

HOW DO OUR PUPPIES AND DOGS LEARN?

Over the last 20–30 years, we’ve learned a huge amount about how our dogs think and learn.

In the past, training often focused on waiting for dogs to get something wrong and then correcting them. We might have pushed their bottoms down to teach a “sit” or guided their legs into a “down.” While it might have seemed effective at the time, it wasn’t really teaching our dogs what to do — it was teaching them what to avoid.

And let’s be honest... having your bum pushed to the floor isn’t much fun! 🐶

Thankfully, things have changed. Research now shows us that dogs learn much more effectively — and happily — when we use positive reinforcement.

THE SCIENCE BIT (IN SIMPLE TERMS)

Dogs repeat behaviours that are reinforced — whether that’s through food, play, fuss, or anything else they find rewarding.

So if your dog comes back when you call them and you reward them with a tasty treat or a quick game, they’re far more likely to do it again next time (even when there are squirrels involved 🐿).

The same goes for a “sit” — if every time your dog plonks their bum on the floor they get rewarded, they’ll keep offering that behaviour.

But the same principle works the other way too.

If your puppy jumps up and gets a fuss or a smile, that’s still a reward — even if it wasn’t your intention! The behaviour worked for them, so they’ll try it again. What we reinforce, we repeat.

💖 WHY WE USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Positive reinforcement training:

- Builds trust and confidence between you and your dog 🐾
- Helps your dog understand what to do, not just what not to do
- Creates happy, motivated learners who love training time

It's not about being “soft” — it's about being clear, kind, and consistent.

Our dogs are constantly learning from the consequences of their actions. When those consequences are positive, they're far more likely to make good choices again in future.

🚫 WHY WE AVOID AVERSIVE METHODS

Aversive training methods (such as shouting, leash jerks, spray collars, or physical correction) may appear to “work” in the short term — but what they actually do is suppress behaviour, not teach.

They don't show the dog what the right choice is; they just make the wrong choice scary or confusing.

Over time, this can:

- Damage trust between you and your dog 💔
- Increase stress, anxiety, or even aggression
- Reduce your dog's willingness to offer behaviours

Our goal is always to teach with clarity and kindness, not fear or force.

🍲 WILL I ALWAYS NEED FOOD?

Not at all!

Food is simply one of the best starting points for learning — it's fast, motivating, and helps your dog understand what earns rewards.

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Once your dog knows the behaviour well, you can start to mix things up with:

- Praise 🐾
- Play 🎾
- Access to things they love (sniffs, walks, attention) 🌳

The key is making sure your dog always feels that working with you is worth their while.

💖 IN A NUTSHELL

Our dogs learn best when they feel safe, confident, and understood.

Reward what you want more of, ignore what you don't, and enjoy the partnership that grows when you train with kindness. ✨🐾