

Doodle By Design



An introduction to Rally training, and becoming an obedience partner for your dog.

By Marsha Houston

My training manual will provide you with exercises to build skills for a peaceful, working relationship with your dog based on respect and trust.

Instructors are welcome to duplicate the student handouts.

These handouts provide a consistent class structure, and encourage students to train for a few minutes each day.

Structure and daily attention create that respectful, consistent, peaceful relationship we all long to have with our canine companions.

"Doodle By Design" refers to the fact that rally exercises are doodles we perform with our dogs to warm up for obedience performances. Rather than randomly doodling to warm up, rally emphasizes the ideal or perfect doodle, and is, therefore, the perfect preparation for other obedience performances. We're not randomly doodling, we're doodling with structure. We're doodling-by-design.

Other electronic books coming soon!!

Look for these in our webstore:

"Doodle By Design Skills" by Ruthann McCaulley

Ruthann is one of our most popular "Go Rally!" authors, receiving dozens of letters from new rally enthusiasts thanking her for providing training tips for followers of her column, "Going it Alone."

"Doodle By Design Workbooks" by Marsha Houston

Marsha provides advanced course work for 8-week rally obedience instructors and students training alone. This workbook is designed to be used in conjunction with Doodle By Design Intro and Skills electronic books.

I'd love to hear back from my readers with suggestions for improvements, or with questions regarding issues which arise in rally classes.

Rally dog training classes are a fantastic laboratory for studying the human/dog relationship, and every new situation initiates learning.

My e-mail address is campdogwood@earthlink.net

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(permission to reprint granted)

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How this book works

If you're a rally obedience (or traditional novice obedience) instructor, this training manual will provide you with a lesson structure for 8 weeks' worth of introductory training. This book provides a weekly handout which guides your students during their daily training sessions, and handouts addressing special issues.

First let me commend you for your dedication to your students. Being an obedience instructor means you devote more time to your students' dogs than you devote to your own. It means that you read training manuals looking for solutions to your students' problems, rather than applying them directly to your own dog training. You spend your lunch hour writing lesson plans and use your office photocopier preparing handouts. It's a labor of love and your students adore you for all your help and support.

Instructing adults or children in the art of dog training is an avocation, a calling, something we often do in addition to the work that pays the bills and feeds the dog. I'd like to offer this training manual as a way of simplifying your life, giving your class presentation structure, covering all the skills needed to qualify and title in rally obedience, and ensuring all AKC rally signs (and most APDT signs) are addressed.

This training manual gives you the bones for your rally classes. Your personal beliefs and experiences are the meat of the lesson plan. There are several pages of my own training philosophy and beliefs, which I encourage you to share with your students.

My primary philosophy is that our dogs wish to partner with us. They've adapted to our lives, and now we're asking them to learn and perform, on cue, irrational behaviors. The very least we can do in return is give them every possible cue, and all the assistance they need. When a dog is trying to understand, it's simply wrong to leave them sitting in confusion.

My other basic belief is that dogs never intentionally perform errors. The instances of willful disobedience are rare, and generally limited to wild puppies and older bitches. I've watched dogs do everything they know to do, to put all their mental and physical skills into a task, only to be cut off or disrespected by their handler, so I'm constantly suggesting "help her out!" to my students.

The handouts in this book support an 8-week class structure which enables students to study 50 AKC rally signs and practice all the skills needed to qualify in AKC rally obedience. I've broken these skills into 3 basic categories: 1) **heeling**, including turns, pivots, pace changes and automatic sits, both on and off lead, 2) **positions**, including sit, down, stand, from each to each, with stays to walk around and walk away, 3) **independent movement**, including coming front, finishing to the right and left, and jumping.

Each week you review the signs your students studied the week before, you test the skill they've been practicing since your last class, you distribute this week's handout, reminding your students to check out the list of signs to be studied and attempted, introduce the homework skill and make sure everyone is applying proper cues and rewards for that skill.

This book contains not only the handouts which will guide you and your students through the 8-week curriculum, but special instructor pages with reminders of the goals of the week. Also included are special topics and miscellaneous handouts addressing some issues not covered in the homework handouts. These handouts have been used in my own classes, so they're time tested, poochie approved.

Special Issues

If students are *staying late* to ask their questions you may be failing to encourage questions during class time. In every group of 10-12 students you'll have one who always wants to stay after class with questions. Discourage this the first time by talking with them as you walk them to their car, then make a point of asking for *their* questions during the last minutes of class in subsequent weeks. Remember that everyone in the class can learn from their questions and your answers. Draw them out by asking specific questions, for example, "how is Max doing with his heeling?" Then end your class with, "Okay, go play with your dogs!"

If a student is *resistant* to positive reinforcement, and continues to share stories of violent training episodes with their dog, please keep *your* temper and encourage them to interact peacefully. Repeat yourself, demonstrate your methods with that student's dog if necessary, showing them that your methods work. Don't give up on them, but also don't allow them to take your positive message off track. They'll either come around to your beliefs, or they won't. Regardless, they don't get to ruin the experience of the other students.

The students who are most *resistant* to positive reinforcement training, perhaps, are children. For whatever reason, children are quick to punish or correct the family dog. Parents need to take charge of this situation as nothing good can come from allowing a child to punish a dog. It's bad for the dog and can often lead to dangerous behaviors in the dog. It's also bad for the child as it teaches them to influence their world through violence and force.

You'll also occasionally find correction-based obedience trainers in your classes. Either they're trying to learn a better way of training dogs (perhaps they've been losing customers to you), or just checking out your classes. If they want to learn they'll become your best students and your biggest fans. If they want to check out your class to discredit you, they'll offer considerable *resistance* to your protocols. I've had these folks bring training devices to my classes and offer to show me how to use them. Regardless of how intimidating they are, no matter how wimpy you are, take charge of the situation and enforce your class rules. My students don't need to know that a power struggle is taking place. I just say, "Please don't bring electronic collars [or prong collars, or pit bull handles, etc.] and attempt to sell me on their usefulness. You've paid for a dog-training class, one designed to build a working *relationship* between the dog and handler. We're not going to rely on gadgets to do that."

