




Social Interactions: Skills

Croney Research Group

A photograph showing a person in a light-colored shirt and blue jeans sitting on the floor, reaching into a metal wire cage to feed a light-colored dog. The dog is looking up at the person's hand. The background is dark and out of focus.

Training Methodology

Positive reinforcement is scientifically supported as the most humane and effective training method

A photograph of two young women with long hair, smiling and interacting with a small dog. One woman is feeding the dog from her hand. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with trees and a building.

Training Methodology

- Negative or “balanced” methods of training have been correlated with fear behaviors including avoidance, aggression, or other problem behaviors
- Compromised welfare from training methods can carry over outside of the training context



4 Ways that Training Improves Dog Welfare

1) Behaviors can be taught that increase active participation and comfort during husbandry (e.g., cooperative grooming and veterinary care)



4 Ways that Training Improves Dog Welfare

2) Reduces the frequency of problem behaviors (e.g., fear of strangers, nuisance behavior)

A man with long hair tied back, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and dark pants, is kneeling in a field of tall, reddish-brown grass. He is looking towards a Dalmatian dog that is sitting and looking up at him with its mouth open. The background shows a line of green trees under a bright sky.

4 Ways that Training Improves Dog Welfare

3) Improves the dog-human relationship



4 Ways that Training Improves Dog Welfare

4) Facilitates outcomes for puppies and rehomed retired adult dogs that are desirable for new families (e.g., manners, response to cues, cooperative body handling)

A light-colored dog is captured mid-air, jumping over a hurdle during an agility competition. The dog is in focus, with its front legs tucked and back legs pushing off. The background shows a grassy field with other agility equipment and a person's legs in the distance.

Skills to Teach for Successful Rehoming

- Focus on handler
- Basics: recall, sit, down, stay
- Acclimation to a leash, collar, and harness
- Taking treats from a hand in MANY locations
- Active husbandry participation (cooperative care)



How to Improve Dog Welfare through Training

- Offer positive, fun training sessions weekly
- Training is most effective with dog's younger than 6 months of age, but important for all stages of life!



Learn More:

- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Application](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Dogs](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Handling](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – People](#)
- [Quick Tips for Success: Adult Dog Body Handling](#)
- [Adult Dog Body Handling Checklist](#)
- [Body Language Handout](#)
- [The role of caretaker interactions in environmental enrichment for kennelled dogs](#)



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