

Dog Training Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- General Rules
 - Establish good habits early.
 - Understand your dog's capabilities and be realistic.
 - Develop a food and water schedule.
 - Never use your crate as a tool for punishment.
 - Be realistic, flexible, patient and always fair.
 - Don't worry about mistakes, move on and do your best to prevent them in the future.
- Environment
 - Start training the quiet and comfort of your home.
 - Choose place to avoid people and animal distractions.
 - Choose place with limited or no vehicular traffic.
 - If outside, make sure there are good weather conditions.
- Equipment
 - Make sure you have equipment that is appropriate to the level and scope of your training plan.
 - Have appropriate and correctly sized and fitted training collar.
 - Have a leash in top condition.
 - Include a sufficient supply of readily accessible and appropriate reward.
- Preparation
 - Before every training session, evaluate your dog.
 - Feed, water, and potty your dog as appropriate.
 - Know the special characteristics relevant to your unique dog's breed, type and temperament.
 - Know your dog's limitations and behavioral issues.
- Training Strategies
 - Have a well-defined training plan.
 - Visualize how you will set up each exercise.
 - Decide which consistent verbal and body commands you will be using.
 - Use lots of encouragement, praise and rewards.

- Concentrate on developing desirable habits and preventing undesirable behavior.
- Keep your training sessions short, consistent and always have fun.
- Start out with very easy commands.
- Base your training sessions around trust and mutual respect.