

15-Day Guide For Success with Your Companion Dog

Items you may need:

22- 24 inch training collar, 17-19 inch martingale, or a gentle leader ( if requested)  
, Six-foot clip a leash or slip lead, a clicker ( any store-bought one will do )  
, Tennis balls, dog toys, dog treats  
An appropriate-sized dog crate

You have just pulled into your driveway. Whether you picked up your dog from the airport or have made the long drive home, your new companion has arrived at his/her new home.

By following this ( humorous and, at times, very, very boring) guide, you and your partner will quickly be hitting the trails, but first, you need to learn how to work together...

Day 1: Welcome Home!

This is your dog's first day home.

After your dog ( let's call him Buck) has gone to the bathroom, put him in a crate in a quiet yet central area of the house. Tell him he is a "good boy" and unpack your bags. This allows Buck to take in his surroundings safely and neutrally.

He can listen to the sounds of the new house and take in new sights and smells, all from the safe place of his crate.

While unpacking, let's review some examples of " being a bad adult":

- \* Leaving your brand new dog alone and uncrated while you go to work. Not only will your house be destroyed, but there will be at least one unpleasant mess for you to find.
- \* Free feeding your Labrador. Your new dog has always eaten his or her allotted amount. Leaving the bowl full all day will make your dog pig out, get sick, and possibly become overweight.
- \* Allow your three-year-old child to walk the dog down a busy street. There is no positive outcome for this, and someone will get hurt.

Now that we have covered being a " Bad Adult," go and be a good one; you can do it!

When you are ready, open the crate, put the training collar ( martingale, slip leash, or training collar, whichever you, as the handler, are most comfortable with and your dog prefers ) and leash on Buck, and invite him out.

\* To invite your dog out of the crate, say “ here ” or make a clicking noise with your mouth; both will work.

With the training collar and leash on, take Buck out to the yard. If you have a fenced-in yard, take Buck off the training collar, say, “Do your business, “ and let him explore. While he explores and takes care of business, you want to remain fairly neutral and enjoy a cup of coffee. Praise him with a high-value treat when he does his business. ( If you don't have a fenced-in yard, remove the training collar and clip your leash to his flat collar.)

Once he has gone, put the training collar back on, and you can invite him back into the house ( sitting before and after going in the door).

\* Remember when airing your dog that this is the “ time “ for him to go to the bathroom and sniff around. You can play or work on training at a different time. If, for instance, you let your dog out to go to the bathroom, but you start tossing a tennis ball around, a young dog may become distracted and want to play instead of taking care of business first.

With the leash still on, you and Buck can explore the house and put Buck back in his crate. When walking with you, he should be at heel ( his shoulder near your thigh). When not walking, he should be sitting or lying down. When you are in motion, your dog is being cued to “heel.” When you stop walking, your dog is being cued to “ sit.”

Your tone with him should be calm and conversational.

Your dog's language was built on “ Negative, Solution, Praise.”

The Negative is “ ah ah,” telling him you don't like what he is doing.

The Solution is the command you want him to do instead.

The Praise is telling him he is a good boy, a treat, or a pet on the head.

So, for example, the conversation would be as follows if he does not sit: “ Ah ah ” ( marking for him that you do not like what he is doing), followed by the cue for sit, which can be a hissing noise or saying sit ( you could also stop walking, )then when he does what you want praise ( this can be words, treats, or pets). The correction for sit (to pull up on

the leash) should not be used in place of the actual cue for sitting until you have had the above conversation first.

Whether you are using a herm spranger training collar, a martingale, or a slip leash, it needs to be loose around your dog's neck. If the leash is tight, he thinks he is doing something bad; if the negative pressure continues, he will try to get away from it. Please put down the tennis ball and dog park passes.... put them back in the closet.)

