

Novice & Open Obedience

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ABOUT TRAINING YOUR DOG

Proof, Proof, Proof: If you teach your dog to “sit” only in obedience class, that’s the only place s/he will reliably sit. Be sure to generalize the new behavior in different locations with varying conditions and levels of distraction. Proofing the behavior makes it reliable.

Train Often: Practice! Excellence, so the saying goes, is just another habit. Keep your and your dog’s skills sharp by working randomly and regularly. Incorporate training opportunities into your daily routine, such as “sit” for dinner, “wait” at the door, or “down” while outside. Practice your own footwork in the grocery store aisle while shopping! Teach new games to your dog each month. Once the behavior is reliable, be spontaneous and unpredictable!

Do Not Repeat Cues: Once you are sure your dog knows a behavior, ask once. If you are ignored or your dog does not respond to it, it’s either because you haven’t taught it well or proofed it properly. Give your command for a behavior once...then bite your tongue!

Smile....frequently: Your dog does not know how to send in trial entries. If you’ve trained often, trained well, have kept your training spontaneous, unpredictable, have proofed and generalized, then you’ll know what to expect in the ring. Be fair to your dog. The result of infrequent training will be evident by lost points, poor placements and NQs. You earn the score you receive. Own it, and smile. Chastising your dog or being visibly disappointed in the ring does two things: 1) It makes you look bad, and 2) it hurts your relationship with your dog. Your dog does not want to disappoint you. Be fair. Whatever happens in the ring or at practice, smile sincerely at your dog and support him/her appropriately.