

Jane Anderson's

10 Simple rules

Intro

Whilst humans usually try their best to be great dog owners, they can apply the incorrect techniques because of lack of knowledge, or because “world famous” tv dog trainers do things a certain way.

Let me be clear as a starting point – there is no tv dog trainer that I endorse. Some of the information contained in these dog “training” shows is downright wrong, sometimes cruel, and in many cases – will not get the desired behaviours you want from your dog.

Resorting to violence is not the way to establish an appropriate relationship and subsequent behaviour from your dog.

This document outlines the steps the humans need to take to get the required behaviour from their dog. Remember, establish the behavioural patterns early!

Good news!

Actually, getting the right behaviour from dogs is very, very easy. Firstly, forget the cute idea they are humans with furry coats. Dogs have their own specific needs, and are incapable of understanding human society. In order to communicate effectively with your dog/s you need to really understand the way they function, and how to get the best out of them. If you remove the confusion, and implement good pack management techniques, your dog will be happy, and an absolute joy to live with.

I've got my 10 simple rules listed below. All of my puppy people are now given this rule sheet and coached through the rules. Regardless of your breed of dog, or where you got it from, following these simple rules below will help you sort out your dog. These rules provide clear indication to the dog/s that you are the pack manager, and this is the way your pack operates.

When your dog understands that they do not rule your house and its people, they will settle, become less anxious, and lose a lot more undesirable behaviours resulting in significantly less barking, much less jumping up, and other inappropriate behaviour.

I support positive training techniques such as clicker training.

Learn good habits early

We are trying to establish a set of behaviours and habits in your pup, and with the humans, that will result in a pleasant relationship down the track. Enjoy your pup and enjoy the process of setting the right patterns.

The learning process for dogs is very similar, or indeed even the same, as humans. This means the “neurological pathways”, or more simply – the way behaviours/habits are formed happens early. If you get a dog behaving a certain way as a pup (good or bad!) then these behaviours will be more than likely demonstrated as an adult.

Think about what is important to you, and prioritise that habit early. These are likely to be things like – recall, retrieve, peeing outside, not barking unnecessarily, sitting/lying quietly, not jumping up, walking calmly on lead, etc. Sit down together with family members before your pup arrives and agree on an action plan.

For those of you new to the dog world, or if it's been some time since you've had a dog, can I give the following straightforward advice:

Jane's 10 simple rules

1. Establish the “house rules” for a pup as soon as they arrive. Whilst it may take some days/weeks to embed the behaviours from both dog and human alike, you want to get the habits learned early, rather than unlearning bad habits, and re-establishing acceptable behaviour. Keep in mind, what may be cute in a 4kg pup, will never be cute in a rambunctious 24 kg adult.
2. Do not make any big deal of comings or goings from your property. You don't want your pup to get the adrenalin pumping and link that to anxiety levels when you come and go. Make this a “no big deal” situation. Preferably ignore your pup/dog for the first 5-10 mins of coming home.
3. Don't feed your dog from the table. Establish the routine from the start that whilst humans are eating, the dog lays quietly to the side, or engages in some other non-interrupting safe behaviour.
4. Work on “off lead” behaviour early. This means – in a **safe** place, get your pup used to being off lead and coming back to you with no major drama. Keep a little liver or cheese treat handy that you can reward your pup with anytime they come near you at this early stage.. You must establish this early. A pup that does not learn recall as a puppy will be very difficult to teach later on. Coming back to the human must be a pleasant experience always. If you make it a drama once, the pup will invariably remember that always and be reluctant to return.
5. You must, must, must go to basic obedience and socialisation classes. These must be based on positive reward only. Avoid any trainer, however, who wants to talk about “alpha dog” and “dominance” behaviour – both of these concepts are outmoded and unhelpful. Do not let your puppy engage in

unacceptable behaviour at these classes. As I said earlier - what may be cute in a 4kg pup, will never be cute in a rambunctious 24 kg adult. You, the human, need to establish what the boundaries are to acceptable behaviour. Eg: it is not acceptable to let a pup hump, bite, bark, etc at these events, or other social events.

