

Obedience Class

A dog that does not have at least some basic obedience skills is more likely to be surrendered to an animal shelter. For this reason it is important that we teach our dogs the skills that they need to become pets that will live their lifetime in a home.

Basic obedience courses for dogs can be found in pet stores, some are even offered by your local parks and recreation departments or animal rescue facilities. There are also many independent trainers and training facilities that specialize in training classes for dogs.

Choosing a Class

Good dog training instructors are knowledgeable about many different types of training methods; however, they use techniques that neither the dogs nor their owners find unpleasant. Ask the instructor what training methods are used and how they (the instructor and staff) were trained.

Ask to observe a class before you commit to one. If you're refused an observation, or if your observation results in anything that makes you uncomfortable, look elsewhere.

Good training methods focus primarily on reinforcing/praising for good behavior in an appropriate and humane way. Physical corrections, such as jerking, yanking, pinning, scruff shakes, etc. are not humane methods. These types of methods teach a dog to be afraid/distrustful of you.

Equipment such as choke chains, pinch (prong) collars, shock collars or using collars to lift dogs off of the ground ("stringing them up") are not appropriate or humane training methods. In fact, these methods are often animal abuse.

Good dog training instructors communicate well with people and with dogs. Remember that they're instructing you about how to train your dog.

Specific problems you may have with your dog may not be addressed in a basic dog training course. If you're seeking help with house soiling, barking, aggression or separation anxiety, ask if the course covers these issues -- don't assume it will. If it does not, then private lessons would be an option to help you with these specific issues.

Avoid anyone who guarantees their work; whose primary methods focus on punishment; or who want to take your dog and train him for you (effective training must include you and the environment in which you and your dog interact).

Finding a Trainer

Dallas-Fort Worth area trainers:

<http://dfwforcefree.weebly.com/>

Certified dog trainers:

www.apdt.com

Certified Behavior Consultants:

www.iaabc.org