are not happy with his behavior.

Most dogs really do desire to please you, their master. Once you have proven to your dog that you are more stubborn than he is by being persistent and consistent with training, he will begin to obey you.

## Assuming the Alpha Role



One element that you may also find helpful in teaching the 'come' command, especially to a stubborn dog is to make sure that you have assumed the Alpha role. We discussed this briefly in the first section. Dogs naturally will either follow in the footsteps of the Alpha leader or they will assume the Alpha role if it is absent. If you are experiencing problems with your dog being resistant to training, it could be that he or she has assumed the Alpha role. If that is the case, you will need to teach your dog that you are in this role so that they will begin to respect you and respond accordingly.

A large portion of assuming the Alpha role lies in simply the attitude that you take. The Alpha has an air of authority and confidence. It should be understood that assuming the Alpha role is never about being aggressive. Instead, it is an attitude that is firm and loving but tough. Once you assume this type of attitude most dogs will respond accordingly with submission because they will recognize that you are in the Alpha position. Keep in mind that your dog will automatically sense if you are uncomfortable or insecure. As a result, he likely won't respond to your commands. If you want him to respond, you need to assume the Alpha position so that he does not.

When working with your dog, make sure you stand tall and exude an air of confidence. Take note of the tone of voice you use with your dog. Make sure it is firm and deep. You also need to make sure that you are telling your dog what to do rather than asking him to do something. There is a distinctive difference between asking and telling. You can rest assured that your dog knows that difference and will recognize it. As the Alpha, it is your right to not only make the rules but also give the orders. When you assume the Alpha role, your dog will instinctively understand that.

If you have a dog that seems to have taken over your entire household, it is extremely critical that you do not delay in assuming the Alpha role. Your relationship with your dog and your entire household will be better for it. Most dogs who assume the Alpha position over their owners will reinforce that position by biting or growling. If they are allowed to get away with it, they will continue to display that kind of behavior. This kind of behavior can be disruptive, dangerous and counter-productive to training. If you want to have the kind of dog that respects your authority as master, then you must assume the Alpha position.

### **Most Common Mistakes in Teaching the 'Come' Command**

Teaching the 'come' command can also be much easier if you are aware of some of the more common mistakes that are often made while teaching the 'come' command. These mistakes can delay the training process and make it more difficult, so read on so you will know what to avoid.

Perhaps the most common mistake that is frequently made is to provide a reward or treat when the dog has not completed the desired reaction. We discussed this a bit earlier and it is critically important. You absolutely must not provide praise or a treat until your dog has actually come all the way to you.

In addition, many dog owners also make the mistake of getting angry with their pets when they do not come to them immediately. This type of negative training really does nothing but make your dog fearful of you.

Another common mistake that is often made when the dog does come back immediately is to so running after the dog. If you are training in a public area, there should be no need for this because you should have your dog on a leash. If you are in your own yard, do not make the mistake of running after your dog. He is likely to see this simply as a game and will keep running. You have also just taught him that if he doesn't do as you say, you will just run after him. That's not exactly the goal of the training. Provided that you are sure your dog is safe and is not in any imminent danger, you should actually run in the opposite direction of your dog and call him to you. Once he has reached you, you can then provide him with plenty of praise.

## Conclusion

Remember, that while training can take time, patience and dedication, it is one of the most important things you can do for your dog. Once you have assured that your dog is well trained he or she will be able to lead a much happier and safer life.

In addition, you will be able to enjoy sharing your life with your dog without some of the common problems and hassles that are experienced by many pet owners who simply ignore the importance of training and make the mistake of thinking that their dogs will somehow, miraculously become well behaved dogs. Without proper training dogs will naturally assume the Alpha role and do everything but what you want them to do.

The investment of a good quality dog training resource can be an extremely important benefit in the process of training your dog. While the idea of training may be daunting to many pet owners, it is an important element in the responsibility of owning a dog that should not be overlooked.

Once your dog is well trained you will be able to relax, knowing that he can be well behaved in any situation. As a result, both of you will be able to enjoy a much more enjoyable life together.

Remember to have fun along the way ☺

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharda Patel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

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