If a student *monopolizes* class by talking incessantly, practice the fine art of moving to the next student and engaging the whole room in your lesson. There are times when students need to talk through a problem, and you should encourage them to explain the whole situation with which they need help. But, if you've answered the question several times, finish that discussion with, "Does my method sound like something that you can do to solve the problem? Are you willing to try it? Let us know how it works!" Then move on.

If a student *quotes other dog trainers* in your class, express your appreciation for the ideas, share any differences of opinion you have, and let everyone know you appreciate the fact that they've chosen to train with you. This is your class and frequently offered opinions of other trainers will only confuse your students. There are lots of dog trainers on television, and students will often refer to them in your class. If the television program is one with positive reinforcement merit, say so, and encourage your students to watch the program. If the program is one that primarily uses corrections and compulsion, discourage your students from practicing those methods.

If a student brings their *bruised inner child* to class, with the resulting anger and resentment, be gentle with them but let them know these emotions can create problems in their relationship with their dog. I started to grow up myself when I learned to train my dog. I learned that any mistakes my parents made raising me could be left behind, just as my early mistakes in training my first dog could be fixed.

Generalization #1: Men are often worried about appearing weak or silly with their dogs. They'll work hard to show you they're in charge. The dogs these fellows bring to class can be completely submissive to the point of urination when the handler engages them, or they can be completely disconnected. Men can also be your best students, and I love showing them how to have fun with dog training.

Generalization #2: Women and men both will come to your classes with their "babies," and, while I appreciate the value of child-rearing skills gained by raising a puppy, I really encourage folks to think of their dog as a 12-year-old instead of as a baby. Any dog, treated as an infant, will manipulate her environment to get what she wants. If we think of our dog as a 12-year-old, we learn to manage a certain amount of her manipulation. Examples include the dog barking every time we're on the phone, or the dog racing around the back seat of the car as we drive, or the dog jumping and biting us as we prepare their meal. A baby might get away with this nonsense, but a 12-year-old would not be permitted to have such poor manners.

Regardless of the sex of the student, or how they treat their dog, help their *inner child* grow up and be a responsible dog-training adult.

Speak to your class with the voice of authority. If you don't know the answer immediately, ask questions and share your ideas out loud. Being an instructor doesn't mean that you have *all the answers*, but that you have the resources to find solutions. One of my most successful teaching methods is to say, "Let's try this, and I'd like you to let me know next week if it works." I don't know everything about dog training, but I can sure help new dog owners work through problems. After all, most problems fall into one of half-a-dozen categories (biting, jumping, barking, destruction, aggression, submission). In most cases we're going to either shape a new behavior, or extinguish a behavior by shifting attention to a replacement activity which is worthy of praise and reward.

Always remember that you'll have a great influence on the students in your class. The best way to impress this on yourself is to query students at graduation about what dog-training skill they found most helpful in their overall life with their dog. You'll be amazed at what students will remember. I've had students tell me, "The tone of voice you used with my dog, and her response to you, really impressed me." Students have shared that, "My relationship with this dog has completely turned around since I've stopped blaming him for everything."

Accept the praise of your students with grace and gladness. Tell them how much it means to you to know you've helped them. There is little compensation for all the hours you spend doing this job, so the moments where you feel terrific about yourself should be experienced fully.

Now we start with your class handouts. Feel free to alter them so they work for you.

Welcome to Dogwood Training Center, LLC !!

We're a "positive reinforcement" dog training facility, and we'll show you the benefits and responsibilities of choosing to make life "rewarding" for you and your dog.

Dogwood Training Center, LLC, is located in a residential neighborhood, and the training buildings are located in our side yard. This is our home and we ask that you treat our training building, our lawns, and our walking paths as gently as you'd treat your own.

When you come to class, whether for a session of basic obedience, or as an ongoing obedience or agility student, you should allow a few minutes for your dog to relieve herself in the grass before entering the building. There are cleanup supplies located at the front of the obedience building. Solid waste should be picked up using a plastic bag and placed in the trash can outside the front door.

Please park on the gravel, rather than on the grass, as our turf takes quite a beating when cars are left parked on it. Also, the shoulders get quite soft in wet weather and you'll probably sink in.

Remember that everything your dog does, whether a marvelous trick or an obnoxious, annoying behavior, is something that *you* taught her to do. Do not punish your dog for simply performing learned behaviors. Instead, teach her to behave in a socially acceptable manner and reward her for that.

There may be behaviors that we need to *interrupt*, in order to reward another behavior. For example, if your dog is barking incessantly, drowning out my lesson presentation, I may approach your dog and say "Knock it off!" When the barking stops, we'll reward the quiet. "Knock it off!" becomes an interrupter, and is not punishment.

Due to the close quarters of a group class situation, reactive or aggressive dogs cannot be accommodated. If your dog exhibits aggression towards you, towards me, or towards another handler or another dog, you'll be asked to remove your dog from our class and 50% of the remaining class fee will be refunded.

Now for the good news !! You're going to learn all about *positive reinforcement* training which involves rewarding the dog immediately and often for behaviors we wish to see again. We want dogs that are biddable and pleasant to live with, not spoiled brats, or neglected barkers.

The hardest part for most trainers is to **first** catch the dog doing something right and reward it, and **second** notice when the dog is offering the correct behavior, and reward it again, and again, and again. There's a huge payoff for the handler being attentive and encouraging to the dog. In return for a few months' work, you'll have a fine companion for a dozen years or so.

Advanced Handout, week 1, continued ...

What is positive reinforcement training, and why does it work?

Positive reinforcement training is the practice of rewarding the dog for behavior we want to see again. When we reward behaviors, the dog learns to offer them more frequently. Behaviors we don't care for, if ignored or not rewarded, will be extinguished as the dog learns that something else earns the attention and rewards they want.

Dogs, like all creatures including humans, have certain fundamental needs. When we, as companion dog trainers, meet those needs we're strengthening the relationship between us and our dog. One highly underrated need of our working dogs is our attention. Of all the behaviors our dogs offer, the brilliant as well as the obnoxious, a huge number of them are designed to **get our attention**.

When our dogs offer unwanted behaviors, we, as positive reinforcement trainers, choose a replacement behavior, create it, and reward it. For example, if my dog is jumping up on my legs, I say, "sit!" and reward the dog for putting her butt on the floor. This replacement behavior, sitting instead of jumping up, makes it possible for the dog to earn the attention, perhaps even treats, that she wants without annoying us.

