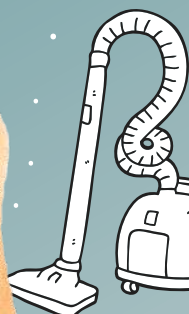


UNCHAIN THEIR LOVE HANDBOOK

With a science-based approach, learn how our dogs and us can co-exist in human society and together build meaningful relationships.

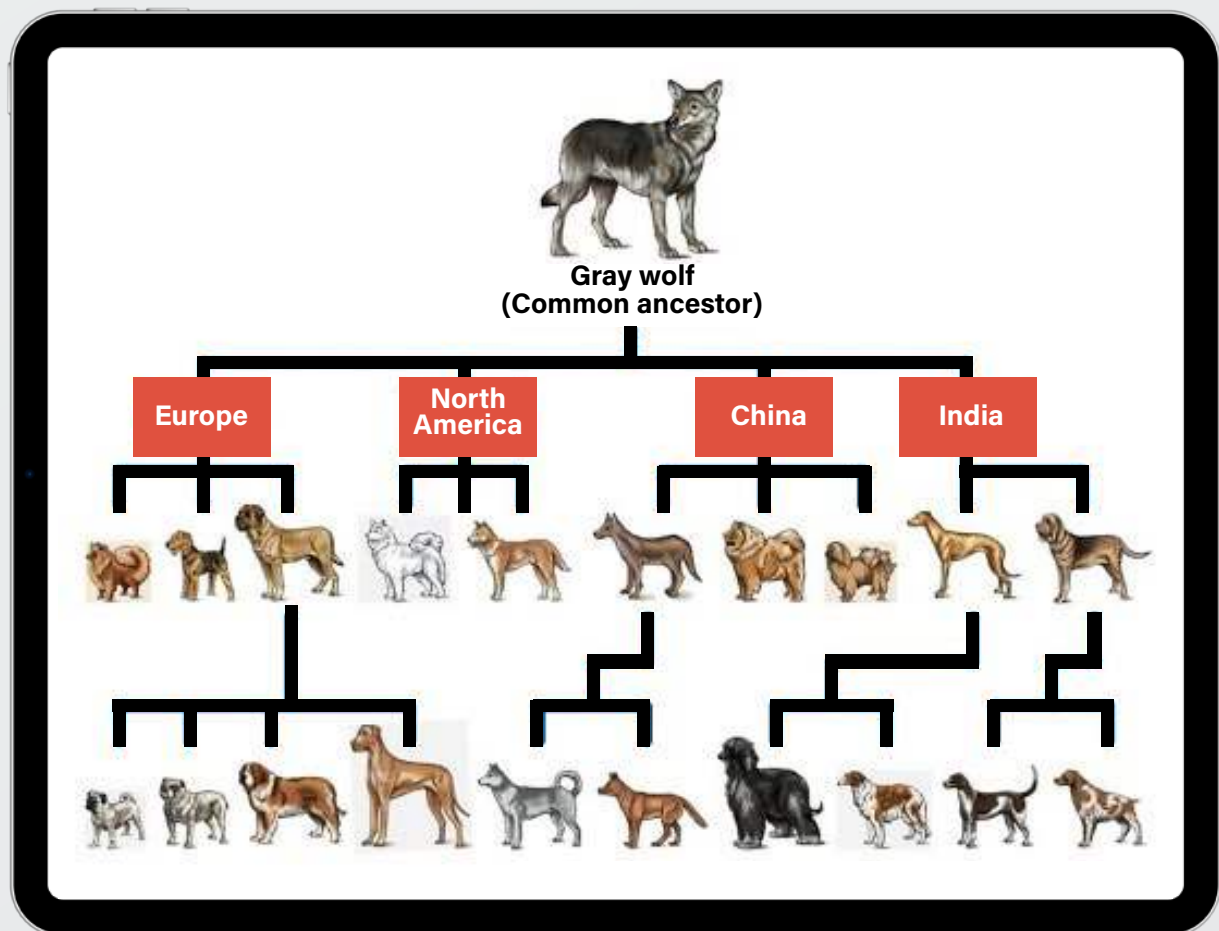


A deeper understanding for a more meaningful pet-owner relationship.



