REWARD BASED TRAINING

What is reward-based training?

Also known as positive reinforcement, reward-based training involves teaching your pet to offer desirable behaviours by giving them something that they like. It's a scientifically proven method of teaching which does not require any force, fear, pain or intimidation to get results.

Giving your dog a reward such as food or praise after they do something good means that they will be likely to repeat that good behaviour again and again.

What are rewards?

Rewards can be anything that your dog likes such as toys or treats. Food is the easiest reinforcer as it's easy to carry around. We recommend feeding at least part of your dog's meal by hand as rewards to provide feedback to your dog about their behaviour.

Whenever your dog does something you like simply say 'yes' and give them a piece of kibble.

🐾 You'll be surprised how quickly your dog will learn to offer the behaviours you like!

Do I always need to use rewards?

Once your dog starts to demonstrate good behaviour reliably you can start tapering the rewards and offering them only every now and again, rather than every time. It's a good idea to bring out a treat at least every once in a while though to help your dog stay motivated.

A note about punishment

Where positive reinforcement refers to strengthening behaviours by giving your dog something that they like, positive punishment usually involves doing something to your dog that they don't like.

Studies show that animals often struggle to understand which behaviour they are being punished for. A dog wearing a barking collar for example, can often associate the discomfort from the collar with the stimulus they were barking at such as a dog walking by the house, or even a child, rather than with the barking behaviour itself.

Punishment often results in other serious behaviour problems such as aggression, anxiety and fear. It can also sadly destroy your relationship with your pet.

⊙ RSPCA recommends positive, reward-based training as the most humane and effective training method for animals.

For more information **rspcaqld.org.au**

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