

## Choosing the right training class for your dog

At Dogs Trust we often receive questions about where one can go to train their dog. A school with credentials or experience and one that doesn't coerce dogs to cooperate is one we recommend.

No learning can take place when you have a gun to your head. The following are some good and bad characteristics to watch out for when making your own choice of training class.

Here are some things a good dog training school does:

- Encourages you to vaccinate, de-flea and de-worm and microchip your dog;
- Will not allow aggressive or anti-social dogs in a class, especially with puppies;
- Asks you to bring your dog's favourite treats or toy to use as a reward;
- Asks you to reward your dog for showing the behaviour naturally, and only add a command when it's happening reliably;
- Asks you to lure the dog into position by putting the treat or toy in a place that naturally makes the dog do what you are trying to teach, hands off;
- Encourages you to look at training as a game and never be boring;
- Takes individual differences into account and helps you set your dog up to succeed; and

- Helps you fade out the treats, and clicker, if applicable, when the dog has learned the command. This means you don't have to attend classes indefinitely and spend less money on training and treats.

Here are some things a good training school doesn't do:

- Frowns at you if you want to use rewards, toys and clickers;
- Asks you to introduce the command before the dog has learned the behaviour;
- Asks you to tug sharply on the lead when the dog isn't walking to heel or sitting right way, or using any other form of punishment;
- Asks you to wrestle your dog to the floor when you ask for a down;
- Asks you to shout louder if the dog doesn't listen to you; and
- Asks you to reduce a dog's 'dominance' (an outdated concept) by not letting him sleep with you, eat with you, share the furniture with you, by spitting in their food and taking it away from them, and always walking through doorways before they do.

*To learn more, visit [www.dogtraining-madeeasy.org](http://www.dogtraining-madeeasy.org). This article was submitted by Dogs Trust Malta.*



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