

# Brandon McMillan

TEACHES DOG TRAINING



#### MEET BRANDON

T's no surprise that
Brandon McMillan is
an animal wiz: Having
grown up in a family of wild
animal trainers, Brandon was
helping raise tigers when he
was only four years old. The
animals he's trained have
appeared in countless television commercials and motion
pictures, including the comedy
blockbuster The Hangover (remember that scene with the
tiger in the bathroom? Yeah,
Brandon trained that tiger).

Brandon started to move away from training wild animals after learning the statistics on shelter dog euthanasia in the United States: At the time, 2 million dogs were being put to sleep each year due to a lack of adoptions and resourcing. But a career-changing moment came when a friend asked him to train a service dog for an injured combat veter-

an who had lost both legs in Afghanistan. Brandon spent the better part of a year training a Doberman to perform essential tasks. Upon seeing the veteran's reaction to meeting his new dog, Brandon realized his calling was in training dogs to change people's lives. He quit animal training for film and television that day and began his new quest. Brandon was now taking dogs out of shelters and training them to be service dogs, therapy dogs, and emotional support animals.

To further his goals, he cofounded the Argus Service Dog Foundation. Brandon has received three Emmy Awards: two for Best Host and one for Best Lifestyle Series. He's also the author of the book *Lucky Dog Lessons: Train Your Dog in 7 Days*. A lover of diving and surfing, he splits his time between L.A. and New York City.



#### **PENNY BOTTLE**

Take an empty water bottle, remove the cap, insert a handful of loose change, and recap the bottle. Use when teaching the off command and to curb barking. As an alternative to a homemade penny bottle, check out Brandon's own Shake & Break device.



#### LEASH

Leashes come in a wide variety of colors, lengths, and materials. For effective training, you'll want to make sure you have both a shorter leash (about six feet long) and a longer leash (25 to 30 feet). Leather leashes are more comfortable, but nylon leashes are more durable.



#### **TRAINING CLICKER**

Training clickers emit a distinctive clicking sound when pressed. By triggering a click while simultaneously teaching a technique or offering a treat, you can condition your dog to associate the sound with the command or reward. This, in turn, can help reinforce their training. Clickers can be especially useful for the come command.



## **Brandon's Top Tools**

Ready to get rolling? Here are some of the things Brandon says you'll need to train your furry friends



#### MARTINGALE COLLAR

Martingale collars use two connected loops to progressively decrease the size of the opening around your dog's neck. When your dog's not pulling, the collar fits nice and loose. As they pull, the collar tightens to prevent their heads from slipping out. Martingales are considered more humane than choke and prong collars.



#### **PLASTIC CONES**

Simple plastic cones can be useful for teaching the heel command.



#### **GENTLE LEADER HEADCOLLAR**

The Gentle Leader is an alternative to a traditional collar.

Designed to attach to the dog's snout, the collar sits high on your dog's neck and spares painful yanking on their trachea.



### KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR PUP'S PROGRESS

In a notebook, draw out a simple chart like the one at the right so you can see how your dog is progressing with each command.



#### **PETMATE LURE STICK**

Lure sticks are adjustable rods with a clip at the end for holding treats. They're particularly helpful for training smaller dogs.



#### **EASY WALK HARNESS**

Harnesses attach around your dog's body rather than around their neck. They can be especially useful with smaller dogs, whose necks can be susceptible to whiplash.



#### **TREAT BAG**

Treat bags are specifically designed to hold your dog's favorite treat. Try attaching it to your belt or wearing it over your shoulder for easy access.

#### **KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR PUP'S PROGRESS**

- In a notebook, draw out a simple chart like the one below so you can keep track of your dog's success with each command day after day. A few pointers to help you get started:
  - Tackle one new command per day.
  - Reinforce previous commands while adding in new ones.
  - Document your dog's progression over the course of a week.
  - Housebreaking and basic manners can start at eight weeks.
  - Obedience training can start between four and five months.

| Day     | Session   | Command | Notes  |
|---------|-----------|---------|--|
| Monday  | Morning   | Sít     | Rufus jumped a lot at first,<br>but we were able to end the session<br>on a good note.             |
| Monday  | Afternoon | Sít     | I was able to remove my foot<br>from Rufus's leash. He's definitely<br>getting it!                 |
| Monday  | Evening   | Sít     | Made sure to conduct this session<br>before his dinnertime. He was extra<br>attentive as a result. |
| Tuesday | Morning   | Sít     | Rufus dídn't jump once and<br>responded to sít every tíme.<br>I thínk we'll try down next!         |
| Tuesday | Afternoon |         |  |
| Tuesday |           |         |  |

#### FINDING THE PERFECT PUP

• There's no right or wrong way to find a dog. What's important is finding the dog that's right for you. Brandon doesn't judge anyone who wants to use a breeder, he just prefers to adopt because of the euthanasia statistics that, while substantially lower than they once were, still count more than 1 million dogs per year being put to sleep. When scouting for a dog, consider four things:

#### 1. Your home

Do you live in an apartment or a house? Do you have enough space for a big dog? Do you have a backyard where the dog could easily head outside for exercise and to do their business?

