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PAWZ AND READ

September is National Service Dog Month

They guide, listen, balance, lead and love. They provide friendship and independence, freedom and peace of mind. They live to serve their handler to the fullest extent of their capability, be it through retrieving dropped items, offering physical support to an unsteady handler or alerting a Deaf or hard of hearing handler to important events. We're talking about Service and Assistance Dogs, and this month, September, is National Service Dog Month. It's all about celebrating the magic these special dogs bring to their people's lives.

National Service Dog Month is all about honoring the hardworking dogs (and the people who helped them become all that they are) that serve individuals with disabilities of all kinds, including physical, mental and developmental disabilities. What initially began as a single fundraiser has since morphed into an entire month of events meant to bring recognition to the Service Dog community, and to help educate everyone about Service Dogs and the life changing work they perform for their handlers. It's also meant to celebrate the hard work of puppy raisers and all of those who support a Service Dog on its way to greatness, including trainers, veterinarians, behaviorists and others who have a vested interest in helping Service Dogs succeed.



The Dog Days of Summer!



DOGGIE DAYCAMP DOG OF THE MONTH!

Duke



Training Tips with Jeff – Leash Pulling

One of the most common requests I review as a Dog Trainer is how to stop my dog from pulling on a leash. This is the simplest but yet the hardest behavior to master. Let's start by examining why dogs pull.

To begin with, most dogs naturally walk faster than we do and there is a natural instinct when wearing a harness or collar to pull. Much like sled dogs it's a self-rewarding behavior. When dogs are on a walk they like to investigate, sniff and generally check out their environment. Also many dogs just like to lead the way. To help aid in our quest for a well-mannered dog whom walks politely on a leash we will start with the use of a leash and collar.

The collar you choose will be based on your needs and comfort level. There are many to choose from. There are flat buckle collars, choke chains, pinch collars, and martingale collars. I'll leave the choice to you. I will caution you about the use of a choke chain however. When properly used it's an awesome tool for communication but I would not allow the dog to pull over a prolonged amount of time as it can cause injury to the esophagus. Next we will introduce some cue words.

I use the word yes when I want to mark a behavior that I want the dog to do. When the dog achieves or completes that behavior, I say "yes" and reward them. I use the word "good" when they are doing what I want. I use "uh-uh" when they are beginning to do what I don't want and "no" when I want them to stop a behavior. I also will use a negative reinforce to go along with that "no". Now that we have established the use of a leash, desired collar, and cue words we will begin to use these to communicate the desired behavior we are after.

We need to have a clear expectation of what location we want the dog to walk at. Decide the position that you would like your dog at and stick with it. I like the dogs shoulder at my leg. Begin walking and when your dog pulls and the leash begins to tighten, stop. Give the cue word "uh-uh" and guide the dog back in position. Once they are settled down and in the correct position begin to walk again. You will need to repeat this sequence over and over again until the dog begins to move back in position with little or no guidance after giving the "uh-uh" command. One of the things we are trying to accomplish is to teach the dog that when they feel the leash pressure they are out of position and need to refocus on where they need to be. Once the dog understands where you want him to be and can correct him with a cue word and a little leash pressure you are ready to raise the bar.

When your dog is challenged with a greater distraction and "uh-uh" doesn't get his attention you will increase the leash pressure. When they begin to pull and put tension on the leash you will introduce the "no" cue and give a quick leash pop. This will be more meaningful if you are using a choke chain, martingale, or pinch collar. These types of training aids are helpful especially with more energetic dogs. The leash pop needs to be quick, decisive and timely. You give the "no" cue then a quick pop with the leash and immediately release. This acts as an abrasive stimulation to the dogs environment and gets there focus back onto you. Now guide the dog back to position at heel. Again this will need to be repeated many times until the behavior is more reliable. Be consistent when you give the "no" cue and always follow with the negative reinforce (leash pop). Be sure to stop, guide the dog back to the heel position, and then reward the correct position. Always use the least amount of leash pressure to get the desired behavior. Soon even the most challenging dogs will stop the dreading pulling on the leash.



GROOMING DOG OF THE MONTH



Jules

September DayCamp Party Dates

Doggie DayCamp Pool Party!
Every Wednesday through September

September Doggie DayCamp Birthday Party
September 25th

