



The Basics of Dog Training

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***Editor's Note:** Luboš Jánký is a licensed international FCI IPO judge. In 1975, he was licensed as a national IPO judge and in the early 1990's, CKS appointed him as an international IPO judge. He has owned and trained German Shepherds, a Doberman and a Rottweiler. Please refer to Issue 4 of 2011, pages 32-33 to read the interview.*

Cynology is a sort of sport and we shall regard it from this perspective— taking it as a hobby which is a pleasure and joy for us. Only when feeling this way shall we start

with cynology, because in case we are not in a good condition, or feeling upset or angry, it is usually difficult to handle such emotions and not to carry them forward to the dog. In such cases, it is better not to start with the training. The dog is not an object for us in this field, but a partner. Love, tolerance, and sensitivity are the key prerequisites for successful co-operation between the handler and the dog. Moreover, the appropriate clothing is also necessary, instead of thinking at the proper exercise we could be afraid of being completely dirty after our dog happily jumps at us, and we are suddenly not "dressed to kill."

The dog is not our partner in the sense that we just need them for the training. The dog is our reflection; our mutual relationship is being mirrored there and the quality of the relationship could be seen in the willingness of the dog to train with us, in their energy and spontaneity. A stressed, fearful, and ruined dog could never perform a happy and successful outcome. It clarifies quickly to what extent the relationship is based on love and patience from the handler's side.

To get to the best achievements, the methodology of the handler-dog work is essential, although the principle is always the same— it is motivation. At the beginning, we shall realize all the differences between man and our dogs, both genetically and physiologically. Dogs primarily use elements of the first signal system, which means conditioned and unconditioned reflexes. On the contrary, the reactions and perception of humans are based on the second signal system, e.g., thinking. We shall have these differences in our minds all the time as the dog does not think the way we do, cannot anticipate, and in the exercises performs exactly what we have taught him or her. The performance is based on the reflexes gained in cooperation with us. Thus, the manner of the handler must be "black and white," clear and easy to be immediately recognized by the dog. The dog must know what we want from them. The dogs do not have the ability of improvising; they only do what we, the handlers, have taught them. In contrast, man can improvise. We can decide what to do in a particular situation, which way to choose so as to get to the best result by the most effective style in cooperation with the dog. It is necessary to work always in the same way, clearly and comprehensibly. The training ways should be pleasant for both the dog and the handler and both of them should feel satisfied.

While training and working with the dog, some conflicting moments can appear, usually caused by misunderstanding when the handler correctly shows what is required and the dog subsequently performs it the way he understood it, not according to the handler's perception. To get rid of these conflicts, we should perform our training step-by-step, clearly and deliberately. Now we again get to the presumption of successful work— the motivation. We can understand it as the whole— life communication with the dog; both have to work hand in glove. Both verbal (in words) and non-verbal communication (e.g., with hands), which is more clear for a dog, have their roles. Good timing and reward (a ball, goodie, or even a big verbal award) which has to come immediately after a successfully performed exercise is also important.

Motivation

Motivation is a core pillar in the dog training. Positive motivation is welcomed as it makes positive reactions— the willingness to cooperate with the handler and readiness to fulfill the particular requirements. On the other hand we have its complete opposite— negative motivation, which evokes negative reactions such as stress and uncertainty. Through motivation we induce the dog to be interested in the particular activity and subsequently the interest is used in training. We motivate and then train the dog so he wants to work with and for us and cooperate with us. Then we move the motivation to the place we will perform the exercise.

Motivational means

When we talk about motivational means, we mean the ball, the bite roll, and also a lead, for example. They all have in common the aspect that the dog must be interested in them, must enjoy having them, like them and subsequently is willing to get them and to do exactly what the handler requests. The act of giving the reward for a proper performance must be quick, clear, and understandable, as well as given in the adequate time sequence. When talking about the ball or the bite roll as a reward, it must not be given for a long duration. The dog must not perceive the reward as being a normal or everyday occurrence. By all means, the dog must be eager to get the reward. We never leave the reward with the dog for casual playing or an extended time. The goodie given as a form of reward must be tasty and small so the dog can easily swallow it without any chewing. Even when the goodie is given repeatedly, it must be wanted and the dog must be willing to get another one. Every reward is introduced and accompanied by a verbal one with the final pet and bigger reward. Verbal reward (e.g., "Yes!") is given with a friendly intonation. On the contrary, the commands in which we inform the dog that they did something wrong (e.g., "No!") are said with strong energy. When we need to interrupt or prevent the dog from performing unwanted actions, we use the word "Leave!"

For the particular exercises, we choose the same verbal commands which are usually written in the examination rules.

Means of Rewarding

Hand in hand with the motivation, it is also necessary to give the dog a reward at the right time. Before giving the reward, the verbal praise or assurance "Yes!" must be given. The reward must be carried out correctly which is another key factor for success. We go through with praise and reward only in case of a correct and perfect performance done quickly and precisely.

Praise could be both verbal and physical (e.g., a short fondle), which is meant to be some kind of communication to the dog that he or she performed the task correctly. Reward could be the giving of the goodie, but it can also be, for example, a bite to the ball or sleeve.

The reward is divided as follows:

Continuous reward: Small reward for quick and precise performance of the discipline or task. It is given immediately after fulfilling of the particular task. When talking about tracking, the continuous reward is the goodies laid in the footprints throughout the track.

Final reward: Big reward with which we finish the training. Its purpose is the final relaxation of the dog and assurance that everything was OK.

"Balling": It is necessary to explain to the dog that the ball is ours and not his. We lend it to the dog only when the dog works properly.