#### 2. Your schedule

Do you have the free time needed to properly train a puppy? Will you be able to provide an energetic dog with the long walks they need?

#### 3. Your lifestyle

Are you an active and adventurous person or a homebody? Do you like to go hiking, camping, and running, or do you prefer leisurely neighborhood strolls?

#### 4. Your wallet

Can you afford the comparatively high costs of buying a dog from a breeder? Can you afford to feed a big dog or a dog with special dietary needs?

You'll also need to keep in mind variables that make every dog unique:

#### 1. Breed

According to the American Kennel Club, there are seven breed groups (Working, Herding, Hound, Sporting, Non-Sporting, Toy, and Terrier). Each breed comes with different personality traits—see the sidebar below for more info on each class.

#### 2. Age

Puppyhood, adolescence, adulthood, senior—over the course of each stage, a dog's personality typically changes.

#### 3. History

If you're buying from a breeder, you'll know the dog's story. If you're adopting from a shelter, the history might be cloudier. Your dog may have been abandoned or even abused, and moments from their history can affect their personality.

#### **BREED ALL ABOUT IT**

### Breaking Down the Different Classes of Dogs

#### THE WORKING GROUP

• Includes Great Danes, Huskies, and Bernese Mountain Dogs. These dogs were originally bred to perform practical duties, including acting as watchdogs and pulling carts and sleds. They are intelligent and loyal.

#### THE HERDING GROUP

• Includes Australian Cattle Dogs, Border Collies, and German Shepherds. Originally bred to herd livestock, these smart and energetic dogs retain the innate ability to corral other animals.

#### THE HOUND GROUP

• Includes Bassets, Beagles, and Blood Hounds. Originally bred for hunting, this group's powerful sense of smell also makes them ideal for law enforcement applications. They are affectionate and strong-willed.



"The world for humans has changed; but for dogs, their personalities, their DNA, has not changed."

BRANDON MCMILLAN



#### 4. Imprinted DNA

This is where nature versus nurture comes into play. Certain characteristics are inherent to your dog and cannot be changed. Dogs are not a blank slate. Herding dogs, for example, already know how to herd from birth—they don't need to be taught.

#### THE SPORTING GROUP

• Includes Cocker Spaniels, Golden Retrievers, and English Setters. Originally bred to assist hunters in retrieving game, these high-energy dogs have retained a love for the great outdoors.

### THE NON-SPORTING GROUP

• Includes Dalmatians, Chow Chows, and Bulldogs. Dogs from the Non-Sporting Group run the gamut in terms of physical and personality traits, but all are ready candidates for loving pets.

#### **THE TOY GROUP**

 Includes Chihuahuas, Maltese, and Pugs. The Toy Group is composed of dogs that are small in stature but big on brains and affection. They are great lap dogs.

#### THE TERRIER GROUP

• Includes Airedales, Jack Russels, and Scottish Terriers. Terriers were originally bred to kill vermin (which they are still very good at), but they have become beloved watchdogs and pets over generations.



#### **BUILDING TRUST**

- dog effectively, you've got to get them to trust you. This is especially important with shelter dogs, who may have come from an abusive situation. The best ways to build trust are also the easiest things to do with your dogs:
  - Take them for walks
  - Give them treats
  - Play with them
  - Invite them to sit by your side as you read, watch TV, etc.
  - Most importantly, don't rush the process

Your goal is to lead them, not dominate them. As Brandon says, dogs learn at the speed of life, not the speed of light. So, don't rush your training. Make sure your dog is well-rested in between training sessions and that you buy treats they really like—your pooch shouldn't have to work for free.

There are two other important pieces of groundwork for successful training:

#### 1. Exercise is critical

If your dog isn't getting enough exercise, they're likely to act out, run wild, and lose the focus needed to be trained. In fact, the vast majority of a dog's behavioral issues likely stem from lack of exercise.

#### 2. Socialization is vital

Lack of socialization—spending time around other dogs and humans—can lead to aggression and anxiety. Same goes for loud or stressful

environments. Slowly acclimating your dog to these situations will ensure they stay calm when presented with new challenges. Remember: Even older dogs can be socialized.