Dogs have been our devoted friends for thousands of years. It's hard to imagine a world without our pets. Despite this, dogs today find themselves in a difficult situation as they try to keep up with the rapid speed of change in human civilization.

Up until a little more than a century ago, most dogs worked. Each breed had evolved over thousands of years into something perfectly suited to the function for which it was bred.



Dogs were primarily used as tools. Their agility, rapid reasoning, sharp senses, and unmatched capacity for human communication made them well-suited to a wide range of jobs, including guarding, hunting, herding, and many other jobs that were crucial to the economy. Dogs had to work to pay their bills. Aside from the rare lap dogs that were the very wealthy toys, the companionship dogs offered would have been incidental and pleasurable, but not their primary purpose.

Everything started to change a few dozen generations ago, and these changes continue to accelerate. Most dogs are only expected to be family pets and not work. In the past, when dogs worked the farms, it was accepted that they were messy, energetic and boisterous. Today, most dogs live in urban environments. They are expected to be simultaneously better behaved than a child and be as self-reliant as adults.



WORKING



COMPANION

But many dogs still manifest the adaptations suited for their original tasks - traits that we now demand change as if they had never existed. The collie who herds sheep is the shepherd's best friend; the pet collie who tries to herd children and chases bicycles is an owner's nightmare.



These unrealistic standards many owners hold for their dogs have led to misunderstandings, frustrations, and even abuse - such as abandonment, tethering, or confining in cages for prolonged periods. This goes against the

Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury, or disease
- Freedom to express normal behavior
- Freedom from fear and distress

Visit www.animalhumanesociety.org/health/five-freedoms-animals to learn more.

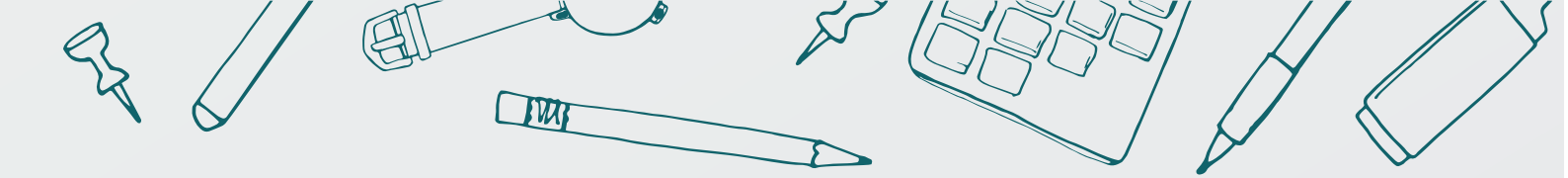


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I.

Debunking Dominance: Dogs are not wolves.

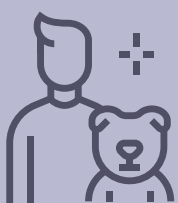
The domestic dog has far removed morphologically and behaviorally from its predecessor, the grey wolf. Dogs have diverged and changed from their wolf-like ancestors.¹ They should not be treated as wild animals, as the relationship between dog and human is affectionate.



Dogs often prefer human contact over contact with other dogs when given the choice.^{2,3}



Dogs exhibit different play behaviour when interacting with humans as opposed to other dogs.⁴



Humans and dogs share similar social needs; both live in groups, and enjoy social interaction.

Dogs and humans each have their own unique and complex communication systems.

Problems can arise due to miscommunication or when we view the relationship as dominance and submission. But regardless of the dog's behaviour, they are never trying to exert an 'alpha' status or 'pull rank' on any human inside or outside of the home.