Auxiliary Training (Signal) Means

When talking about auxiliary signal, or also strengthening means, we mean prong or electric collars. Usage cannot be recommended to beginners as they can cause pain to the dog. Their misuse does not lead to better results and understanding, but to the very opposite. They are by no means a kind of armament of the handler, but only the means for achievement of better results when the dog understands our requirements. The handler should rather persuade the dog to train, which means to motivate the dog well and to lead the dog to the fulfilling of the task, rather than to force the dog to perform it. In case the dog does not understand what we want, it is 95 percent our fault. To use the word "No!" is recommended for leading the dog out of the bad performance. Serious mistakes shall not be corrected; we get the dog again and again to the starting position and the task is repeated. This will lead to the required outcome. Then, of course, the praise and reward come.



Abbey Ginger Taffy

Introduction to the Track Training Issue

While a medium-sized dog has about two hundred million smell cells, we humans, have only about five million. Consequently, the dog can use smell as a primary sense, but man relies first of all on sight. As a result, humans and dogs perceive the world around them differently. We must be aware of this fact while working on tracking.

During the track, there are two smells (odors)— primary and secondary. The primary ones are caused by the making of the track: the broken blades of grass or other growth and also the disruption of the ground on which the tracklayer walks. Secondary smells are made by our perfumes or medications we use. All these are left as a smell track.

The key factor for successful tracking is motivation again. The dog searches for the goodies he or she likes. It is very important to choose the proper kind of goodie. The dog must eat it easily and not be bothered or delayed with it during the track.

From the very early puppy age, it is good to start slowly with a so-called scent circle. In the grass which is maximally 10 cm high, we track out a circle with a diameter of about 80 cm or a square 80 cm by 80 cm. Inside of the scent circle, we scatter the goodies. When we lead the dog inside, we let them find the goodies. While they are searching for the goodies, we can add some more when we see that the dog searches for them actively. The receiving of the goodies in the scent circle must be active and spontaneous; we cannot force the dog into it. The dog must never be naturally overeating the goodies. This is the precondition: they must want the goodies. Logically, we count the goodies into the whole daily amount of dog food. We usually give food to a young dog three or four times a day, so it means we take one serving away for the track training. It is really necessary that the goodies lie only inside the scent circle, and by no means can be found outside it. Only then will the dog connect the smell track with the presence of a goodie, and he or she will naturally tend to follow the track only.



Athena Ginger Taffy

As soon as the dog sniffs without any problems and searches for the goodies inside the scent circle, we can make another step. Usually, it follows 15 to 20 trainings. While the dog is in search of the goodies inside the circle, which is now less filled with goodies, we step out from the circle and stay very close to it, opposite the introduction place, facing the beginning of the track. Under the soles of our right and left shoes, we inconspicuously hide some goodies. When the dog is finishing with the search for the goodies inside the circle, we take one step back with one leg and the dog eats the uncovered goodies. Subsequently, we step away with the other leg and continue in the same way.

We go back step-by-step giving one or two goodies under our feet. After some training sessions in this style, we make the track with a normal straight walk, only the steps of right and left leg are in one line. During that time, the dog is, for example, waiting in the car. The length of a step, meaning the distance between the tip and the heel of the other foot, is only 10 to 15 cm, according to the size and age of the young dog. When the dog is being introduced, we carefully focus on the dog's approach to be fluent with taking of the goodies in each step. We follow the dog calmly and closely on a short lead. As the training develops, we make the track in two lines, following both left and right lines of the steps. The length of the step would differ. At the very end of the steps, we prepare a smaller smell pile and put the rest of the goodies inside, which is the final reward. We do not praise the dog during the track; the goodies in the steps are sufficient reward.

When training the tracking in grassy terrain, we put the goodie in the top of the step. But on the clay terrain, we put them towards the heel so as not to be so easily seen. Subsequently, we can make the track also with the curves and turns in 90 degrees.

As soon as the dog understands what is the track about and also what we want from them, we can start with the parts without the scent circles. The time when that comes is individual for each dog. The decision is fully on the handler. If he or she knows the



*Draha Mašková with
Candy Ginger vom Lipizzaner Wappen (Left) &
Honey Taffy Rotti Kingdom (Right)*

dog and is sure with the dog's performance, they cannot be wrong. We put the goodies into each and every step and we make the curves and irregularities so that the dog learns not only the straight track.

Track Line Beginning

The very beginning of each track is so-called track line beginning, which is the strengthened start of the track. The tracklayer stays there with a few oversteps for 15 to 30 seconds so as to leave

as much scent track there as possible. When training, we reinforce it with the goodies so as to make the dog more interested in the activity. Nevertheless, we can also put some food morsels inside the last steps in front of the track line beginning. The dog concentrates earlier and when they get to the real beginning, they can sniff perfectly. In case we do not follow this procedure, the dog can overrun the beginning of

the track line (which happens quite often) and starts sniffing but without the possibility of deeper smelling of the scent at the beginning. We mark the track line beginning with the stick tightly at the left side. The

dog enters to the track line beginning and in case he eagerly wants to run forward and start tracking, we do not ease the lead and keep him there. Only when he eats all the goodies can he continue in following the scent track. At the beginning, the footprints are short. According to the particular progress of the dog, we decide about the following procedure.



Osbourne vom Schwaiger Wappen

Conclusion

The pursuit of the tracking line is not an easy task. At the beginning, good motivation as well as the relationship between the dog and the handler is important. When on the track, we provide the dog with calmness and time to think. When the success does not come immediately, we have to consider why that happened and what to improve from the point of the handler. When we focus on the goal we want to reach, based on the cooperation between us and our dogs, the assumption of success is great. *Luboš Jánský*

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