



Canine Learning Centers *Doggie News*

“Fall 2005”



Tail Waggin' Tips

Finding your lost dog

One of the most nerve racking and upsetting occurrences a dog owner can experience is when their pet gets lost. If this unfortunate event ever happens to you be prepared and have a plan.

- Begin looking for your dog as soon as you realize it has gone missing: the sooner you start your search, the better the odds are of recovering your pet.
- Search the area where you lost your dog, both on foot and by car and bring a friend along for safety.
- Call your dog's name and make familiar noises so it recognizes you (ex: favorite squeaky toy, bag of treats).
- Knock on as many doors as possible in the area where you last saw your dog.
- Question all your neighbors and ask them to keep an eye out for your dog.
- Leave your phone number with people you've spoken with so they can contact you if they see your dog.
- Post "lost" signs around the neighborhood within a mile radius of where your dog was last seen: telephone poles, grocery stores, convenient stores, bus stops, laundry mats, vet hospitals, pet shops, delis etc...Put only your telephone number, **DON'T WRITE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS OR YOU MAY BE THE VICTIM OF A CRIME.**
- Use bright colors for your signs to increase their visibility. Your sign should include: a current picture of your dog (a color copy if possible), date it was lost, the place it was last seen, breed, age, sex, weight, color, your phone number, and a notice for a "reward", but never list the amount.
- Do not mention your dog's identifying marks on the flyer. This information should be used to check the credibility of people calling you, claiming to have your pet.
- Check all of your local shelters on a daily basis if possible. Go in person: giving your dog's description over the telephone may be confusing and cause you to accidentally by-pass your pet.
- Leave a picture of your dog at the shelter along with your phone number.
- Call all your local vets and emergency hospitals (if it is after 5:00 p.m.).
- Run a "lost" add in your local paper and check the "found" section.

Preventing the loss of your pet:

- Secure your dog's environment to prevent escape. Keep your doors and gates closed and your fences secured.
- Keep your dog's tags current.
- Keep your dog's rabies tag current.
- Have your dog microchipped by your veterinarian and keep this information current.
- Keep your dog on a leash when taking it out, especially in new and unfamiliar settings.

What is your dog telling you?

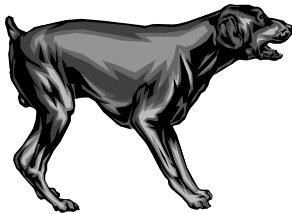
Dogs have a very evolved system of communication, which is expressed through countless intricacies using their bodies from head to tail. Although often overlooked, humans use body language as well, but its importance is overridden by our ability to express ourselves with the spoken word. This fundamental difference is where communication between canines and humans becomes obscure. Being the "talkers" that we are, it is essential that we learn to listen to our dogs by "watching" what they tell us. Let's take a look at some common emotions our dogs express using their bodies:

Fear:

A fearful dog anticipates pain or danger and is often overtaken by an urge to either fight or flee from whatever threatens them. When scared its entire body is held in a lowered position. The legs are bent, the back is curved, the head is carried at a low level, the ears are back, and the tail is tucked under (often all the way between its hind legs). Eyes are wide open and pupils are dilated, eye contact is avoided causing the dog to glance sideways and showing the whites of its eyes. Frightened dogs may bark in an attempt to keep distance between themselves and their perceived threat.



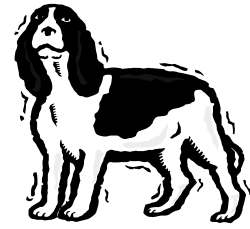
Aggression:



An aggressive dog is aroused and hostile and is likely to deliberately display unfriendly behavior. An aggressive dog is rigid throughout its entire body. The legs and back are straight and stiff, the head is held low with the ears pinned back, and the tail is straight out. The hostile dog will stare intently at its adversary with a fixed gaze. The eyes are narrowed or closed and pupils are dilated. The hair on the dog's shoulders and back stands up (called a pilo-erection) and the dog may also draw back its lips showing its teeth and growl.

Stress:

A stressed dog is emotionally upset in response to something in its environment. Stress causes physiological responses, increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and muscular tension. The entire body is carried low with the tail held down and ears are held back. The corners of the mouth are pulled back accompanied by rapid panting. Eyes are glassy looking and pupils are dilated, and the dog will avoid direct eye contact. The dog may shake or whine and under extreme stress may urinate submissively. The dog may also act out a range of calming signals (in an attempt to calm itself): scratching, sniffing, blinking, yawning, and lip licking.



Confidence:

A confident dog is self-assured and free of doubt. A confident dog stands tall with its body erect. Ears are pricked forward or simply relaxed and neutral. The tail is held high and wags slowly. The eyes are relaxed with small pupils and the dog will feel free to make direct eye contact.



The Prong Collar: Mean or Practical?



The prong is a metal collar made of linking chains with protruding metal fingers. When the collar is used, the pressure of the fingers is evenly distributed around the dog's neck. The prong collar is meant to cause an uncomfortable sensation that the dog wants get away from. The idea is that the unpleasant sensation stops as soon as the dog stops acting in a manner that causes the collar to tighten. This very simple philosophy is the same one practiced by all of the other popular training collars in use today. Martingale collars, head halters, and no-pull harnesses all operate on the same principal that the pressure will go away as soon as the unwanted behavior stops (in this case that is usually pulling).

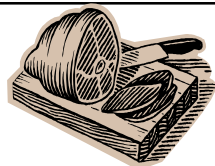
The prong collar does have a rather barbaric appearance giving the uninformed individual a quick and easy reason to oppose it, but to condemn its use is to write-off some owners' only chance for a manageable dog. Overexcited and disobedient dogs are frustrating to work with and as a result often end up unwanted and relinquished to the nearest shelter. If a prong collar can prevent this ill-fated occurrence than it has served its purpose.

It is a trainer's responsibility to determine the type of equipment most appropriate for a particular dog. Trainers recommending this collar should be educated on the all the different breed types and their characteristics. Depending on what a certain dog was bred for, physical and psychological characteristics will vary. Some have a higher pain threshold than others that are thin-skinned and touchy. A few adjust well to the prong while others may never be equipped to handle its severity. When other ways of control are ineffective, the prong collar can be a potentially successful means for control. It is especially helpful with physically insensitive dogs or with handlers who are not capable of controlling their dog (the weak or elderly).

The prong collar is not advisable for all dogs, and its appropriateness depends on a dog's level of sensitivity. Although much can be decided according to breed, it should not be the determining factor. The dog's specific personality should be the guide. The collar should never be used on shy, nervous, anxious, or fearful dogs or the results may be counter-productive and the problem can worsen, potentially resulting in aggression towards other dogs or people. The prong should not be used on dogs that are already aggressive because it could exacerbate the problem.

Prong collars should be used under the guidance of an experienced trainer who can show you how to fit them properly and use them effectively. A prong collar used incorrectly can be harmful. The decision to use a prong collar should be carefully weighed. If you have any questions on the use of the prong collar, please feel free to contact any of your Canine Learning Centers instructors.

Nutrition Seminar!!!



Presented by: Laura Christiansen and Marcia Wigdahl

When: Sunday, November 20th from 11:00 am to 1:00 p.m.

Where: Del Mar @ Dexter's Deli

"If you consider your dog a member of your family and want to do everything to help it live a long and vigorous life, this seminar is for you!"

"Extremely educational and well worth it!"

