

# SET YOUR DOG UP FOR SUCCESS

*Susan Isaacs, trainer*  
Phone: 310-248-2420  
Email: [susanisaacs@mac.com](mailto:susanisaacs@mac.com)

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## 1. BE CONSISTENT

If you are consistent, your dog will learn your rules. Be clear and fair. Everyone in the family needs to enforce the rules. Don't allow your dog to misbehave one minute and punish her the next. Also, dogs do best when they have an established routine for feeding, elimination, bed time, etc.

## 2. DON'T CORRECT UNLESS YOU CATCH HIM IN THE ACT

Your dog lives in the immediate present. He connects good and bad experiences with what he is doing at the moment. Therefore, if you're rewarding good behavior or discouraging bad behavior, you must catch him in the act. Interrupt an unwanted behavior with a reprimand and immediately redirect him to an acceptable behavior. After-the-fact corrections are useless -- they will confuse the dog and teach him to distrust and fear you. Similarly, if you've asked for and received a good "sit", mark it (e.g., "good dog!") at the very moment it happens.

## 3. STAY CLOSE

To learn what you expect from her, your dog should be under your constant supervision, that is, in the same room as you. If you are not home or unable to pay attention to her, she should be crated. The crate keeps her safe and keeps your home safe (from her). Note: A crate is NOT a babysitter! Learn the correct way to use a crate.

## 4. MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

Your home, furniture, clothing, books, food, etc. are yours, not your dog's. If your dog has not been trained to behave around your things, don't give him access to them.

## 5. BE HAPPY

Training should be fun for both you and your dog. Your enthusiasm is as important as the reward (treat, toy, praise, etc.) you provide for desirable behavior. Keep the session upbeat. If you're sick, if you're frustrated, if you're in a bad mood, your dog and the training will suffer. Take a break and return to it when you're feeling better. Similarly, if your dog is sick, don't bring him to class. It's still a good idea to try to attend class by yourself so you can practice with the dog later.

## 6. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

The hour you spend in class every week is primarily for you to learn the proper techniques. At home is when your dog does most of her learning. You need to work with her every day, just a few minutes at a time, to reinforce what you both are learning. Dogs learn by constant repetition. They also have short attention spans. Incorporate exercises into everyday activities to make them more fun, and more relevant. For example: Want your dinner? Sit first. Want to go for a walk/a drive in the car? Sit first. Want to play with your toy? Sit first. Want a tummy rub? Sit first. Always end practice sessions on a high note.

## 7. THERE'S NO FREE LUNCH

Dogs need love and attention. However, no dog should receive attention whenever she demands it. Nudging, barking, jumping or other "pushy" behaviors must not be reinforced. Attention should be given on your terms. It is a powerful reward, so don't give it away so freely! Play sessions are a great way to bond with your dog. Make sure that you control when they start and when they end. Keep in mind your dog's short attention span and end the game while she still wants more.