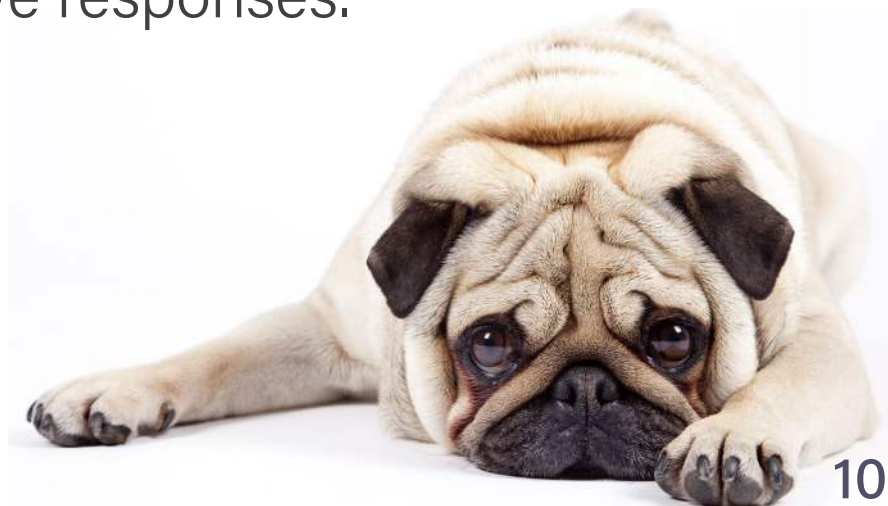
Individual relationships are learned through experience, rather than motivated by a desire to dominate.⁵



Throughout the past decades, the study of dog behaviour has been based on observations of wolf behaviour. Misinterpretation of this and the application of dominance theory are detrimental to the human relationship with dogs because it suggests people should maintain a dominant or leadership-based and controlling relationship with dogs.

Humans never have to be the 'alpha' by getting the dog to perform rollovers, scruff shakes, holding a dog's mouth shut, or any other punishment-based techniques recommended to maintain rank.

Confrontational training methods, whether staring down dogs, striking them or intimidating them with physical manipulation, does little to correct improper behaviour and can elicit aggressive responses.⁶





Instead, we need to take on **a parenting role with dogs**. Consistency and predictability help dogs thrive. We must help guide and teach them the desired behaviours in the human domestic environment. At the same time, people must be fair by recognizing and providing for dogs' exploratory, social, and physical needs.

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II. Creating a daily routine for your dog.



Mornings (6-9 am)

- 10-minute leash walk with sniff breaks
- 10-minute training session (30-50 small treats used)
- 10-minute playtime
- Build a relationship with new toys, slow feeders

Evenings (4-8 pm)

- 10-minute exploratory walk with sniff breaks
- 5-minute training session (30-50 small treats used)
- Foraging activities - scattering the pet's meal or a food puzzle toy

This is a guide of minimum activities to perform daily. Some pets require a higher level of engagement, so be sure to adjust the time periods and activities according to your pets' needs. You are also encouraged to interact with your pets throughout the day by scheduling more playtime.

III.

Training Methods: Are you employing the right one?



Many undesirable ways of pet-handling have been passed down to us. If you find yourself already using one of the non-advisable methods, do not fret. We know you're trying to achieve the best life possible for your pets. At the end of the day, all we can do is try to do better the next day.