6. Do not let your dog on your bed or on your couch. There is nothing wrong with restricting your dog from certain rooms in the house.
7. For 10 minute sessions at a time, put your dog in a crate and ignore them, or tie their leash to a post or similar for 10 minutes and ignore them. Do this at least 3 times weekly for the first 12 weeks, and then every so often. There are going to be times when you need to crate or tether your dog, so establish early that this is a “no big deal” activity. Ensure appropriate access to water and shade of course. And it needs to be a safe environment. Do NOT tether your pup outside a shop.
8. Your Portuguese Water Dog loves activity. Recall is an excellent activity to teach, and of course, teach it as a pup. Try and get your pup/dog out every day. This is good for you and your pup, and good for your relationship.
9. I don't care where your dog walks when on lead, but pulling on lead is unacceptable. If you let your pup pull you as a pup, it will pull you as an adult, and this will make each and every walk an unpleasant experience. Reward your pup as a youngster for correct lead behaviour. And if your pup pulls on the lead, don't say anything, merely stop walking until the lead has relaxed. Do not jerk the pup/dog. Let the pup/dog work out what the acceptable behaviour is and go from there. You may need to be patient, but you will get there.
10. Resist the urge to carry the pup around, or let others carry it around. And resist the urge to spend a lot of time petting and cuddling your pup. What may be cute in a 4kg pup, will never be cute in a rambunctious 24 kg adult. (Do you see a theme yet!).

Ensure all guests and family members follow all the rules as listed above. We don't want our dog thinking there is one set of rules for the family members, but with guests, the sky is the limit!

Importantly, you are the pack manager. Do not shirk this responsibility. If you don't take on this responsibility, your dog will, and then you will have the consequence will be – inappropriate behaviour". It is never too late to implement these techniques.

Remember, you dog is part of a general society. Badly behaved dogs reflect badly on you, the dogs, and the breed in general. Too many breeds have bad reputations only because humans have not established the preferred patterns of behaviour early in life.

This also means if you are a breeder, of any breed, you have an inherent responsibility to ensure your puppy people know how to get appropriate dog behaviour.

A quick word about “dog parks”

Dog parks seem to attract people with poorly behaved dogs. If you're like me, you'll quickly become frustrated at the lack of attention humans have given to establishing the parameters for acceptable behaviour for their dogs.

This also means, don't let your pup become the one that has a reputation for poor behaviour that other people will in future actively avoid.

You might find it useful to visit a dog park in a non busy time.

For what it's worth, I actively avoid all dog parks. I have a “secret location” that I will take my dogs to that I can safely exercise off lead without the distraction of other dogs and their people. And just like I actively look for meat specials at the supermarket for my dogs, I actively seek places that my dogs can run in safety and in peace.

Before your pup arrives, hunt around the local areas to find suitable places to take your dogs. Often well behaved dogs in a dog park belong to owners who have actively sought each other out. ie: “we like our nice dog to play with other nice dogs”.

Finally

Sometimes when dealing with puppy or dog problems, they can seem a little overwhelming. If you got your pup from me, please call me regarding any problems and we can sort them through. If you didn't get your pup from me, I may be able to provide some consulting to you (at a reasonable rate).

We can work out most problems. Importantly, for the vast majority of behavioural issues, to change the dog's behaviour, we need to change the human behaviour first. Often to correct a behaviour the humans need to do less, not more. So let's work on the issues together to get a resolution quickly and without fuss.

A quick note about copyright – if you're going to use part/all of my work in any forum, you need to quote me as the author. We regularly run checks to see if our work is appearing on other websites. We have and will continue to take action against those who are stealing my work and claiming it as their own or not acknowledging the source

The vast majority of people do the right thing. Thank you.