Positive reinforcement training for kids and their dogs.

Kids often dislike looking silly, and will chastise their dog if a mistake is made. As their role models and instructors, we want to help kids understand that the most important element of dog training is the relationship between them and their dog. How they look to their friends or classmates is secondary in importance. It's a difficult but important lesson, and one they'll appreciate as they mature. After all, they'll have different classmates next year, and some will move away or choose another activity, but they'll remember this dog forever.

Positive reinforcement training provides kids with an intelligent alternative to corrections and punishment. If you make it a game to find a replacement behavior for the unwanted one, you can engage their desire to look smart and inventive. We want to mentor kids, and give them the benefit of our perspective. Childhood embarrassments and regrets can last a lifetime if they're severe enough. Developing a desire to do the right thing, and to disregard minor embarrassments, is always worthwhile.

Positive reinforcement training for busy adults and their dogs.

Busy adults don't mind looking silly sometimes, if it works, but it needs to work quickly for them to accept a dog training plan. Dog training needs to fit into a hectic, distracting schedule, where emergencies arise and not everything revolves around the dog and her needs.

My goal, as an instructor for busy adults, is to minimize resistance to the training protocols I know will work for my students. Training exercises will be broken down into tiny, doable pieces. Students will be asked to work with their dogs 5-10 minutes a day. I'll be available for e-mail consultations between classes, in case students have questions or problems. And we'll review homework assignments and achievements in class each week.

Positive reinforcement training for the "serious" trainer.

The serious dog trainer already knows the power of positive reinforcement training. We start our puppies at 8 weeks, teaching attention and biddability to a puppy even before we get too concerned about house training. Serious dog trainers recognize that the most dangerous dog in class is the dog who is spoiled into believing that she's in control of her household and her people. When she wants something to happen she simply nags or barks until it happens. When she wants something to stop she just lifts her lip and it stops. She's a danger to herself, her people, other dogs, and to strangers.

I'm going to try to keep that from happening to the dogs in my basic obedience classes!

Novice rally and traditional obedience SKILLS class will cover the following topics. Please use this form to indicate any questions that arise between classes, and to remind yourself to ask me at the next class.

Heeling ...

Left Turns	Left Pivots	Automatic Sits	
Right Turns	Right Pivots	ON lead	OFF lead
Slow	Fast	Normal	From each to each

Positions

Sit	Down	Stand	From each to each	
Sit/Stay	Down/Stay	Stand/Stay	for walk around	for walk away

Independent Movement

Around	Front	Jumping
Finish Right	Finish Left	with or without halt / sit

Adv. Handout, week 2 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Right Turn (90-degree) - #5

DAY 2: Left Turn (90-degree) - #6

DAY 3: About Turn Right (180-degree) - #7

DAY 4: About "U" Turn (180-degree Left) - #8

DAY 5: 270-degree Right - #9

DAY 6: 270-degree Left - #10

DAY 7: 360-degree Right - #11 AND 360-degree Left - #12

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable assuming any one of several positions at our side (i.e. "heel" position). Practice "sit," "down," "stand," and transitions from each to each.

Teaching "Positions"

With your dog sitting in "heel" position and her dinner in a food bowl in your right hand, take a handful of kibble and signal "down," releasing the kibble as she lies down. With your dog lying down in "heel" position and her food bowl in your right hand, take a handful of kibble and signal "sit," releasing the kibble as she sits up. With your dog sitting in "heel" position and her food bowl in your right hand, take a handful of kibble and signal "stand," releasing the kibble as she stands. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

Adv. Handout, week 3

(Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Halt-Sit - #3

DAY 2: Halt-Sit Down - #4

DAY 3: Halt-Fast Forward from Sit - #28

DAY 4: Halt-Sit-Walk Around Dog - #30

DAY 5: Halt-Down-Walk Around Dog - #31

DAY 6: Halt-Down-Sit - #45

DAY 7: Halt-Stand-Down - #46

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable finishing around our backs ("finish right") and swinging counter-clockwise to our left ("finish left").

Teaching "Finishes"

With your dog sitting in front of you and with her food bowl in your right hand, signal a right finish and lure her around behind your back and into heel position, then release the kibble to reward her. With your dog sitting in front of you and with her food bowl in your left hand, signal a left finish and lure her counter-clockwise into heel position, then release the kibble to reward her.. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

Adv. Handout, week 4 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Call Front Finish Right Forward - #13

DAY 2: Call Front Finish Left Forward - #14

DAY 3: Call Front Finish Right Halt - #15

DAY 4: Call Front Finish Left Halt - #16

DAY 5: Call Front - 1, 2, 3 Steps Backward - #26

DAY 6: Halt Call Dog Front Finish Right - #41

DAY 7: Halt Call Dog Front Finish Left - #42

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable staying in heel position regardless of the pace we set. Practice normal, fast, slow, and transitioning from each to each.

Teaching "Pace"

With your dog moving in "heel" position and her meal in a bowl in your right hand, alternate between the three paces (normal, fast and slow). Move in a straight path for now, but alternate paces randomly, releasing kibble to her each time your dog responds to your change of pace. After all, it's her response to our signal we want to encourage. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

Adv. Handout, week 5 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Slow Pace - #17

DAY 2: Fast Pace - #18

DAY 3: Normal Pace - #19

DAY 4: Fast Forward from Sit - #28

DAY 5: Send over jump Handler runs by - #34

DAY 6: Moving Down - #27

DAY 7: Moving Stand Walk Around Dog - #48

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable around cones, and should be turning briskly toward us as well as away from us. Make sure you never walk your dog over a cone or sign while heeling. This will discourage the dog from heeling with attention on you and her head up.

Teaching "Cone" exercises

There's a specific path we want to follow in all the cone exercises, and we'll be practicing those in class, but your homework has more to do with moving briskly through cones, your dog in heel position and heads up, making sure you allow enough room on your left that your dog touches *nothing* while heeling. This can be harder than it sounds as cone exercises can sometimes leave us a bit dizzy and disoriented.

We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

Adv. Handout, week 6 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Spiral Right Dog Outside - #21

DAY 2: Spiral Left Dog Inside - #22

DAY 3: Straight Figure 8 Weave Twice - #23

DAY 4: Serpentine Weave Once - #24

DAY 5: Offset Figure 8 - #39

DAY 6: Send Over Jump, Handler Runs By - #34

DAY 7: Moving Side Step Right - #20

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Start with the easiest version of the turn (a gentle left turn, for example) and build complexity gradually until you've achieved a left pivot. Then practice the opposite direction (a gentle right turn, for example) and build complexity until you've got your right pivot.