PRONG COLLAR



SHOCK COLLAR



CHOKE COLLAR

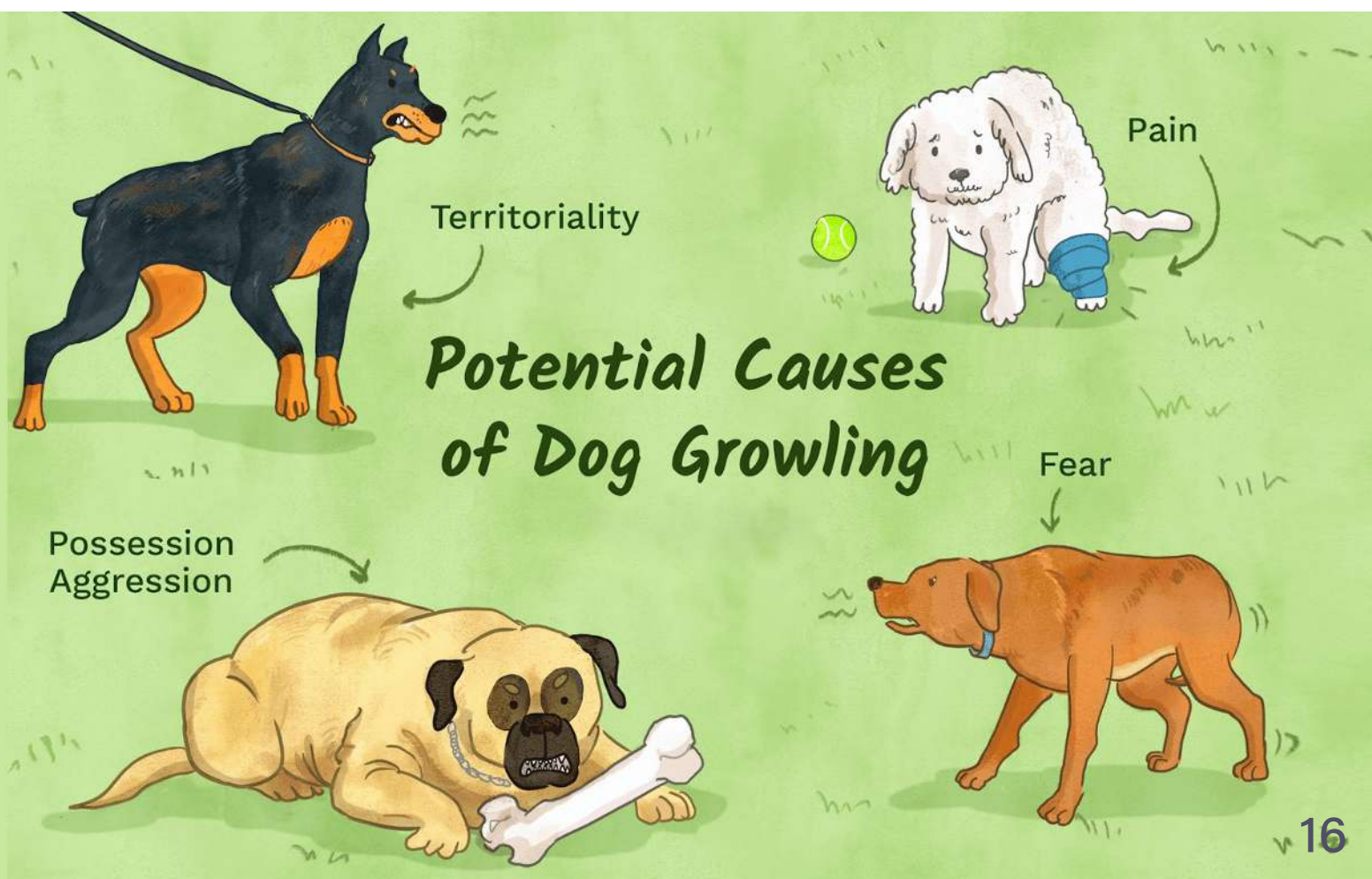


Behavioural restriction refers to attempts to "control" the pet and correct "unwanted" behaviours through excessive confinement, deprivation, caging and tethering. In exchange for this "control", the pet can be subject to poor quality of life, negative emotions, abandonment and psychological trauma. And perhaps most unfortunately, the bond between the owner and pet may be irreparably damaged.

Aversive training makes your pets give up undesirable behaviour by causing them to associate it with an unpleasant effect. Such equipment causes discomfort or pain to the pets by design, so they learn to give up the “bad habit” by associating this discomfort or pain with it. I get a painful shock whenever I bark (association), so I should avoid barking (effect). Although this seems like a quick and simple training tool, aversive methods can actually negatively influence your dog’s health and psychological well-being, potentially leading to even more problematic behaviours.



