

Reward based training

- Can you imagine learning from someone that clips you around the ear when you do something wrong?
- Can you imagine learning from someone who scolds you for trying?
- Can you imagine learning from someone who punishes your efforts?

This is why reward based training is about utilising motivational techniques and encouraging responses rather than compulsion. Corrective methods of training are demotivating, harsh, archaic, counter-productive to training and potentially harmful to dogs and at the very least they damage the owner dog relationship.

Lets take a few moments to look at what a reward is and how it can be used effectively.

Timing your reward / praise.

When you begin to teach your dog a new exercise, you should give him, his earned reward as soon after the desired behaviour has occurred as possible, hopefully within a second or two. When this occurs every time, it is termed a continuous schedule of reinforcement, (the behaviour has been reinforced continually).

Similarly, you go to work each day and earn a paycheck continually at the end of each week. Although the time scale in which you receive your reward is extended the principle remains the same.

Once the desired behaviour is being achieved successfully time after time, then the reward can be placed on a random reward schedule, this will have the effect of strengthening a response and is the best way to perpetuate a learned behaviour.

Have you ever played the 'Lottery'? Camelot places their reward on a random reward schedule. You play each week in the hope of changing your life for the better, but as each week passes the reward doesn't come. That doesn't stop you from playing, in-fact it has the opposite effect of creating a greater desire to want to play more. It is just the same for your dog.