

Dog Training Articles
By Beth Bradley

TRAINING THE DOMINANT DOG

Sometimes dominant dogs are born dominant and sometimes owners unknowingly teach their dogs to be dominant. Dominant dogs need to be taught their place in your family and need to be taught that you (the human) are the leader and the dog is a pack member. The dominant dog needs to be taught that it must listen to your commands no matter what the distraction or where it is. A pack dog always listens to the Alpha (or leader) because it is natural dog behavior. A pack dog that does not listen to the Alpha is challenging the Alpha dog and will be severely punished for doing so. Through obedience (and major repetition) you should be able to teach your dog to focus on you, its Alpha. This way dog will understand he is being corrected for not paying attention to you. In the world of dogs, the “Alpha” is the decision maker. The “Alpha” protects the pack and its territory and is the first in line when eating. Another dog in the pack that does so is challenging the “Alpha” for that leadership position. Don’t allow your dog to think he is “Alpha” and that it is his job. If you give your dog a command he will believe you are taking control of the situation. If your dog has confidence in your ability as “Alpha” he will always obey your commands because doing so shows respect to the “Alpha”. Once your dog has confidence in your ability to be “Alpha” then he will trust your judgment under any situation. An Alpha is only challenged if the dog feels that he might win. Your dog must never feel he can win, if he wins once, he will challenge again.

Training will make your dog understand that he is not the leader, you are. The “alpha” greets visitors, protects and eats first. And you are the “alpha”. This is not a 5 weeks training program. For some dogs it takes months for them to have confidence in you as their “Alpha”. You may not see results immediately but private and group training will desensitize your dog and make him realize his position in your family. He will gladly allow you to become his “Alpha” if you show initiative and tell him what he should be doing. In the world of dogs, respect needs to be earned and you will constantly be challenged for that leadership position.

Never let a dominant dog on the furniture, bed or other. This tells him that he is your equal. Treat him like a dog so he doesn’t get confused and believe he can take liberties. Take food and toys from him like an Alpha dog would. Never let him pull in front on a walk (the Alpha dog always leads the pack). Train your dog every day to show leadership. Basic dog obedience teaches the dog he must listen to his Alpha. If you have children work the dog with them so he realizes he must also listen to them also (all humans in the family should be Alpha).

Practice with your dog in as many new environments as you can. Pick a new area each time you train. This builds reliability in training and teaches your dog he must listen to his Alpha no matter where he is. If you only train your dog in your yard, your dog is only going to listen in your yard. Train at your Veterinarian’s office parking lot, at the supermarket, the park, etc. Pick a new area, once your dog is responding consistently in that area go to another area. In a couple of weeks you will have 4-5 different areas where your dog is training and listening to your commands.

Once your dog is responding in different areas use different distractions. Begin with minimum distractions (i.e. training late at night when not many people are around) and then work your way up to more and more distractions.