Our pets also need to communicate with us and have specific ways of doing so. Dogs can growl as a way to increase the distance from something that makes them fearful or uncomfortable. If this growl is punished, dogs may feel they have to escalate their signal, and you can get "biting out of nowhere". In this way, the punishment can force the dog to abandon the less harmful communication and resort to aggression such as biting. Suppose we suppress certain behaviours we deem "undesirable" (e.g. growling, avoiding contact). In that case, we run the risk of cutting off the critical message the behaviours are trying to deliver.



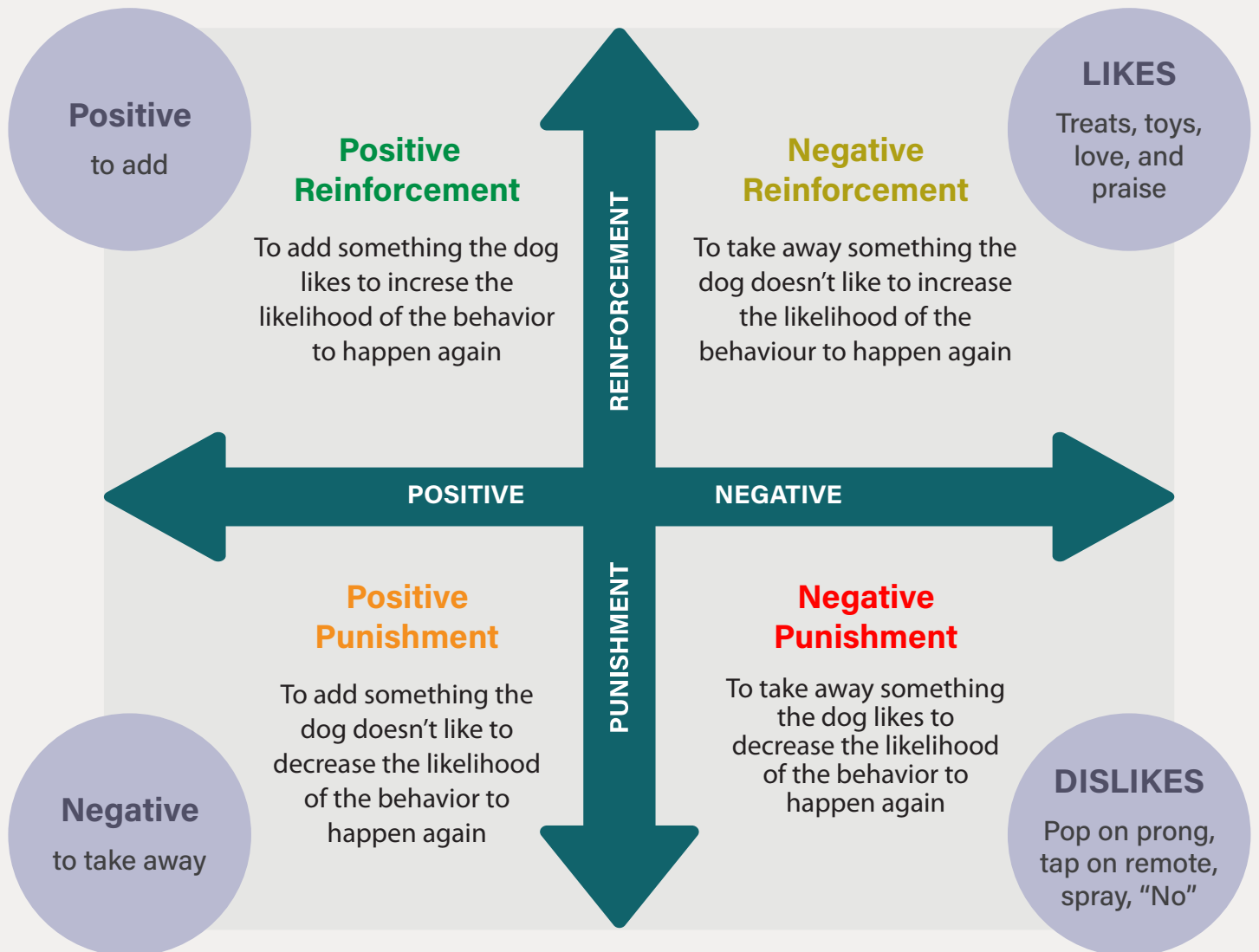
The Right Training Method: Operant Conditioning

Dogs tend to exhibit behaviours more frequently with positive results and less with negative ones. Operant conditioning works in two dimensions. The first is whether you add or subtract something. For instance, if you give your dog a treat, you've added something. That is considered a positive. A toy is something that you remove when you take it away. That is regarded as a negative. Think of it only in terms of addition or subtraction.