### The First Week:

Your first week should be very much like your first day. Buck should be very comfortable and used to a routine by now. ( The bumpers, tennis balls, and dog park pass should still be in the closet)

- \* He knows which door to go to when he needs to go out.
- \* He knows that he should be quiet and well-behaved in your home. He knows that he should be calm because you have reminded him that “ here, heel, and sit” still apply in the house.
- \* He looks for you to guide him because that is what you have done when you brought him home.
- \* Lessons that you can work on are: Heel, Here, Sit, Sit / Stay, Place, Look, and Okay

Heel: walking on your left side, his shoulder should be near your thigh ( you can extend the length of the heel if you prefer but remember to be consistent )

Here: to return when called. This can be done with “ Here, Buck” ( if he is the only dog in the household ) or “ Buck, Here” if you have more than one dog. Remember that your dog's name cues him to do the next thing. So if you say “ Buck”, your dog will look at you, but you're not telling him to do anything.

Sit: Sit when prompted or auto-sit when you stop walking ( your dog may lay down if you disengage, and that's okay). To ask your dog to sit, you can do any of the following: stop walking, show him your finger, make a hissing noise, or say sit.

Sit/ Stay: This can be done in the yard, on a safe street, or mostly on a bed/ hammock as a coinciding “ place” lesson. Show your dog the bed/ hammock/ mat /blanket you want to use for “ Place”. Say “ place,” and your dog will go on the bed; say “ sit” if he is not already sitting. \* Remember, for a sit or down stay, it's important not to call the dog off

of it, as he will always be anticipating “ go.” Instead, when you want your dog to come off of a sit/ down stay, go to him, praise him for the “ stay” and pick up the leash. A good rule of thumb is to go to your dog to “ release them “ from a sit/ down stay 8/10 times. This keeps your lesson focused on Steadiness/ Stop rather than Action /Go.

Look: This cue is one of the first things we teach young puppies when using a clicker for their “ Learn to Learn” head start puppy training. If your dog is “ looking” at you, he is paying attention to you. When your dog is on a sit/ stay, say, “Look.” They should make eye contact with you. Praise immediately. If they look away, “ Ah, ah, Look,” then praise when their attention comes back. \* This isn’t to be used as a staring contest, just a check-in that they are paying attention

Okay: This is your dog’s release cue to go be a dog. Let the silly antics and zoomies begin!

Day Six: It is 9 am, and the phone is ringing. Your friend Stacey is calling; she is just as excited about doing exciting things with Buck as you are! She wants to bring her five dogs over for a play date. Doesn't that sound like fun? You look at Buck, he wags his tail, and you think, “Well, why not?”.

STOP! FOR THE LOVE OF DOGS AND ALL THAT IS AWESOME. Consider the next second a “defining” moment. Common sense prevails, and you tell Stacey, “Hey, that's a great idea, but I just got the dog a few days ago, and he is still settling in.” Stacey is disappointed; she sniffs a bit, but you promise to go for coffee tomorrow afternoon.

You have waited a long time to get your new dog, who NEEDS TO GET TO KNOW AND TRUST YOU, before you put him in an excitable situation where he may NEED to listen to you. Congratulations, you just passed your first “ Excited Friend” hurdle.

End of Week 1

By now, you and Buck are comfortable with the foundation of Heel, Here, Sit, Sit / Stay, Place, Look, and Okay

. In fact, hopefully, you are so bored with the words Heel, Here, Sit, Sit / Stay, Place, Look, and Okay that you never want to read them again. Sorry.... you’ll read the words a few more times.

## Week 2

Buck is comfortable. You can see this in the wag of his tail when he greets you, the soft, unworried look in his eyes. When you get up in the morning, his tail beats so hard and fast against the crate that the whole box wobbles. He scampers outside to do his business and returns to you when he is done. He enjoys riding in the car, and you even left him alone ( windows cracked a bit) just long enough to grab a few groceries at the store yesterday. He rests quietly in his crate or at your feet ( still on leash) while you watch BlackList on TV. You have worked on the foundation of Heel, Here, Sit, Sit / Stay, Place, Look, and Okay ( sorry), and you are very confident that when you say “ Here,” he comes, “ Heel,” he heels, and “ Sit” he sits.

Congratulations!

In two short weeks, you have successfully brought your new dog home, acclimated him to his new environment, and had pleasant “conversations” using a language on which his foundation of training was built.

Because you took the necessary time to get to know your dog, there are no limits to what you can teach each other.

As always, please feel free to call anytime. My cell phone number is 814-790-2643.