



Obediently Yours K9 Training

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Socialization – Not just for Puppies

A dog is a social pack animal. It is important for our dogs to be exposed to as many experiences as possible throughout their lifetime and to continue socializing them in order to be a trusting, well balanced and happy dog.

Start to build a strong foundation during the first five months of puppyhood and establish building trust and self confidence. Expose your dog to as many experiences as possible such as children, walking in a crowded area, skateboards, bikes, people with knapsacks, hats, beards, shopping carts and loud noises. If your dog is afraid of something it is important to work them through the fear with positive reinforcement. Once your dog has worked through a negative experience as a pup, the better recovery period he/she will have when something scares or spooks them later on in life. A well socialized, confident dog will demonstrate self control when faced in an awkward situation and be able to remove himself from it before things start to escalate. This does not mean that your well socialized dog will leave without yelling at another dog, but things most likely will not get out of control.

We can socialize dogs by putting them in obedience and agility lessons, interacting with dogs they meet on their walks and at the park, doggie daycare, etc. Introduce them to new experiences and new dogs, not just the ones they are familiar with. Walk them on a different route where there are new things to see and smell. They will love you for it!

As pet owners we need to constantly mold and reinforce appropriate behaviour and discourage the negative behaviour. If you adopt an adult dog, be sure to assess where his strengths and weakness are. You may need to contact a professional dog trainer to help you and your new companion through some rough spots but investing in this initially will address and help resolve the problem from early on. If your dog has issues around other dogs and / or people, it will not go away unless you work on the specific problem. It may take some work but having a dog friendly pooch is a great reward.

Walking your dog should be a relaxing and joyful experience, one that you look forward in doing. Socializing your dog for many years after puppyhood will help ensure them a balanced and happy life. Guide your dog through life experiences, shape his manners and praise him when he makes a good choice. Socializing pets is a life long journey so be sure to stay calm and enjoy the experiences along with your pooch.