The second factor is whether the consequence makes the behaviour more frequent or less frequent. This is known as reinforcement (anything that makes the behaviour more likely) and punishment (anything that makes the behaviour less likely).

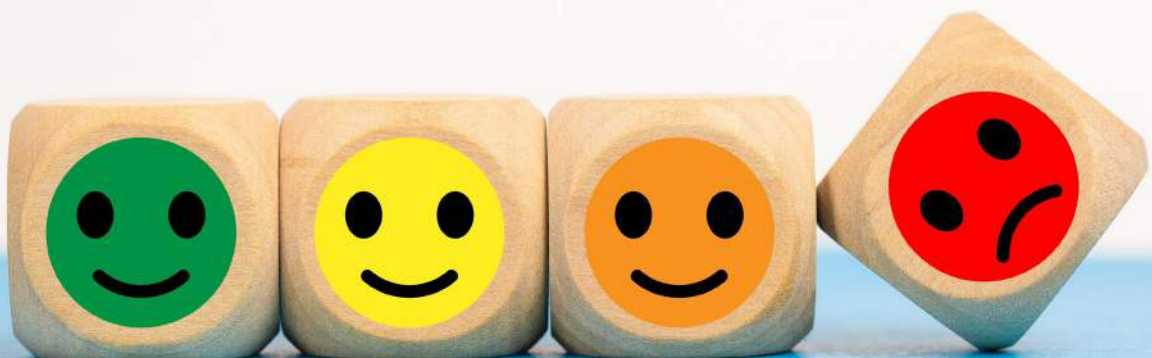
These two dimensions combine to form the four quadrants of operant conditioning. And you can use these quadrants to affect your dog's behaviour.

OPERANT CONDITIONING



Reinforcement
INCREASES the
likelihood of a behavior
to happen again.

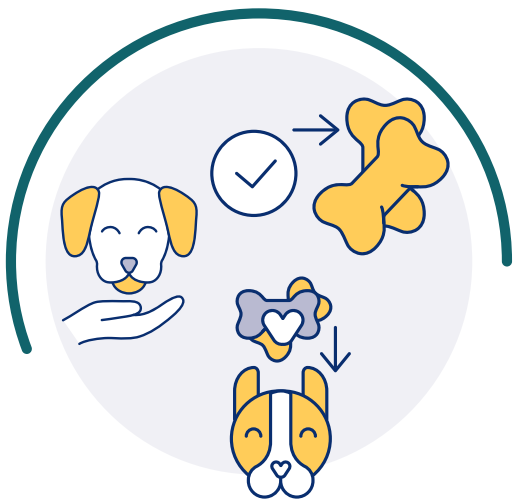
Punishment
DECREASES the
likelihood of a behavior
to happen again.





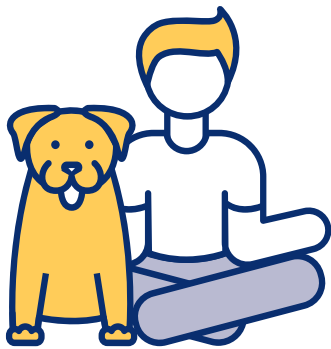
CHOOSE Positive Reinforcement

Effective trainers use two quadrants: positive reinforcement and negative punishment. They give what dogs want - treats, games, or attention. Or sometimes take them away. It's all about earning the good stuff.



