



# Mother Knows Best Obedience School

- Information Sheet -  
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## TRAINING TIPS

### Training Tip No. 1

#### **WATCH THOSE CANINES LARRY!!**

Starting in puppyhood, Larry had a tendency to guard his food. I knew a bite was not far in the offing.

By standing close to his food bowl, lifting it and adding something tastier (or simply dropping it in his bowl), Larry soon learned that I was not a threat to his food supply (no challenge) and that good things happen when I'm around. Never try this technique if your dog is so aggressive that you are afraid of him – get professional advice.

### Training Tip No. 2

#### **TEACHING LARRY “NO BITING”**

Larry's puppy teeth were as sharp as Singer sewing machine needles and when he started using my skin as his sewing material, it was my job to teach him never to use his teeth on human skin.

Each time Larry would nip, he elicited from me a sharp high pitched scream of AAAAAH! Or OUCH! This was followed by my leaving the room and paying no attention to him for at least a minute or two. By repetition of this exercise, Larry learned quickly that his teeth and human skin never meet.

### Training Tip No. 3

#### **CHILDREN BEWARE – WARNING SIGNS, “ANGRY DOG”!**

One or all of these signs may be exhibited by a dog prior to a bite or a full blown attack – barking, growling, snarling with showing of teeth, ears laid flat to head, stiff legs, tail up, hair raised on back.

Slowly walk away sideways – never run. Never stare at the dog. Staring is perceived by the dog as a threat and could provoke an attack. If an attack occurs, roll up in a ball on the ground and protect the face/head area.

## **Training Tip No. 4**

### **LARRY AND HIS BUDDIES' FIFTH WEEK LEARNING PLATEAU!**

So you have completed four weeks of obedience training and now you think your dog is brain dead – don't despair. To date, he has done exceedingly well in learning and performing his obedience exercises and now he acts as though he has never heard, let alone perform, the sit command.

Unless you understand what is happening, it can be very devastating and frustrating – *he has reached his fifth week learning plateau.*

Although there are many theories as to why this occurs, don't lose heart. Within 3 to 5 days, he will perform better than ever. Is he processing information?

## **Training Tip No. 5**

### **SMALL DOG OWNERS – PROCEED WITH CAUTION!**

And so your 15 lb. Poopsie is now growling at you when you want her off your bed, barking at everyone and everything, refusing to come when called, and perhaps even won't walk for more than 20 feet without pawing at your legs to be lifted up. Shocking news folks, but you probably have caused it all. Don't be too quick to blame the dog – read on...

I, along with the majority of my obedience training associates, believe that based on size alone, many owners of small dogs overly pamper and spoil their tiny furry companions to the point where they are no longer trustworthy, sociable, or happy pets. Unlike owners of larger dogs, small dog owners are frequently guilty of picking up and clutching their dogs to their chest whenever any uncomfortable situation presents itself, wimping out on training, and finding endless excuses as to why Poopsie behaves so poorly. Believe me, Poopsie is behaving appropriately for the position in which you have inadvertently placed her, that of alpha dog. As such, you are seen as a subordinate member of her pack. Dogs of all sizes are pack animals. Be the pack leader. Train your sweetums and strengthen your bond.

## **Training Tip No. 6**

### **YOUR DOG'S ATTENTION – THE "ON" AND "OFF" SWITCH!**

No dog, not even Larry, or human works all the time. Although we need our dog's full attention when training an exercise, we do not need such concentration indefinitely. Larry has on "On" and "Off" switch.

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The OFF switch is simply the “OKAY!” with my arms thrown open, followed by an invitation to play. The ON switch is the word SIT and, through consistent training, Larry is aware that work is beginning and to pay attention.

A word of caution – be fair to your dog – give clear commands and follow through. When you leave the house, do you really mean “now STAY there and be a good doggie”. Is that the same STAY you are using in your obedience training? How will your dog know the difference? THINK.

### Training Tip No. 7

#### **THERE IS NO SUCH WORD AS “NO” IN TRAINING!**

With my dog Larry, and in my classes, the word NO does not exist. I have found that most dog owners cannot say the word NO! without sounding and feeling, to some degree, angry. Dogs don't understand anger and end up being fearful or ignoring completely the owner.

Usually by the time students enroll in class, they have worn out the word NO, using it for everything from don't jump up, drop the dirty socks, to don't bark. I simply replace the word NO with a sound – a sharp AAAAH! I have yet to see this sound fail to get a dog's attention and stop immediately the undesired behaviour – try it, it really works!

### Training Tip No. 8

#### **DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO CORRECT – HELP IS AN OPTION!**

Knowing when to correct a dog, versus when to help, is part of what makes a good trainer. Generally, if your dog is confused or afraid, HELP him. However, if your dog is distracted or feels he has a choice, CORRECT him.

How do you know the difference? A good instructor knows and can help you to read your “dog's body language” – the position of his ears, tail, head etc, will tell you what he is thinking.

If your dog is having difficulty with a particular exercise, a good trainer will go back to the beginning and break the exercise down step-by-step. Maybe you are the cause of his problem by having moved too quickly in your training of the exercise?