Teaching "Pivot" exercises

These are probably the toughest exercises in rally, and have no traditional obedience equivalent until you're showing at the Utility level. There's no reason they shouldn't be fun for the dog, though, so just make an effort to keep your training upbeat and motivational. Some trainers use dowel rods or sticks to move dogs, especially in the left pivot. I've found that gradual conditioning exercises do as well without the intimidation some dogs may feel when touched with rods or dowels.

We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net

Adv. Handout, week 7 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Halt About Turn Right Forward - #32

DAY 2: Halt About "U" Turn Forward - #33

DAY 3: Halt Turn Right 1 Step Call To Heel Halt - #35

DAY 4: Halt 90-degree Pivot Right Halt - #37

DAY 5: Halt 90-degree Pivot Left Halt - #38

DAY 6: Halt 180-degree Pivot Right Halt - #43

DAY 7: Halt 180-degree Pivot Left Halt - #44

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be conditioned to completely understand Heel Position, and should enjoy the activity of *staying* in that spot in relation to the handler.

Teaching "Heel Position" exercises

Regardless of whether we're moving forward, backward, or side-to-side, we click/treat for the dog's most elemental efforts at staying in heel position. We practice the slightest movement in each direction, gradually building to the full exercise. For example, before practicing "Halt Side Step Right Halt" (#40), we practice slight steps to the right, followed by full side-steps to the right. Before practicing "Back Up 3 Steps Dog Stays in Heel Position" (#49), we practice half steps back, followed by full steps back, and build up to 3 full steps back. Always encourage your dog, always praise and treat for attention and effort.

Adv. Handout, week 8 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

-
- DAY 1: Halt Side Step Right Halt - #40
 - DAY 2: Halt - 1, 2, 3 Steps Forward - #25
 - DAY 3: Halt - Stand - Walk Around Dog - #36
 - DAY 4: Halt - Stand - Sit - #47
 - DAY 5: Back Up 3 Steps Dog Stays in Heel Position - #49
 - DAY 6: Left About Turn - #29
 - DAY 7: Honor - #50

Our class schedule for next session includes

- 1.
2. List your class offerings
- 3.

To register for next session please **complete your registration form and make check payable to** _____.

You may leave the form with your instructor, or mail to: _____

Name: _____ Dog's name _____ (breed or type) _____

NEW student address: _____

Telephone: ____/____ e-mail: _____

PRICES: _____

Payment information: check attached _____ credit card information

Visa MC _____ exp ____/____

Please read and sign the following waiver ... Thank you. "I understand fully the risks inherent in training my dog, and that I must take all possible precautions against disease and injury. My dog is current on all vaccinations (check with your veterinarian if you have questions about what is recommended or required) or has regular titer checks, and is in good health. (If your dog is ill or in season, skip class or attend without your dog, please.)

I agree to hold Dogwood Training Center, LLC, Marsha and/or Bud Houston, and all other persons in the building or on the grounds of Dogwood Training Center (8658 and 8738 Slocum Road, Ostrander, Ohio 43061) harmless from any claim or loss or injury which may be alleged to have been caused directly or indirectly by any of the above mentioned while on this property. I understand that Agility, Flyball, Obedience or any other dog-related sport in which I choose to participate could cause significant injury to my dog or myself. I personally assume all responsibility and liability for any claims regarding theft, accident, illness, injury, death or otherwise alleged to be caused by negligence of the above mentioned."

ALL STUDENTS need to sign waiver, please, Handler _____ date _____

INSTRUCTOR, week 1 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

Open with introductions of all your instructors, briefly describing your training experience and philosophy. There will be plenty of time later to introduce your dogs and demonstrate their abilities, so I don't spend much time the first hour talking about your dogs. It's more important to find out about your students' dogs.

To get your students to relax, have them introduce themselves, tell about their dog's achievements, and what their goals are for this class. As a final introduction, go over any house rules, show folks where to park, and fill them in on how the homework is going to function. Most of the work in this class will happen at home, and they should prepare for that now.

Set up a heeling square and allow everyone to show their heeling skills. In rally, dogs have to be able to heel at all paces, turn infinitely right and infinitely left, and assume all positions from a heel, so knowledge of heel position is critical.*

I demo my methodologies for teaching right turns and left turns, using the dog's instinctive understanding of handler posture to indicate turns. At this point, I introduce my version of "choose to heel," with the dog eating breakfast and dinner in heel position. Hand out the homework and describe both of these assignments.

ASSIGNMENT #1 - write two paragraphs and bring them to class next week; 1) what is your dog's weakest obedience skill (describe the performance in detail), and, 2) describe your idea of the perfect performance for that skill. I want to know your goals for this class, so also please indicate how much work you plan to do to create that perfect performance.

Two simple paragraphs which will help me determine the goals and skills of my class.

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise once a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. *Hopefully* dogs will return week 2 with an increased recognition of "heel," with motivation and attention.

Teaching attention and "heel" *I demo this exercise and it's described below ...*

Put your dog in a sit in heel position (dog's right shoulder next to your left knee), holding dinner, say your dog's name, get movement forward with attention, and put a few pieces of food at a time in your dog's mouth. The sequence is *"Heel!" movement forward with dog's attention, handful of food, repeat* until the dinner or breakfast bowl is empty. If you're really busy, do the training for just a few minutes and feed the balance of the meal as you normally would. While you're training your dog, you'll find that lessons are learned faster if training is paired with a meal. The easiest way to do this is to train primarily at mealtimes and -- at all other times -- withhold food. That means you'll probably want to feed scheduled meals instead of "free-feeding," and eliminate "cute treats." **The heeling square is a simple square made with cones. The handler does left turns on the counter-clockwise square, right turns on the clockwise square. Ruthann McCaulley introduced me to this concept in "Go Rally!" electronic magazine.*

This is the third page of my students' week 1 homework. It's a brief discussion of positive reinforcement. I wanted to emphasize the idea that homework doesn't require hours a day and that rally training, as with all dog training, is a job best done 5 minutes at a time.

