



Super Dogs

Managing the Superintendent's Best Friend

By SUE MILLS-KOTHE
Total Recall School for Dogs

(Editor's Note: Sue Mills-Kothe, instructor at Total Recall School for Dogs, will write a series of columns regarding dog training. Pictured above is Zip, "the world's fastest goose dog, as well as the most popular crew member and best investment ever made according to members" said Dale Caldwell CGCS, Minneapolis GC.)

Are you having behavioral problems with your dog, such as excessive barking, jumping on you or your company, stealing things off the counter, running around the house out of control, lashing out at other dogs as you are out for a walk, or the big one, not coming when called? The list could go on and on!

When I get calls from dog owners with some or all of these problems the first thing I ask is, "Do you self feed your dog?" Which means is the dog's food left down for them to eat anytime they wish? The answer is "yes" 100% of the time!

The reason for this is quite basic: dogs are pack animals, and the head of the pack provides the food. Think if you have ever seen a mom with her puppies; she provides the food for them for several weeks. When she leaves the whelping box to relieve herself and eat, the puppies are off sleeping. When she gets back to the box, she decides if they need to eat again. When she gets back into the box with her brood, the puppies will wake up and are happy to see her because they already know she is the one who provides the food for them. They have great respect for their mother and take comfort in knowing she will provide them food.

When the puppies leave their mother and go to their new homes "we" must assume the role of their mother; that is providing food and comfort. We must let them know they survive because we feed them. We assume the position of leader of the pack. To keep this order in their perspective you must put your puppy or dog on scheduled feeding.

I feed puppies three times a day until they are about six months old and then just twice each day. Food is put down in a clean bowl and the pups are given fifteen minutes to eat. If

they walk away I pick up their meal and they get fed at the next scheduled feeding time. I am becoming their pack leader.

If you start them this way they will never leave their dish until it is empty. This prevents bad behavior. If your animal is already a self-feeder you can change the pattern. They may not eat for a day as they have been taught to be 'snackers', but will change quite quickly if the food is only available at the scheduled feeding time. This discipline of controlled feeding almost always cures poor dog habits.

Scheduled feeding will also cure many housebreaking issues. Once you develop a pattern for feeding it only becomes natural to progress to a schedule for elimination out of doors. Repetition, repetition, repetition. Dogs adapt quickly to schedules and become eager to eat and happy to go outside to relieve themselves.

Perhaps the most important aspect of scheduled feeding is dog health. You, the owner, will know when your pet has missed a meal or two. If this happens with my dogs it indicates they are not feeling well or there is a possible obstruction. I immediately make an appointment and take them to the vet!

Scheduled feeding. Your dog will be happier knowing their "leader" provides for them both food and comfort. Your best friend will also live healthier as you are better able to monitor what is eaten.



Olive Tritabaugh and her Siberian Husky buddy Jake.
Photo submitted by Chris Tritabaugh, Northland Country Club.

About Total Recall School for Dogs

Total Recall School for Dogs, located in Hugo, Minn., was established in 1990 with the intent to provide the best dog training possible. To date, TRSD has trained over 10,000 dogs to various levels of proficiency, based on the goals set by the dog's owner. The 14,000 square foot facility is heated and air-conditioned. There is also an outside 10,000 sq. ft., fenced area used for training.

Training methods at TRSD are based on "Leadership" principles. Being

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pack animals, dogs must have a leader so they know the rules. This leadership is obtained by teaching the dog the "rules" which establishes you as the leader. Dogs respond faster to this type of training. Harsh treatment in training is not necessary to obtain the desired results. We use 'Positive Motivation' to teach the dog. This method does not use "clickers" or "halter" type collars. We do not use these devices.

Our instructors have a minimum of 20 plus years in training dogs, some with over 35 years experience. We offer various levels of training designed to help owners better enjoy their pet or get a new puppy off to a great start. We also offer all levels of competition training if you are so inclined. We also offer Agility and Conformation Training to all levels with the proper obedience training first. This is to ensure the necessary control for safety of your dog.

About the Columnist, Instructor Sue Mills-Kothe

I have been training dogs for 35 years. I have had two Obedience Trial Champions, 10 Champions in three different breeds, two Master Agility Champions, The first AKC "Utility Dog" Rottweiler in Minnesota, The first "Champion, Obedience Trial Champion, Utility Dog Excellent" Border Collie in Minnesota.

We have trained over 10,000 dogs from over 100 breeds. I am currently showing six dogs in Agility, Obedience and Conformation.

The goal is to provide the best training environment possible for every type of dog.