### How Can I Socialize My Dog?

There are a variety of strategies for socializing your dogs, from introducing them to new people, to discouraging nibbling, to exposing them to loud noises or unfamiliar situations. The Animal Humane Society offers more information on how to socialize dogs of all ages.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND

### **Acts of Service**

For centuries, humans have been raising and training dogs to perform essential tasks. (There's a reason why entire groups of dogs are categorized as shepherds and retrievers.) But in the last 100 years or so, the training of dogs to assist people with disabilities has taken off. For the blind, a guide dog can make quick work of navigating busy streets. For the deaf, a service dog can make it clear when a smoke detector goes off or there's a knock at the front door. Dogs can even be trained to anticipate

seizures or cardiac episodes (like a drop in blood pressure), and emotional support animals can calm people with anxiety or agoraphobia as they navigate the challenges of everyday life.

Sadly, wars have also caused a boom in the demand for service dogs. Like the Doberman that Brandon trained for the double-amputee veteran, dogs of all breeds have been called upon to serve those who serve us. Dogs are even being deployed in combat zones covered in the same type of body armor worn by their human brothers and sisters in arms. You can learn more about service dogs for veterans through the <u>Argus Service Dog Foundation</u>, an organization that Brandon cofounded.

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF TRAINING

dog, know that you've got to do some homework, too. The first piece of preparation is mental. Know that there will be ups and downs in the training cycle. Some days, it'll seem like your dog can do no wrong. The two of you will be perfectly in sync and your pup will be flying through the commands.

Other days, you'll have to try again and again to get him or her to cooperate. Rest assured that a bad training session does not mean you've failed or that your dog has no hope of learning the command. Training is a marathon, not a sprint.

In addition to mental prep, you've also got to have the necessary tools: leashes, a harness, and some kind of treat that your dog really loves (see page 3). But just buying a leash isn't enough. You have to know how to use it properly. Since leashing a dog gives you 90 percent more control over them, developing proper leash technique is essential. Brandon covers a few different leashing methods (see right).





#### The Pointed Finger Lock

Place the leash between your pointer and middle fingers, then make a fist.

#### The Thumb Lock

Take the leash around your thumb, run it over your pointer finger, then make a fist.





#### The Double Loop

Loop the leash over your pointer finger twice, secure with your thumb, then make a fist.

#### The Body Anchor

Find your center of gravity (the area between your hips and mid core). Grab the leash with both hands, placing the hand that's farthest from your dog against the small of your back. Next, twist your hips and lean back. This places the leash's tension on your body, saving your arms.





#### The J Leash

When training, aim to leave enough slack in the leash so that it forms a small curve at the end attached to your dog's collar, similar to the letter J.

#### The Double Leash Lock Off

This crucial technique will require two leashes, a collar, and a harness. Take the back leash and anchor it using a stake or something heavy, then attach it to your dog's harness. The front leash—the control leash—will be attached to their collar and used for correction. This system prevents them from moving forward, backward, left, or right.

#### THE 7 COMMON COMMANDS

 There are two main approaches to training dogs, and each relies on its own set of psychological principles.

#### 1. Compulsive Training

This system was the dominant method of dog training for decades. During compulsive training, the trainer will often physically place the dog into the desired posture (forcing them to sit by pushing their butt down, for example). When the dog misbehaves, positive punishment—like a strong jerk on the leash—is employed (in psychological terms, "positive" means to give or do something to the subject, not that the action is necessarily good).

#### 2. Operant Conditioning

The realization that compulsive training can be detrimental to the psyches of some dogs gave rise to a new psychological approach to training—operant conditioning. This approach relies on rewards rather than punishment. Dogs are coaxed into the desired behaviors through an incentive, usually a treat, and quickly rewarded when they perform successfully. Brandon's method is a simplified technique-plus-conditioning process that gets you

from point A to point B in a quick and humane way.

Brandon's training system revolves around seven commands: sit, down, stay, no, off, come, and heel. While each of these commands is unique, there are certain principles that unite them. The first is the importance of control, the cornerstone of all training. A controlled animal is:

- Focused
- Calm
- Attentive

It's essential to have control over your dog before you begin teaching them a technique. Remember that using a leash gives you 90 percent more control over your dog, which is why all training should be done on leash.

From a position of control, you are able to teach the technique of a given command—to run to you when you say "come," for example.

Conditioning is the repeated instruction of a technique. Through conditioning, your dog will build muscle memory, and commands will eventually become second nature.

By doing these things, you will increase the amount of

trust your dog has in you and the affection they feel for you. No matter which command you're working on, you'll want to train your dog in 10- to 15-minute sessions three times a day. Always make sure to end each session on a good note with your dog performing the technique successfully. As Brandon says, "if you combine all these things together, you'll not only have a well-trained dog, but you'll have a best friend who trusts and loves you and will be there for you through thick and thin for the rest of their life."