Your job, as obedience instructor, is to educate - even entertain - these folks.

Advanced Handout, week 1, continued ...

What is positive reinforcement training, and why does it work?

Positive reinforcement training is the practice of rewarding the dog for behavior we want to see again. When we reward behaviors, the dog learns to offer them more frequently. Behaviors we don't care for, if ignored or not rewarded, will be extinguished as the dog learns that something else earns the attention and rewards they want.

Dogs, like all creatures including humans, have certain fundamental needs. When we, as companion dog trainers, meet those needs we're strengthening the relationship between us and our dog. One highly underrated need of our working dogs is our attention. Of all the behaviors our dogs offer, the brilliant as well as the obnoxious, a huge number of them are designed to get our attention.

When our dogs offer unwanted behaviors, we, as positive reinforcement trainers, choose a replacement behavior, create it, and reward it. For example, if my dog is jumping up on my legs, I say, "sit!" and reward the dog for putting her butt on the floor. This replacement behavior, sitting instead of jumping up, makes it possible for the dog to earn the attention, perhaps even treats, that she wants without annoying us.

Positive reinforcement training for kids and their dogs.

Kids often dislike looking silly, and will chastise their dog if a mistake is made. As their role models and instructors, we want to help kids understand that the most important element of dog training is the relationship between them and their dog. How they look to their friends or classmates is secondary in importance. It's a difficult but important lesson, and one they'll appreciate as they mature. After all, they'll have different classmates next year, and some will move away or choose another activity, but they'll remember this dog forever.

Positive reinforcement training provides kids with an intelligent alternative to corrections and punishment. If you make it a game to find a replacement behavior for the unwanted one, you can engage their desire to look smart and inventive. We want to mentor kids, and give them the benefit of our perspective. Childhood embarrassments and regrets can last a lifetime if they're severe enough. Developing a desire to do the right thing, and to disregard minor embarrassments, is always worthwhile.

Positive reinforcement training for busy adults and their dogs.

Busy adults don't mind looking silly sometimes, if it works, but it needs to work quickly for them to accept a dog training plan. Dog training needs to fit into a hectic, distracting schedule, where emergencies arise and not everything revolves around the dog and her needs.

My goal, as an instructor for busy adults, is to minimize resistance to the training protocols I know will work for my students. Training exercises will be broken down into tiny, doable pieces. Students will be asked to work with their dogs 5-10 minutes a day. I'll be available for e-mail consultations between classes, in case students have questions or problems. And we'll review homework assignments and achievements in class each week.

Positive reinforcement training for the "serious" trainer.

The serious dog trainer already knows the power of positive reinforcement training. We start our puppies at 8 weeks, teaching attention and biddability to a puppy even before we get too concerned about house training. Serious dog trainers recognize that the most dangerous dog in class is the dog who is spoiled into believing that she's in control of her household and her people. When she wants something to happen she simply nags or barks until it happens. When she wants something to stop she just lifts her lip and it stops. She's a danger to herself, her people, other dogs, and to strangers.

I'm going to try to keep that from happening to the dogs in my basic obedience classes!

Novice rally and traditional obedience SKILLS class will cover the following topics. Please use this form to indicate any questions that arise between classes, and to remind yourself to ask me at the next class.

Heeling ...

Left Turns	Left Pivots	Automatic Sits	
Right Turns	Right Pivots	ON lead	OFF lead
Slow	Fast	Normal	From each to each

I always encourage my students to bring their questions to class !! If they're not asking questions, they're not maximizing their class experience. Also, I view classes as my favorite laboratory, and questions tell me the direction my instruction should be taking. This form gives them an overview of the class curriculum.

Positions

Sit	Down	Stand	From each to each	
Sit/Stay	Down/Stay	Stand/Stay	for walk around	for walk away

Independent Movement

Around	Front	Jumping
Finish Right	Finish Left	with or without halt / sit

INSTRUCTOR, week 2 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

Our lesson today starts with a bit of a test on the heeling square. I hope they've done a little work this week, though I'm certain a couple of folks will show me huge improvements, and a couple folks will show me no improvement at all. I keep encouraging them to work on all the skills we're going to cover.

Next we play the "positions game." We all stand in a circle, facing in, with our dogs and lots of treats. I start the game, calling out 3-4 position names. For example, "sit, down, walk around your dog, sit." Everyone does those moves - in heel position - rewarding their dog as needed. The person beside me then calls out 3-4 positions, and on around the room. Everyone gets a chance to chose their favorites.

The first homework assignment is to start studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (heeling/turning).

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Right Turn (90-degree) - #5

DAY 2: Left Turn (90-degree) - #6

DAY 3: About Turn Right (180-degree) - #7

DAY 4: About "U" Turn (180-degree Left) - #8

DAY 5: 270-degree Right - #9

DAY 6: 270-degree Left - #10

DAY 7: 360-degree Right - #11 AND 360-degree Left - #12

The second homework assignment is to practice positions at home. We teach our dogs to understand hand signals and verbals for sit/down/stand, as well as staying in all positions for a walk away and a walk around the dog.

ASSIGNMENT #2 - Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable assuming any one of several positions at our side (i.e. "heel" position). Practice "sit," "down," "stand," and transitions from each to each.

Teaching "Positions"

With your dog sitting in "heel" position and her dinner in a food bowl in your right hand, take a handful of kibble and signal "down," releasing the kibble as she lies down. With your dog lying down in "heel" position and her food bowl in your right hand, take a handful of kibble and signal "sit," releasing the kibble as she sits up. With your dog sitting in "heel" position and her food bowl in your right hand, take a handful of kibble and signal "stand," releasing the kibble as she stands. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

INSTRUCTOR, week 3 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

First we play the "positions game" and check how the homework went. We all stand in a circle, facing in, with our dogs and lots of treats. I start the game, calling out 3-4 position names. For example, "sit, down, walk around your dog, sit." Everyone does those moves - in heel position - rewarding their dog as needed. The person beside me then calls out 3-4 positions, and on around the room. Everyone gets a chance to choose their favorites.

Next we'll work on introducing the dogs to right and left finishes. I teach this by putting the leash and the lure in the same hand, giving our young dogs an additional cue as to which lead hand to follow. We rely heavily on luring to shape this behavior at first, rather than pulling the dog with their leash.

