

Training Principles and Guidelines

1. Respect and care for your dog is a primary consideration

- Proper care, diet, exercise and watering regimes affect response to training and stress.
- Proper nutrition and conditioning reduces injury and improves concentration and health.
- Violence is not acceptable. Confront your dog's weaknesses - not your dog!

2. Effectiveness of training is due to: methods, effort, and resources

- Results depend on methods, time, effort, efficiency, grounds, equipment and help.
- Use a proven sequential program as a basis for advanced work
- Be prepared for variables of tests, environments, and dog behaviour

3. Work to achieve balance in training

- Training that enhances one aspect of training often diminishes another.
- Remember to maintain the ABCs; Attitude, Balance, and Control.
- For success, seek the all-around balanced dog with sound fundamentals

4. Emphasize communication and teamwork: training retrievers is a "team sport"

- Consistency in commands and cues will lead to better communication
- Communicate that a decision was wrong at the instant the dog makes the decision.
- Use praise wisely- at the instant of doing well.

5. Establish and Maintain Standards

- Dogs deserve and thrive on consistent rules.
- It is better to reduce the level of difficulty of the task than to reduce the standard
- Avoid habits that will have to be changed later.

6. Don't teach with the e-collar

- Attrition is a safe and first consideration tool.
- Use the collar to enforce the command after the dog has been taught.
- Always give a command before a correction.

7. The approach to using pressure is a critical aspect of training

- Dogs can thrive with reasonable amounts of pressure if they understand it.
- The dog should be capable of giving the correct response after the proper correction.
- Correct for a lack of effort not just a flawed decision.

8. Design your training for predicted outcomes

- Seek success more than failure
- Be sure to teach before you test
- Simplify after repeated failure

9. Match the training to the nature of the dog

- Strive to make the dog the best he can be but not more.
- Recognize a dog's strength and weaknesses and train accordingly
- Basics and fundamentals don't change but implementation may

10. Training is an art as well as science — it involves communication, analysis and interpretation

- Learn to read your dog and respond to what you see.
- If the dog has a problem ask if and how you caused it
- Exact methods may not be as important as the overall approach.

These Principles and Guidelines are derived from *Total Retriever Training* and *Retrievers ONLINE*
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