#### When Did Dog Training Become a Thing?

Modern dog training traces its history to the first decades of the last century. Dogs were trained to serve various functions during the first and second World Wars, although the methods were punishment-based and generally cruel. Fortunately, gentler methods were popularized after World War II, and force-free, reward-based training has since taken root.







• There's no set order for training commands, but Brandon thinks sit is a good one to start with. It provides a strong foundation and offers a natural transition to the other common commands.

With every command you teach, you're going to employ both a verbal command and a hand signal. You'll want to teach both at the same time. For the sit command, hold a treat between your first two fingers and place your hand palm-side up at a 45-degree angle above your dog's head.

1. To begin, make sure your dog is leashed and you have control.

- vent your dog from jumping up. Make sure you're giving enough lead to prevent choking but not so much that they can jump up on you.
- instructed above your dog's head, about six inches from their snout. The placement of the treat above the head is key—your goal is to hold the treat just outside of your dog's peripheral view because they can't bend their neck to look up any higher. The only possible way to see the treat is for them to sit, which brings the treat into their line of sight.
- 4. Say "sit," making sure to enunciate. Say it with emphasis. Make it a command, not a request.
- **5.** As soon as your dog sits, reward them with the treat and heavy praise.
- 6. Repeat the process for up to 15 minutes, always making sure to reset your dog so they are under control and attentive before you begin the command.
- and better at the technique and stops jumping up for the treat, remove your foot from the leash.



#### GTF

#### How Often Should I Train These Commands?

Train these commands three times a day for 10 to 15 minutes each. There are two times when training is most effective: when the dog's energy is right (they're not too fired up or too tired) and when they're hungry (they'll be extra focused on your treats). The morning or right before dinner is ideal.



## ((DOWN))

- your dog in a sitting position on some form of higher ground: a table, a curb, a couch—somewhere that will allow you to place your treat hand below their body. From there, you'll want to employ the double leash lock off (see page 10). The leash attached to your dog's harness will act as an anchor, while the leash attached to their collar can be used to gently lead their head in the direction you want it to go (i.e., down).
  - a sitting position, hold your hand near their mouth with a treat placed between your first two fingers. You're now ready to begin the command.
  - **2.** As you say "down"—remember to annunciate—move the treat away from your dog's

- mouth and below their body, guiding them toward a down.
- mand and coax your dog's body downward with the treat until their elbows hit the surface. If they're stubborn and refuse to go down, wait them out. They eventually give up and lie down out of boredom.
- **4.** As soon as your dog enters a down position, reward them with a treat and heavy praise.
- **5.** Continue to pay your dog with treats so long as their elbows remain down. Don't forget to continue saying "down."
- 6. Reset your dog and repeat.

As your pup begins to get the down technique, stand up and add some distance between the

- two of you. Once your dog masters the pedestal, move to level ground and continue training.
- For stubborn dogs who don't respond to this technique, try the grab-and-slide technique:
- 1. Take your dog's collar in your left hand and place your left arm over their body, anchoring your elbow on the tabletop.
- 2. Using your right hand, slip a treat under your dog's body while simultaneously sliding their front legs out. This will guide your dog into the down position.
- down position, hover over them with your body to prevent them from standing up (but do not place your body weight on the dog).
- **4.** Keep your dog in the down position and pay them with treats over and over while saying the command.

After a couple of sessions training the grab-and-slide technique, you should be able to stand in front of your dog, say "down," and have them comply with only the verbal command due to conditioning.









- When you begin teaching the stay command, you'll want to start your dog in a corner—or anywhere with a 90-degree angle—which will reduce the number of directions they can run from eight to three. Now stand in front of them, reducing their number of escape routes to two. You'll then use your hands to cut off their last two directions. Once you have your dog in position with their leash on:
  - 1. Stand a few inches away from your dog and extend your hand, palm up, with a treat between your first two fingers. Say "stay" with emphasis—you don't want to use a voice that suggests this command is an option.
  - 2. Give your dog treats while they remain stationary. Don't worry if they try to dart. That's why you're holding them on the leash. If they do dart, reset them, and begin again with the command.
  - **3.** Back away from your dog slowly, keeping your hand on

- their leash and repeating the command. If he or she tries to dart toward you, take a step forward to discourage them.
- **4.** If your dog stays from this distance, slowly return to your starting position (a few inches away) and reward them.
- **5.** Continue the process of backing farther and farther away, but always return to your dog slowly to pay him or her with treats.
- **6.** Eventually, you'll get to a distance where you can drop the leash and continue backing away.

After two to three days of training stay in the corner, you'll want to move your dog to a flat wall. This increases the number of directions they can run, which in turn increases the importance of the command. While the location has changed, the process remains the same as the corner stay.