The first homework assignment is to start studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (sit/down/stand/walk around dog).

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Halt-Sit - #3

DAY 2: Halt-Sit Down - #4

DAY 3: Halt-Fast Forward from Sit - #28

DAY 4: Halt-Sit-Walk Around Dog - #30

DAY 5: Halt-Down-Walk Around Dog - #31

DAY 6: Halt-Down-Sit - #45

DAY 7: Halt-Stand-Down - #46

The second homework assignment is to practice finishes, to the right and to the left. It will take more than a week to teach our dogs to finish independently of us, but there's no time like the present to start.

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable finishing around our backs ("finish right") and swinging counter-clockwise to our left ("finish left").

Teaching "Finishes"

With your dog sitting in front of you and with her food bowl in your right hand, signal a right finish and lure her around behind your back and into heel position, then release the kibble to reward her. With your dog sitting in front of you and with her food bowl in your left hand, signal a left finish and lure her counter-clockwise into heel position, then release the kibble to reward her. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

INSTRUCTOR, week 4 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

First we'll work on finishing the dogs to our right and left. I cue this by putting the leash and the lure in the same hand, giving our young dogs an additional cue as to which lead hand to follow. We rely heavily on luring to shape this behavior at first, rather than pulling the dog with their leash. Some dogs get the right finish really quickly, others pick up on the left finish faster. Interesting !!

Next we'll put our heeling square back in place and practice pace changes. I generally do one dog at a time since it's difficult to make sure all dogs are actually changing pace and my room is so small that folks will run into each other. My goal is to give each handler a good idea of how to cue a pace change, and how to prove to a judge that their dog understands the exercise.

The first homework assignment is to start studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (fronts/finishes, right and left).

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Call Front Finish Right Forward - #13

DAY 2: Call Front Finish Left Forward - #14

DAY 3: Call Front Finish Right Halt - #15

DAY 4: Call Front Finish Left Halt - #16

DAY 5: Call Front - 1, 2, 3 Steps Backward - #26

DAY 6: Halt Call Dog Front Finish Right - #41

DAY 7: Halt Call Dog Front Finish Left - #42

The second homework assignment is to practice pace changes, from normal to fast and back to normal, from normal to slow and back to normal, to fast from a sit, and from slow to fast to normal to fast to slow, etc. We teach to each, from each..

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable staying in heel position regardless of the pace we set. Practice normal, fast, slow, and transitioning from each to each.

Teaching "Pace"

With your dog moving in "heel" position and her meal in a bowl in your right hand, alternate between the three paces (normal, fast and slow). Move in a straight path for now, but alternate paces randomly, releasing kibble to her each time your dog responds to your change of pace. After all, it's her response to our signal we want to encourage. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

INSTRUCTOR, week 5 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

First we'll put our heeling square back in place and practice pace changes. I generally do one dog at a time since it's difficult to make sure all dogs are actually changing pace and my room is so small that folks will run into each other. The students who have been continuing to train for heel position will have an easier time of it on this exercise.

Next we'll bring out my large cones and I'll show each student a straight figure eight as well as both of the spiral exercises. Right now I really want them understanding how to turn around a cone without stepping on it or pushing their dog into it. The pattern in which they move is of no consequence at first.

The first homework assignment is to start studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (pace) plus moving down and jumps.

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Slow Pace - #17

DAY 2: Fast Pace - #18

DAY 3: Normal Pace - #19

DAY 4: Fast Forward from Sit - #28

DAY 5: Send over jump Handler runs by - #34

DAY 6: Moving Down - #27

DAY 7: Moving Stand Walk Around Dog - #48

The second homework assignment is to work around cones. The handlers have to make sure they leave room between their left side and the cones for their dog, and make sure they don't trip over the cones themselves because of watching their dog

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be comfortable around cones, and should be turning briskly toward us as well as away from us. Make sure you never walk your dog over a cone or sign while heeling. This will discourage the dog from heeling with attention on you and her head up.

Teaching "Cone" exercises

There's a specific path we want to follow in all the cone exercises, and we'll be practicing those in class, but your homework has more to do with moving briskly through cones, your dog in heel position and heads up, making sure you allow enough room on your left that your dog touches *nothing* while heeling. This can be harder than it sounds as cone exercises can sometimes leave us a bit dizzy and disoriented.

We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net.

INSTRUCTOR, week 6 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

First we'll bring out my large cones and practice a straight figure eight, an offset figure eight (with mild distractions) as well as both of the spiral exercises. Right now I really want them understanding how to turn around a cone without stepping on it or pushing their dog into it. The pattern in which they move is of no consequence at first.

Next we'll work on pivots. Pivots are simply turns where the handler's feet remain in the same area of the floor. To train for pivots, warm-up with turns. Beginning with right turns, we reward the dog for catching up to the lead hand which is quickly moving away from her. This evolves into a pivot and the rewards are great for the dog who rushes to catch that hand. We switch to left turns - much harder than right turns - and gradually turn tighter until we're able to heap huge rewards on the dog who moves with us in a left pivot. Any movement left earns a reward!

The first homework assignment is to start studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (spiral/serpentine) plus side step.

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Spiral Right Dog Outside - #21

DAY 2: Spiral Left Dog Inside - #22

DAY 3: Straight Figure 8 Weave Twice - #23

DAY 4: Serpentine Weave Once - #24

DAY 5: Offset Figure 8 - #39

DAY 6: Send Over Jump, Handler Runs By - #34

DAY 7: Moving Side Step Right - #20

The second homework assignment is to train our dog to respond to our pivot cues.

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Start with the easiest version of the turn (a gentle left turn, for example) and build complexity gradually until you've achieved a left pivot. Then practice the opposite direction (a gentle right turn, for example) and build complexity until you've got your right pivot.

Teaching "Pivot" exercises

These are probably the toughest exercises in rally, and have no traditional obedience equivalent until you're showing at the Utility level. There's no reason they shouldn't be fun for the dog, though, so just keep your training upbeat and motivational. I've found that gradual conditioning exercises work well, without the intimidation some dogs may feel when touched with rods or dowels. We'll practice these signals in class, but please make sure you note any questions, or e-mail Marsha at campdogwood@earthlink.net

INSTRUCTOR, week 7 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

First we'll work on pivots. Pivots are simply turns where the handler's feet remain in the same area of the floor. Beginning with right turns, we reward the dog for catching up to the lead hand which is quickly moving away from her. This evolves into a pivot and the rewards are great for the dog who rushes to catch that hand. We switch to left turns and gradually turn tighter until we're able to heap huge rewards on the dog who moves with us in a left pivot. Any movement left earns a reward!

