



VETLAND

Animal Hospital



Choosing a Dog Trainer

Do you have a new puppy? Or an older dog that's developed bad habits? Do you just need some help to understand your canine companion? Then you're probably looking for a puppy / dog training school or instructor.



It's important to know that *anyone* can advertise themselves as a dog trainer. There is no licensing or regulatory body, or minimum qualification. So it's essential that you do some research before committing yourself and your dog. Here's a list of some things to consider.

Get References. Good references are probably the best indicator of a good school or trainer. Talk to other dog owners. Where did they train their dogs? You can also seek advice from your vet, animal welfare organisations (the SPCA or Wet Nose), your breeder, grooming parlours, etc.

Visit the School. Any reputable school or trainer should permit you to sit in on a lesson or two, and to speak to the participants, before you make a commitment.

- Watch the instructors interact with the animals – do they demonstrate real enthusiasm and a genuine love of dogs?
- Do the instructors have good teaching and communication skills? Are questions encouraged? Are the instructors courteous to all?
- What are the instructors' qualifications?
- Are the participants (human and canine) enjoying themselves? Training should be fun.
- Is the training location safe, pleasant and clean? Is animal health taken seriously (e.g. is vaccination status checked?)
- Does the class size permit individual attention?
- If applicable, are children permitted to attend? Is the entire family encouraged to work with the dog?

Training Approach. What approach does the school / the instructor use: Positive reinforcement? Negative reinforcement? Physical coercion? Avoid any school that permits harsh or abusive methods, such as yelling, hanging or hitting, which may frighten or inflict pain on the dog.

Types of Classes. Be sure you know what will be taught, and the objectives for each course. This should match up with your expectations, and any goals you have for yourself and your dog. Are the classes geared to competitive obedience? Good manners? Specialised work such as agility, or tracking, or therapy dog training? Are different levels of training offered? Are both group and individual lessons available? Especially for puppies, find out if the class is for socialisation only, or does the programme include some training, to help instil good discipline?

Support for Owners. Puppy and dog training is as much for the human handler as for the pet. What support does the school provide for owners? Are written materials available to supplement the practical work? Can the instructor provide information on basic health care, nutrition, problem solving, etc. and refer you to other medical, behavioural or training specialists when and if necessary?

Practical factors. Location, day and time. Be realistic. If you don't want to get out of bed early on a Sunday morning, or only have 15 minutes between dropping Junior off at school and getting to class, it may become a hassle and you may be tempted to skip classes, or to resent the obligation. Remember, training should be enjoyable for the handler as well as for the dog.

Cost. This is a reality for everyone these days. But do remember that costs for dog training are a long term investment, so it makes sense to pay for the best training you can afford.

Trusted School Franchises.

- Hills Puppy school
- Eukanuba Thinking Pets
- Royal Canin Super pup

Feel free to contact Vetland's reception to book your place or a visit with our puppy school