If your dog has progressed after two to three days of training against a flat wall, you can begin training the technique in the open. The idea here is to utilize orbiting, or slowly walking around your dog while repeating the stay command. This is a new setup for your dog, so don't get discouraged if they try to dart at first.

Once your dog has mastered the technique in an open area, you'll want to introduce distractions. Begin by stepping on their leash. Next, throw toys and treats around. As you throw each toy, repeat the stay command. If your dog doesn't bolt toward the toys, reward him or her. Reset and repeat.

"You want to make sure that your tell your dog to stay. Don't ask them."

BRANDON MCMILLAN



- Just like down, you'll want to start this command with your dog on some sort of pedestal. Attach a leash to their harness and anchor it behind him or her, preventing your dog from reaching you or the treats.
  - **1.** Place a treat just outside your dog's reach.
  - **2.** As your dog reaches for the treat, say "no." Continue to say the command.
  - they're calm and stop reaching for the treat, wait five to seven seconds, then reward him or her. Make sure to reward your dog from your hand, not from the pedestal. Say "okay" as you do. "Okay" is the release command.
  - **4.** Once your dog gets the hang of it, place up to five treats out

- in front of them, saying "no" each time you place a treat on the pedestal. If he or she is calm for five to seven seconds, pick up all five treats and reward your dog with a treat from your hand.
- **5.** As your dog progresses, begin to place the treats within their reach.
- 6. If your dog goes for the treats, attempt to stop them with the voice command (don't rely on the anchor leash). You can also tap your fingers on the pedestal as you say the command, which will break your dog's focus on the treat.
- **7.** Continue to move treats progressively closer to your dog.
- **8.** Once your dog masters the technique on the pedes-

- tal, move him or her onto the ground with no restraint. Place treats around your dog and use the no command to restrain them. If your dog doesn't respect the no command in this setting, move them back onto the pedestal and repeat the previous steps.
- 9. Don't move too fast. Give your dog as much time as he or she needs to really grasp the command.

"If trained correctly, a no command could be a lifesayer."

BRANDON MCMILLAN







The off command is particularly important for training puppies and for big dogs, the latter of which can pose a safety hazard when they jump up on people. There are three versions of the off command:

#### **Version One**

- 1. Step on your dog's leash as you did with the stay command. Have a treat ready.
- 2. Crouch down and get excited. Say your dog's name, but don't call them up to your chest (you don't want to send mixed signals here). Hold a treat up above their head.
- a. Any time your dog jumps, say "off." Use a firm voice.

  Let the leash do the work—it should stop them in their tracks if they jump.
- 4. Once your dog stops jumping, wait about 10 to 15 seconds, then reward them (you don't want to reward them right away because doing so will teach them to jump then stop for a treat). If they jump during that window of time, reset and retry.
- 5. Once your dog gets the technique with you in a crouching position, stand up and repeat the process. You can start eliminating treats after a few sessions.

#### **Version Two**

This variation of the off command requires you to grab your dog's paws when they jump on you. It typically works better with medium to large dogs. (If your dog is reactive when their paws are touched, do not use this technique.)

- you, grab and hold their paws while repeating the off command. You want to make the whole idea of jumping up on you boring for them by using a little bit of reverse psychology.
- **2.** Release their paws and look for 10 to 15 seconds of no jumping. If they make it that long without jumping, reward them.
- 3. Repeat the process.

#### **Version Three**

This variation of the off command follows the same process as version one, except this time you'll also use a penny bottle (see page 3). The idea of using the bottle is similar to tapping the table or pedestal as Brandon demonstrates during the no command: It offers a disruptive sound to get your dog off of you, but it shouldn't replace the voice command.

- **1.** When your dog jumps, say "off" and shake the penny bottle.
- 2. While the sound of the penny bottle can help discourage your dog from jumping, it's important to not let it replace your command. The goal is to have them respond to the command, not the penny bottle.
- **3.** Make sure to correct your dog when they jump on you.

## ((COME))

- When training the come command, you'll be starting your dog from the stay position. If they don't already know the stay command, use a second person to hold your dog in place. With the dog's leash in hand:
  - **1.** Slowly take a few steps away from your dog.
  - 2. Slap your leg (or clap your hands) while saying your dog's name and "come" in a very inviting voice. Make sure to keep a treat between the first two fingers of the hand you're using to slap your leg.
  - **3.** Once your dog runs to you, pay them with the treat and offer heavy praise.
  - 4. Reset them. Now, move back at least six feet or until you're at the end of the leash. Repeat the command and the leg slap.
  - **5.** If your dog doesn't come to you immediately, pull them towards you with the leash.
  - **6.** Once they come to you, make sure to pay them in treats.
  - 7. Now, move back 10 feet and repeat the process. Then go for

20 feet. Just remember: You only want to increase your distance *after* your dog is reliably coming to you every time.