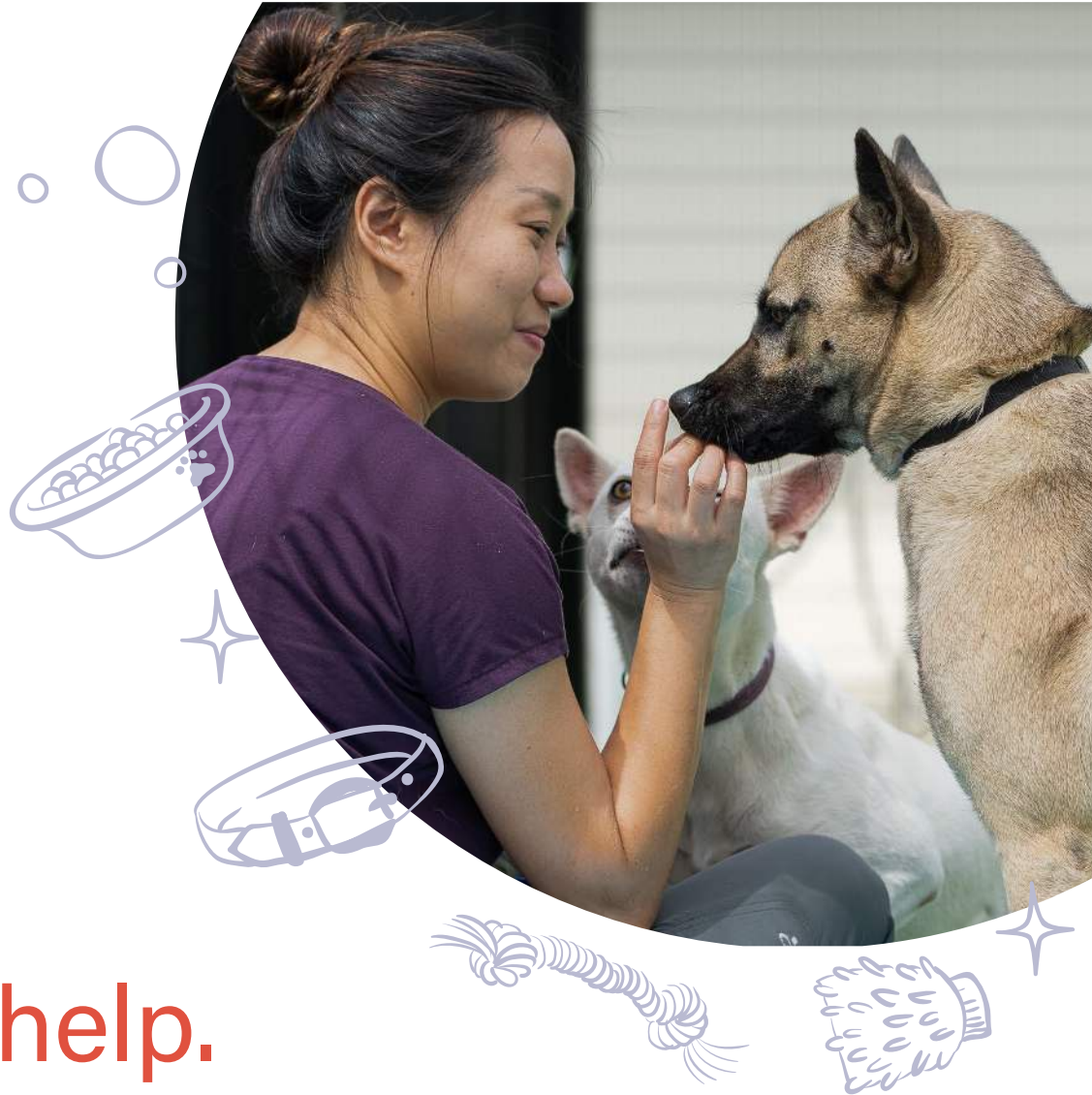
A focus on rewards

influences dog behaviour but teaches dogs to love training. Your dog can participate in the training without fear of doing the wrong thing. They will start trying new things, get plenty of mental exercises, and actively look for ways to earn rewards.



Plus, instead of just learning what not to do, they understand what you expect in each situation. Your dog will associate you with the rewards you provide which **strengthen your bond**. And isn't that a fantastic way to take advantage of science?





