

Force. . . Gray Matter... Feeling ... Trial Routines.

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If you haven't used corrections, you haven't trained your dog. It is not a matter of punishment or hurting your dog; it's a matter of making things clear and, therefore, creating a pleasant bond. This is the second in a series on raising and working with your dog in obedience.

Before training methods can be discussed, certain aspects of using force (corrections) must be covered. Although the basic Schutzhund test serves as an evaluation of the working ability of the breed, the training and competition aspect of Schutzhund is a sport. As in all sports, practice makes perfect. The professional golfer or tennis player will work for hours on the mechanics of a specific shot until his or her

body learns to respond in a conditioned manner. It is the same in dog training. The more dogs you train, the quicker and more confident your reactions to the dog become. But before you begin using forceful corrections on that young, well-bred dog of yours, consider using a dog from your local humane society to help train yourself in obedience techniques. (The dog you have rescued from destruction may

not earn any titles but will make a fine, well trained family pet.)

Force

The use of force is the subject of much controversy. How much is appropriate? Will the dog at the end of your leash turn sour if too much force is used? Won't the dog be happier if he or she is trained only through playful motivation? Only experience can begin to answer these



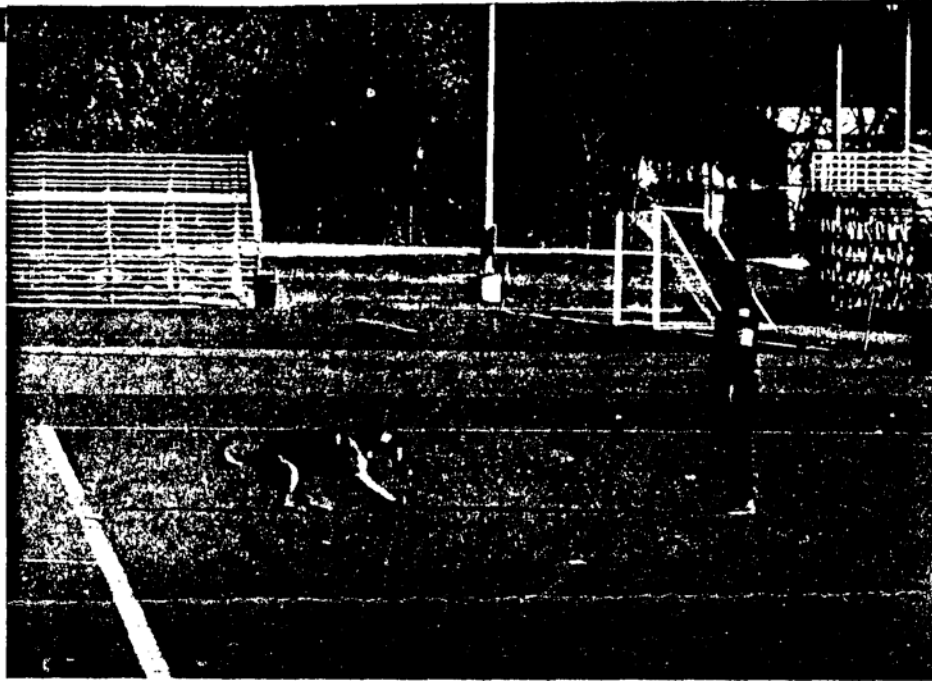
I begin to teach my dog to sit correctly in front during heeling. As my dog heels beside me, I back up quickly, correcting my dog toward me with the command "here."



Once the dog is directly in front of me, I give a correction under the dog's jaw upward along my body with a sit command. I always keep my hands together in the center of my body during the correction.



When my dog is sitting in front of me, I maintain eye contact. I wait before petting him. This pause keeps him focused on me. After a moment, I use a reassuring voice and my eyes to praise him. At first I keep the dog focused for a one count, but I increase that focus until the dog stores at me for one minute.



questions, but one thing is certain: Without the use of corrections, the dog will not become conditioned in his or her behavior. When you decided to be a Schutzhund handler, you made a commitment to your dog to be fair and consistent. A handler that corrects a dog one day and not the next creates confusion in the dog's mind. If your dog is to execute your commands quickly and happily, he or she must have a clear

understanding of what is correct.

Gray Matter

Handlers often use a command such as "Come here, heel" when their dog is wide on the turns. Or the handler will snap his or her fingers and point to the ground when the dog gets up from the "down" command. To the dog, this is merely idle chatter. It creates gray matter: "Heel" is heel. "Down" is down. Dogs work better

with a smaller vocabulary and clear, crisp commands. Quick, efficient corrections used consistently in conjunction with clear commands put things in perspective for the dog. When corrections are given, they too must be crisp and clear. The leash, for instance, should be loose immediately before and after a correction. The force must be sharp and immediately released. Nagging your dog about on a tight or semitight



When the dog is sitting correctly in front, three or four repetitions can be done and repeating the steps.



To improve the dog's concentration on me, I place a ball under my chin or food in my mouth.



When the dog looks away, I correct him upward and repeat the "sit" command.



In the Schutzhund III obedience routine, the dog must sit in front of the handler five times-three with the dumbbell in his mouth and twice on recalls. If your dog is consistently incorrect in this part of the exercise, you could lose up to ten points. Correct execution of this exercise is an essential part of a V-rated routine.

leash accomplishes nothing and is cruel and confusing to the dog.

Quite often when I have a problem with a trained adult dog or when I am teaching something new to a beginning dog, repeat the same exercise two or three times a day. If I can train only in the evenings, I have three short sessions over the period of an hour. By using these short sessions, the training becomes a conditioned part of the dog's obedience routine.

Feeling

Obedience training is not all human domination over the dog. The great handlers are those who have learned to work with their dogs. Working with a dog's drives is as vital in obedience as it is in protection. Try to feel how many points the dog is capable of obtaining in each exercise.

To use this feeling correctly, you must have a clear understanding of the trial regulations and the points that will be deducted for incorrect actions. This gives you realistic understanding of your dog's capabilities.

Trial Routines

The different phases of our sport display different disciplined behaviors from our dogs. The trial enables the dog & handler team to exhibit the training skills of the handler as well as the character of the dog. The dog cannot exhibit his or her character completely if the dog & handler - as a team - lacks the discipline of consistent training.

Many dogs would exceed their current point levels if exercises were executed correctly in the trials. Straight fronts, straight sits, correct motion exercises (sit, down and

stay in motion)-all these seemingly minor details can be obtained when the handler demands a correct exercise and rewards the dog for correct execution.

When consistent training techniques are used with a dog, his or her natural willingness to work will surface as a correct and happy obedience routine.

This is the second in a series of articles on the obedience phase of our sport. **Dean Calderon** is the training director of the South County Schutzhund Club. The most recent accomplishments of this club include taking second and third place in the 1988 North American Championship and sending three members, including Dean Calderon and Axel v.d. Lindenhof, to the 1988 World Championships in Munster, West Germany.