Once your dog has mastered these techniques, it's time to introduce distractions. Grab some of their favorite toys, then:

- 1. Begin the process again, standing just a few feet from your dog. Maintain control of their leash in case you need to keep them from running after toys.
- a toy, then back up farther.
  When you're ready and your dog is focused on the toy, throw it off to the side. At the same time, call for your dog to come.
- **3.** Repeat this process until your dog ignores the toy and comes straight to you.

Some other ideas for distractions include having another dog join in, getting someone to ring the doorbell, and enlisting a friend to compete with your dog for your attention.

Once your dog has mastered the come command on a short leash and with added distractions, try the techniques on the long leash. Over time, give fewer treats when your dog completes the command.

Eventually you'll want to implement a reward lottery system in which treats become sporadic but heavy praise is always offered. You want to start and end with a treat, but give treats throughout a session, too (so earning a treat becomes a "lottery"). As time goes on you'll give fewer and fewer treats until you're only giving praise. This process is vital for weaning dogs off of treats.



Q+A

## Is My Dog Ready for Off-Leash Training?

If your dog has learned the come command, you may think they're ready to go off-leash. But keep in mind that some dogs aren't meant for the off-leash life; there are some instincts that no amount of training can overcome. If you're considering removing the leash, make sure to have a professional trainer evaluate him or her to make sure they're a candidate for that style of training.





#### THE 7 COMMON COMMANDS

## HEEL

• With the heel command, you'll be training your dog to stay by your side when you walk. But with puppies, it's best to start with something even simpler: the leash drag.

The leash drag is exactly what it sounds like: You'll attach a leash to your puppy's collar and let them drag it around your backyard or some other enclosed space during

a short session. During every session you should pick up the leash and drop it—as sessions go on you'll pick up the leash for longer periods of time and let them feel some slight resistance. Once they've gotten accustomed to walking while attached to a leash, you're ready to teach them to heel. If your dog is already accustomed to a leash, you can skip

the leash drag stage and go straight to the command.

The setup for heel involves small plastic cones (or anything that creates a narrow alleyway), which you'll use in conjunction with an existing wall to create a pathway for your dog to walk through. This is especially helpful for dogs that tend to walk in a zigzag pattern.

#### FOR MEDIUM AND LARGE DOGS

- 1. Make sure your dog's collar is sitting high on their neck, just under their jaw and right behind their ears. This will give you greater control. Create your J leash (see page 10) with your hand at the height it would naturally fall when walking.
- **2.** Get your dog's attention with a treat and keep them at your side.
- **3.** Take one step forward while saying "heel." Treat them immediately as they step forward with you.
- **4.** If they lunge or jump for the treat, close your hand and tell them "no." It's very common for dogs to do this at first, so a little patience goes a long way.
- 5. Once your dog can manage one step

- forward, take two steps forward at a time, continuing to say "heel" and offering treats. Make sure to reward your dog as he or she is walking with you—don't stop walking to treat them.
- **6.** Once your dog has the fundamentals down, begin walking at different speeds, making turns, stopping and starting, and so on. Continue to say the command and pay with treats.
- **7.** As your dog progresses, you can move the cones farther and farther away from the wall, widening their walkway. Eventually, you can remove the cones altogether.
- **8.** With enough conditioning, you won't need treats to keep your dog at your side. Once they're advanced enough, you can even remove their leash.

#### FOR SMALL DOGS

- 1. Instead of keeping a treat in your hand, you'll want to employ a lure stick. This will allow you to keep your dog's focus on the treat without having to bend down to their height. It's also advisable to use a harness instead of a collar and to make any leash corrections from your wrist, not your arm. This will spare your dog any whiplash.
- **2.** Get your dog to focus on the lure stick. Keep it about six inches away from their head.
- **3.** When your dog lunges for the treat, quickly pull it away. Place it back within their reach

- and repeat the process until they no longer lunge. Once they stop lunging and are walking smoothly with you, reward them.
- 4. Once your dog is able to stay focused on the treat without lunging, you're ready to follow the method above to train them to heel. Pro tip: Attach some string between the cones to keep your dog from easily dashing through the gaps.
- **5.** As your dog progresses, shorten the lure stick. Eventually you'll be able to lose it altogether.



## HOUSEBREAKING

 Getting puppies to do their business outside can be a challenge. But, with the help of the housetraining triangle crate to outside to inside to crate again—you can get them housebroken in no time.

#### **CRATE**

- Size is key when it comes to picking the right crate for your pup. If you choose one that's too big, they'll have the ability to do their business on one side of it and still sleep at the other end. Choose one that's too small, and it will be uncomfortable. Go for a crate that allows your puppy to stand up, circle around, and lie down comfortably.
- Once you get a crate that's the proper size, make sure it's inviting. Add some blankets—make it cozy.
- Place the crate by the door so that it's easy for your dog to get outside and go to the bathroom before they have the chance to go inside the house.

