



# Dog training made easy



Dogs Trust and SPCA have teamed up for a new campaign about dog behaviour and training. Following data collected from a sample of 120 dogs given up to the SPCA by their owners, it transpired that almost half of them were given away because of behaviour problems such as: not being able to control them on a walk, the dog was too hyperactive in the home or the neighbours complained because the dog barked when left at home.

The campaign aims to inform people about training methods that can prevent or even solve these problems.

A new website has been launched at [www.dogtrainingmadeeasy.org](http://www.dogtrainingmadeeasy.org), where one can read useful tips on dog training, watch videos and even learn more about clicker training. Clicker training is one of the great leaps in dog training methods that makes the training process faster and more fun for both the dog and the owner. People interested in using a clicker to train their dog can request one for free of charge from the website. The clicker will also be accompanied by an instruction book.

Over the following weeks you can look forward to reading more about dog behaviour and training in this newspaper on a bi-weekly basis. Remember that it is your responsibility to train your dog to be well-behaved and a safe companion.

This week's focus is on how food can affect a dog's behavior.

## Can an inappropriate diet affect a dog's behaviour negatively?

When trying to find a cause for a behaviour your first port of call should be a vet and they will also factor in the dog's diet, alongside other possibilities such as disease and genetics. Think about it. When you are on a diet or on holiday you often change your eating habits completely and your mood often changes because of it. You eat too much sugar you might get a boost of activity that leaves you drained with a headache. You eat too little sugar and you become nervous and tired quickly. Dogs are, just like us, affected by what they eat and when they eat it.

A variety of textures is the ideal for a dog. They benefit from eating both dry and wet food and chewing bones. Many dog food brands nowadays design dry dog food to have a more appealing and varied texture for a type of mouth a dog can have which is part of the reason why you see so many specialized breed diets.

Feeding a dog only once a day, will give him a kick of energy which will very soon wear off leaving him low on fuel for the rest of the day, and perhaps a little uneasy, especially if he doesn't get enough chromium. Breaking up the meal in 2 or 3 portions will improve his mood and may help dogs with food guarding issues.

A well balanced complete dog food should provide all the nutrients your dog needs, provided he does not suffer from a condition that requires a special veterinary diet. Severe deficiencies in certain nutrients can affect a dog's behaviour, mood and even ability to learn new things. Follows the list of nutrients below and how deficiencies can affect behaviour:

NUTRIENT	SEVERE DEFICIENCY CAUSES...
Vitamin B1	Irritability, poor concentration and poor memory
Vitamin B3 (niacin)	Lack of energy, headaches, migraines, poor memory, anxiety, depression and irritability
Vitamin B5	Poor concentration, anxiety, lack of energy and easily exhausted
Vitamin B6	Depression, nervousness, irritability and lack of energy
Vitamin B12	Irritability, anxiety and lack of energy
Calcium	Insomnia, nervousness and poor mental acuity
Chromium	Irritability when hungry and a need for excessive sleep
Folic acid	Anxiety, lack of energy, poor memory, depression and poor appetite
Iron	Fatigue, loss of appetite and nausea
Magnesium	Insomnia, nervousness, hyperactivity, depression, confusion, headaches & migraines
Omega 3 & 6	Poor memory and learning

Do not go over the limit as with some vitamins, specifically the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, build up into toxic levels is possible and can be dangerous, and there are no behavioural benefits to be had.