Now we've come full circle and are ready to re-visit our heel position training. Heeling remains job 1, and is made more difficult with pivots, stationery side-steps, and 3-steps-back. Beginner rally students should be reminded that these are very advanced exercises and that they should be rewarding their dogs' attempts to stay in heel position without getting mental about it. Perfect heel position is acquired through hours of training and treating, and those students who have been spending a few minutes a day on these skills are going to demonstrate tremendous improvement.

The first homework assignment is to start studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (pivots/about turns from sit).

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Halt About Turn Right Forward - #32

DAY 2: Halt About "U" Turn Forward - #33

DAY 3: Halt Turn Right 1 Step Call To Heel Halt - #35

DAY 4: Halt 90-degree Pivot Right Halt - #37

DAY 5: Halt 90-degree Pivot Left Halt - #38

DAY 6: Halt 180-degree Pivot Right Halt - #43

DAY 7: Halt 180-degree Pivot Left Halt - #44

Our second assignment re-visits heel position - reward every effort from the dog!

ASSIGNMENT #2 -- Practice this exercise several times a day, with dinner or breakfast, feeding the entire meal for doing work. Our obedience dogs should be conditioned to completely understand Heel Position, and should enjoy the activity of *staying* in that spot in relation to the handler.

Teaching "Heel Position" exercises

Regardless of whether we're moving forward, backward, or side-to-side, we click/treat for the dog's most elemental efforts at staying in heel position. We practice the slightest movement in each direction, gradually building to the full exercise. For example, before practicing "Halt Side Step Right Halt" (#40), we practice slight steps to the right, followed by full side-steps to the right. Before practicing "Back Up 3 Steps Dog Stays in Heel Position" (#49), we practice half steps back, followed by full steps back, and build up to 3 full steps back. Always encourage your dog, always praise and treat for attention and effort.

INSTRUCTOR, week 8 (Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC copyright 2006)

We'll continue work on our heel position training. Heeling remains job 1, and is made more difficult with pivots, stationery side-steps, and 3-steps-back

Finally, I generally set up a short (8-10-station) course using a combination of novice and more advanced signs. Each student works individually and is coached and judged on their results.

The final homework assignment is to continue studying signs. This week they'll study the signs involved in last week's skills exercises (advanced heel position).

ASSIGNMENT #1 - "Sign recognition" - as we work on competition obedience skills we want to keep in mind that our goal is to perform these skills at the appropriate time, whether we're working on a rally sign or a traditional performance. Performing the rally signs will create the motivational, rewarding environment in which dogs thrive. At the end of week 8 we'll have studied every AKC sign.

Signs to study and practice each day of the week, study a sign or two from this list, see if you can perform the skill with your dog, and note any difficulties you encounter. (These are AKC signs, and you may choose to download and study the corresponding APDT signs.)

DAY 1: Halt Side Step Right Halt - #40

DAY 2: Halt - 1, 2, 3 Steps Forward - #25

DAY 3: Halt - Stand - Walk Around Dog - #36

DAY 4: Halt - Stand - Sit - #47

DAY 5: Back Up 3 Steps Dog Stays in Heel Position - #49

DAY 6: Left About Turn - #29

DAY 7: Honor - #50

Our class schedule for next session includes *(Don't be embarrassed to ask people to continue training with you!)*

1. List your class offerings

To register for next session please **complete your registration form and make check payable to** _____.

You may leave the form with your instructor, or mail to: _____

Name: _____ Dog's name _____ (breed or type) _____

NEW student address: _____

Telephone: ____/____ e-mail: _____

PRICES: _____

Payment information: check attached _____ credit card information

Visa MC _____ exp ____/____

Please read and sign the following waiver ... Thank you. "I understand fully the risks inherent in training my dog, and that I must take all possible precautions against disease and injury. My dog is current on all vaccinations (check with your veterinarian if you have questions about what is recommended or required) or has regular titer checks, and is in good health. (If your dog is ill or in season, skip class or attend without your dog, please.)

I agree to hold Dogwood Training Center, LLC, Marsha and/or Bud Houston, and all other persons in the building or on the grounds of Dogwood Training Center (8658 and 8738 Slocum Road, Ostrander, Ohio 43061) harmless from any claim or loss or injury which may be alleged to have been caused directly or indirectly by any of the above mentioned while on this property. I understand that Agility, Flyball, Obedience or any other dog-related sport in which I choose to participate could cause significant injury to my dog or myself. I personally assume all responsibility and liability for any claims regarding theft, accident, illness, injury, death or otherwise alleged to be caused by negligence of the above mentioned."

ALL STUDENTS need to sign waiver, please, Handler _____ date _____

Partnering with puppy and building a bond (Student Handout)

By Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC, copyright 2006
e-mail your questions to campdogwood@earthlink.net

When we first get a puppy, they're going to have a period of adjustment where we teach them how things work in our household. Dogs and puppies are incredibly adaptable, and they quickly learn how we operate and move through our day.

By getting involved in the feeding and care of your puppy, you'll be seen as the "nurturer," and puppies bond quickly with nurturers. If you want the puppy to be yours you must take all responsibility for feeding, grooming, playing and pottyng. These activities strengthen the bond between you and your puppy, and help her learn to trust you. You'll want to learn how to trim nails and clip out mats gently so your puppy will never learn to fear grooming tools or the vet's office.

Creating the perfect house dog ... when we think of the perfect house dog, we often think of a dog whose activities revolve around our hectic and various activities without interrupting our day with messes and confusion. The dog knows just what to do at any given time and does it regularly.

The most amazing thing about puppies is that they do adapt to life in our homes quickly, and that they do begin to set up routines that revolve around a varied schedule. But, as dog owners and trainers, we want to help the puppy create these routines by adopting a routine ourselves -- at least while we've got a young puppy in the house.

There will be fewer accidents and messes if we adopt a routine -- puppy is gotten out of crate first thing in the morning (sometimes they can't hold their urine in the morning) and is taken outside immediately upon waking up. They can't sit in the crate and watch you wake up for 30 minutes. They can't come out of the crate and watch you brush your teeth for 2 minutes. They need to go out immediately.