#### **OUTSIDE**

 Take puppies outside to do their business. Say a command, such as "do your business" or "go potty," and wait for them to go. If they

- do, treat them heavily.
- In the future, make sure to leash them as soon as they leave the crate, and get them outside ASAP.
- Remember to use your command as they do their business and reward them when they do.

#### **FREE TIME**

- After your pup successfully goes to the bathroom, bring them back inside for an hour of supervised free time.
- You'll want to limit your puppy to one room when starting out, so dog gates and closed doors are a must here. This allows you to keep an eye on them and prevent them from getting into too much trouble.
- Make this time fun: toys, attention, and so on.

#### **BACK TO THE CRATE**

- After an hour of free time, return your dog to the crate for about three hours.
- Asking puppies to hold their bladders like this trains their muscles and develops them for adulthood.
- After about three hours in the crate, it's time to head back outside and repeat the process.

As your dog progresses, begin to add on to their free time and subtract from time in the crate (about 15 to 20 minutes each day). Eventually, you can make the decision to no longer crate them at all—and at that point, your dog is housetrained.

A few special considerations to keep in mind:

- At mealtime, you'll want to feed your puppy in the crate, then immediately take them outside (eating gets their systems moving very fast).
- If you live in an apartment, place a pen around a piddle pad and use that as a substitute for the backyard.
- To decrease the chance of house accidents, stop giving your puppy water at least two hours before bedtime.

If your puppy does go in the house, there's a simple and effective way to discourage them: Leash them to some kind of anchor—a chair, a table, a cinder block—beside the site of the accident and leave them there for about 20 to 30 minutes. Dogs don't want to hang around their own pee or poop. You can use a similar approach for adult dogs who mark their territories indoors.



**BEHAVIOR** 

## DOOR DASHING

 We've all seen dogs dash for an open door, the gateway to their beloved outdoors. But door dashing is a great way to lose your dog or injure the person who's just arrived on your doorstep.

For this technique, you'll want to use the thumb grip (see page 10) on your 30-footlong leash. Keep some slack in the leash—you don't want to prevent your dog from dart-

ing, but you do want to maintain control if they do.

- 1. Crack the door open by one to two inches and then shut it quickly. Don't hit your dog in the face with the door—timing and speed are important.
- **2.** Wait for your dog to calm down, back away from the door, or sit before you crack the door open again.

- **3.** Repeat these steps: Open, shut, wait.
- 4. Once your dog gets the hang of it, try opening the door by about three inches. If your dog doesn't dart, wait 10 to 15 seconds with them in a controlled position, close the door, then treat. After that, try opening the door by 5 inches. If your dog doesn't dart, wait 10 to 15 seconds with them in

a controlled position, close the door, then treat.

- ing the door wider and wider each time (but don't open it any wider than what will keep your dog calm and content). Eventually you'll be able to open the door all the way. If your dog makes a move to get out, you can use a voice command like "no" or "stay" to remind your dog not to move, but ultimately you don't want them to rely on a voice command for this technique.
- **6.** Once your dog has got it, drop the leash and continue the process.

After your dog has mastered the technique with you inside the house, try opening the door and taking a step outside. Your dog should remain calm and controlled at the threshold.

- 1. Slowly walk farther and farther from the doorway. If your dog tries to dart, correct them from your position and wait for them to reset.
- 2. Slowly go back inside the house, close the door, and then praise and treat your dog. Remember to save your praise until you're close enough to pet your dog—you want to

reinforce the idea that doing nothing gets them paid.

3. Next you'll work on walking your dog through the doorway with you, making sure they heel as you do. Employ a verbal command such as "okay" to signal that it's alright for your dog to exit, then treat them.

If you've got a particularly determined dog or if your door isn't well-suited for the method above, here are some additional tactics to try:

- 1. Attach your dog's leash to something solid or heavy near the doorway that can act as an automatic stop if they dart.
- 2. Use a large piece of card-board to block the doorway if your dog starts to dash. This should discourage them from continuing.
- **3.** Lay crinkled tinfoil sheets on the floor in front of your doorway. Your dog will likely halt when their feet touch this unfamiliar surface.