IV.

Ask for help.

Feeling overwhelmed with your dog? There is no shame in asking for help. Reach out to Chained Dog Awareness SG via FB or IG messenger for recommendations that advocate modern science reward-based training methods.



www.facebook.com/ChainedDogAwarenessSingapore



www.instagram.com/chaineddogawareness/

V.

Are you a first time owner?

Owning a dog is a lifetime commitment. Are you sure you and your family are ready for a pet? You can use this helpful questionnaire to determine if you are prepared for a dog.



Part 1: Household Composition

1. Who will be interacting with and will be caring for the dog?
Are they 100% committed to taking full responsibility for the animal?
2. Are there other animals in the house? What are their species and breeds?
Do you know if they are dog-friendly?

Part 2: Household Logistics and Dynamics

1. Is anyone in the home allergic to animals?

☒ **Yes** ☐ No

2. Does anyone in the family have special needs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. How often do adults visit the home?

☒ **Daily** ☐ 1-4 times a month
☐ **Numerous times a week** ☐ Infrequently

Part 2: Household Logistics and Dynamics

4. How often do children or teens visit?

- ☒ **Daily** ☐ 1-4 times a month
☒ **Numerous times a week** ☐ Infrequently
-

5. How would you describe your current lifestyle?

- ☒ **Very hectic** ☐ Moderately busy/controllable
☐ Calm/Quiet
-

6. Are there any major family changes in the near future?

- ☒ **Yes** ☐ No
-

7. Do you have access to quiet outdoor spaces?

- ☐ Yes ☒ **No**

If you have checked the majority of the **orange text**, you might want to rethink getting a dog.



Part 3: Management and Responsibilities

1. Will your pet be left alone most of the time without supervision?
2. How much time do you plan on interacting with your pet daily? (training, playing, exercise, grooming, etc.)?
3. How often do you travel? What will you do with your pet when you travel?
4. Who will be responsible for feeding?
5. Who will be responsible for cleaning up after the pet?
6. Who will be responsible for administering medications?
7. Who will be responsible for walking, and how often do you plan to walk your pet on a daily basis?
8. How often do you plan to train your pet? Who will be responsible for training? Do you plan to attend private or group training classes?
9. What will your pet's indoor areas include? Where will your pet sleep?



Part 4: Financial Considerations

1. How much are you willing to pay for your pet?
2. How much are you budgeting monthly for pet food?
3. Do you plan on spaying or neutering your pet?
4. How much are you budgeting annually for your pet's medical care?

Part 5: Pet Characteristics

1. Are there other animals besides your current pets that you anticipate your pet will need to interact with?
2. How often do you plan to groom your pet yourself? Do you plan to have your pet professionally groomed?

3. How important is it to you that your pet wants to sit in your lap, follow you around?
☐ Very Important ☐ Important ☐ Not important

4. How much does hair on your clothing or furniture bother you?
☐ Cannot tolerate ☐ Can tolerate somewhat ☐ Does not bother me

5. Your primary purpose for obtaining a pet?
6. What size pet do you prefer?
7. What age would you like the pet to be when you acquire it?
8. Which breeds are you considering?

9. Are you interested in training your pet?
☐ Yes, I look forward to training
☐ No, I would like a pet that requires little training

Photo Credit: Animal & Veterinary Service



10. Below are potential pet behaviours. Which ones are deal breakers and which ones can you live with? You might want to rethink getting a dog if there are too many deal breakers.

Dog behaviour	I can deal with this behaviour	I will do my best to address this behaviour	I cannot live with these challenges
Housetraining problems			
Shyness with people			
Excitability			
Demands attention			
Jumps on people			
Digging / yard destruction			
Chewing / destructive behaviour			
Excessive vocalisation			
High reactivity, getting triggered by loud sounds, cyclists, etc.			
A history of biting			



More than just fun and games, caring for a pet takes a lot of work. After going through these questions, are you confident that you and your household are ready for a pet?



If there are too many challenges to overcome and not everybody is committed to caring for the dog, then you might want to rethink getting a dog.