When they've pottied outside (preferably pooping and peeing while you stay with them and watch -- just encourage them to do this and praise and reward when they do), provide them with some personal time. Spend a few minutes playing and petting, letting them know that the reward for being good is attention from you.

After pottyng, puppy is allowed back in the house to get breakfast. If you're going to be leaving for work or school in an hour or so, it's best to feed puppy early so she'll have an opportunity to process the meal and be ready to potty again before you leave the house.

Make sure she has access to water, and encourage her to follow you around as you prepare for your day. Get ready for school or work, and then spend another 10-15 minutes outside with puppy before you bring her inside to be confined for the morning.

Puppy crates should be large enough to accommodate the full-grown dog, but not so large that she feels comfortable pooping or peeing in there. Provide her with a towel or light blanket to lie down on, a small bowl of water (or ice cubes that will melt for later), and a chew toy she enjoys. Good chew toys include "Kongs" with a dab of peanut butter in them, or "Nylabones" she can gnaw on but not consume.

Puppies can stay in a crate during the day for short periods of time, but -- if you work or are away from home for 8-10 hours at a stretch -- you need to come let her out of her crate at noon, let her potty and play, feed her lunch, get her a drink of water, praise and reward, potty again, more peanut butter in the Kong and a little more water in the crate, then back to work or school.

When you get home in the afternoon, you adopt the same routine -- out of the crate to potty, praise and reward and petting, feed her some dinner, get her a drink of water, potty again, more play or training, potty again (about every 30-40 minutes is a great evening routine to get the puppy on a nice house training schedule). She hasn't had much attention during the day, so you'll want to spend some time with her in the evening, bonding and training.

Remember that you want her life to revolve around yours, so make sure you become her "sun," and pay attention to her and shine on her. She should accept all sorts of activities if you ask for them, and late evening (when she's tired) is a great time to teach her to accept grooming and touching.

Training itself should be a fun, connecting activity. Never punish your puppy for being a dog. She doesn't speak English and has no way to logically figure out what you want. She learns through conditioning, the process of repeating an activity over and over in the same way. You provide the verbal cue or physical cue, your puppy does a behavior, then puppy gets a reward -- same chain of events every time. She learns that the cue precedes the behavior and that the reward follows the behavior, so she repeats the behavior over and over and over again -- to get the reward.

List some rewards you'll be giving your puppy

Teaching "Honor" (Student Handout)

By Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC, copyright 2006
e-mail your questions to campdogwood@earthlink.net

When our dogs have earned their Rally Novice titles (on-lead, with three qualifying legs under 2 judges) and their Rally Advanced titles (off-lead, with three qualifying legs under 2 judges), we move to Rally Excellent.

At this level of training, our dogs will be working completely off lead, will be taking two jumps per course, will be ignoring distractions, and will have a few new skills to perform.

Rather than waiting to train these skills, however, we start working on these skills as early as possible.

Make your "Honor" training sessions upbeat and motivational, and work in tiny increments to your dog builds a good foundation for stays.

The four positions for "Honor" dog are

- 1) Down in heel position: Team heels to sign, handler cues "down/stay," at left side.
- 2) Sit in heel position: Team heels to sign, handler cues "sit/stay," at left side.
- 3) Down in front: Team heels to sign, handler cues "down/stay," pivots to front.
- 4) Sit in front: Team heels to sign, handler cues "sit/stay," pivots to front.

When you complete your Excellent-level exercises, you'll be handed your leash which you'll attach to your dog's collar. You'll move to the "Honor" sign and assume the position the judge has specified in the briefing.

You'll maintain this position as long as the dog following you is working. You may talk to your dog, signal your dog, and encourage your dog. When the dog following you is done working, the judge will excuse you and you'll exit the ring.

"Honor" is a pass/fail exercise, so any movement will lead to a non-qualifying Excellent-level run.

Practice this exercise in as many distracting and stressful locations as you can reach in your vehicle with your dog.

Teaching Your Dog to Turn Right and Left (Student Handout)

By Marsha Houston, Dogwood Training Center, LLC, copyright 2006
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I'm an agility instructor/handler, and my philosophy is that we should give our dogs every allowable cue to help them succeed. In a perfect world, our dogs shouldn't know if they've failed or succeeded, but handlers rarely are capable of the self-control it takes to hide disappointment when errors occur. Dogs read our body language and tone of voice perfectly. They adore us and want to please us. Let's help them!

Before introducing the idea that we'll be turning, I do a lot of straight-line heeling. I want the dog to have a firm foundation in my version of "choose to heel," a training method that encourages the dog to fight their way into heel using consistent rewards. Remember that some dogs will rush into heel position. Others will meander their way to heel position. Regardless of how they get there, the reward should be constant. We don't all train border collies and that's one of the joys of dog training, to see different styles of dog, all working for those treats.

Once my dog is heeling beside me, mostly with attention, I introduce a right turn as a slight turn away from my dog, accompanied by an attention-getting word (perhaps her name, or "heel!") dropping my left (treat) hand to immediately reward the dog for catching my lead hand.

I continue heeling and making slight or extreme right turns, always accompanied by voice and physical cues, including but not limited to her name or "heel!" and dropping my left (treat) hand to immediately reward her efforts. Oftentimes this training takes place at mealtime, so I would hold my dog's food bowl in my right hand, heeling around while reaching into the bowl with my left hand and feeding the dog her kibble reward.

After several days (or weeks) of straight-line or right-turning heeling, I'm ready to introduce my dog to left turns. Rather than being rewarded for being with me, or (in a right turn) catching me, the dog now is rewarded for relinquishing space to me. This is a concept that is fairly natural for clingy dogs, less natural for more independent types.

With my dog in heel position, giving me attention, I turn 90-degrees to my left and step directly toward my dog's head. As she turns away from my movement, I lower my left (treat) hand and reward her for that effort.

I continue heeling forward and, with her full attention, turn into her and ask her to relinquish space to me. I fluctuate between asking for easy left turns to asking for 90-to-180-degree left turns.

When my dog is eagerly looking for a left-turn cue, I make her work harder, with the end goal being not just the 360-degree turn, but to turn repeatedly to the left for as long as I step into her.