Keep in mind that this same method can be applied to dogs who have a tendency to dash from inside your car. Just replace your home's door with your car's door. And make sure to practice in your

WHAT A GOOD BOY

### A Quick History of Dog Training

As you set out on the adventure of training your dog, know that you are working with an animal whose origins are the wolves that still run wild across the world today. The domestication of dogs began more than 10,000 years ago, and over the course of millennia, humans selectively bred dogs for a variety of purposes—to hunt, to retrieve, to herd, to guard, to offer comfort and companionship. Dogs were as likely to be found on rural farms as they were in the imperial courts of Europe and the Far East. And while they have been domesticated for thousands of years, they still share plenty of DNA with their wolfy forbears. As Brandon says: "We're the ones who genetically modified the wolf...so it should be our responsibility to at least make some sort of attempt to help them."

garage, driveway, or an empty parking lot—you don't want your dog getting away from you in the street.

## DIGGING, CHEWING, BARKING

#### **DIGGING**

If your dog is one for digging holes, the solution is simple—all you need is some of their poop. Place the poop in the hole and cover it up with one or two inches of dirt. Repeat the process with any other holes your dog may dig. Soon, they'll be done digging altogether.

#### **CHEWING**

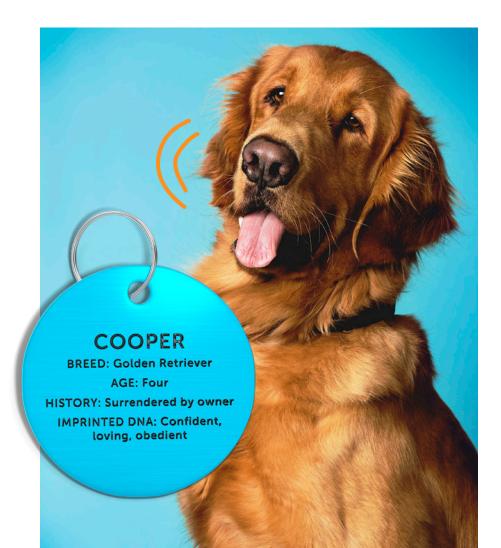
Dogs of all ages like to chew, but the behavior is more common among puppies and adolescents. This is because their teeth are coming in and moving around, and the process is itchy. Since they can't scratch that itch, they chew to relieve it. You'll never stop a dog from chewing, you'll only redirect

what it is they're chewing on.

To curb unwanted chewing, you'll need three objects your dog can chew—like toys—and three things they can't chew—a shoe, the TV remote, a hat, etc.

- **1.** Place all six of the objects on the ground in front of your dog.
- 2. If your dog goes for a no-chew object, give a quick verbal reprimand, then redirect them to an object they are allowed to chew.
- **3.** When they chew something that they *are* allowed to chew, offer heavy praise.
- **4.** Once your dog is focused on a chew-appropriate item, remove the other objects.

As an alternative, you could try squeezing some lemon into their mouth when they begin chewing something they're not supposed to chew. With larger dogs, you might even try temporarily tying the chewed item to them to discourage future gnawing.





#### JUNO

BREED: Golden Retriever
AGE: 13 weeks
HISTORY: Recently adopted
IMPRINTED DNA:
Happy-go-lucky,
very sweet, curious,
eager to learn

BARKING

Barking is a natural instinct that all dogs have—they're typically barking at something that they perceive as a threat. You're never going to get your dog to stop barking altogether; your goal is to get them to stop barking on command.

For barking, you'll need your trusty penny bottle (see page 3) and some treats. When your dog barks excessively, say "quiet," shake the penny bottle, and say "quiet" again. As the days go by, shake the bottle less and less and rely more on the verbal command.

When your dog stops barking, treat them. (Be sure to keep several penny bottles around the house in key areas where barking is common: one by front door, one in kitchen, one by the couch, etc.)

For an advanced anti-barking technique:

- Leash your dog and do something to encourage them to bark, like having a second person ring the doorbell or knock on the door.
- **2.** When your dog barks, say "speak" and use a hand signal

(such as opening and closing your fist while holding it in front of your face) and treat them.

**3.** Continue this technique over several sessions.

Once your dog understands the speak command you can train them to stay quiet:

- 1. Use the speak command.
  After your dog begins barking, say "quiet."
- 2. Continue to repeat the command until your dog stops barking. Wait for at least a few seconds of silence, then treat them.
- **3.** Repeat the process over several sessions, slowly increasing the amount of time you wait before treating them.

#### PARTING WORDS FROM BRANDON

"One of the most common things I hear people say to me is, 'my dog is untrainable.' And I say back to them that there are no untrainable dogs, just untrained humans. Most importantly, I want you to understand how important trust is between you and your dog. That bond, that relationship—it's just like with humans. The more trust you have between each other, the more you'll learn | from | each other."

**CREDITS** 

**CLASS** 

Brandon training a group of dogs Courtesy Bob Riha, Jr. **WORKBOOK** 

Dog tags Illustrations by Comrade

Gear Guide Illustrations by Jason Schneider Assorted dog toys Courtesy Liliboas/ Getty Images

