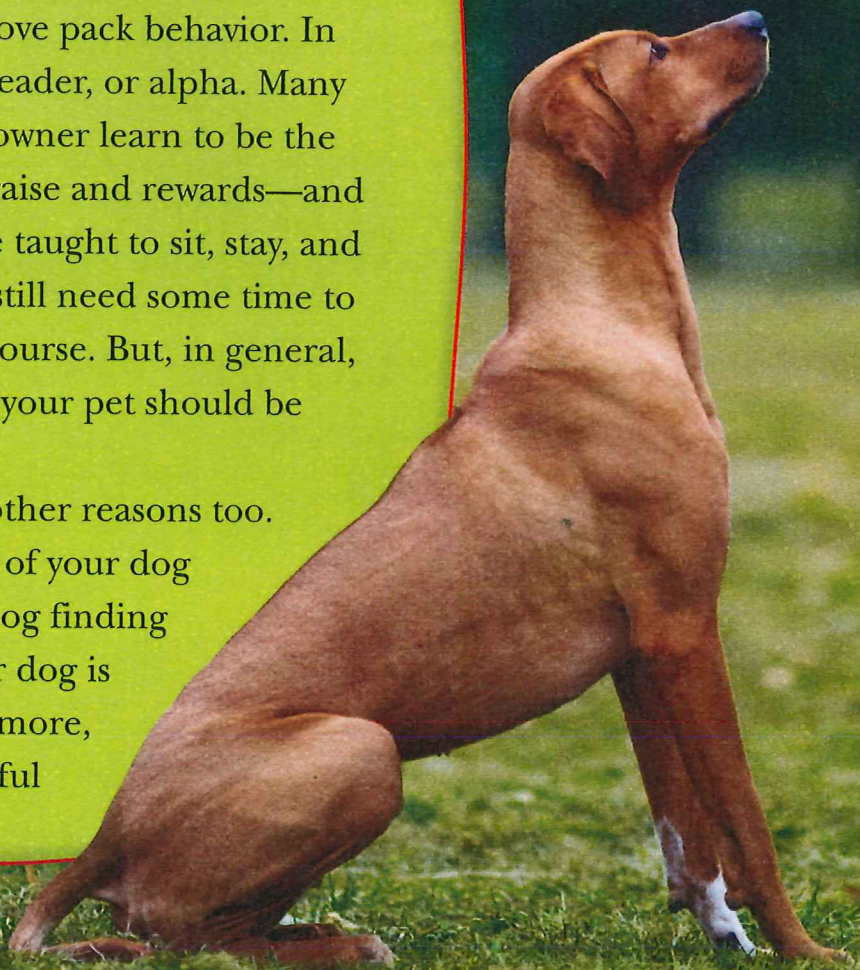


Train Your Dog

Why does it come as such a surprise to dog owners that there are people in the world who do not like being around dogs? When their unsupervised, unleashed dogs sniff around, bark at, or jump on people, some naïve dog owners actually smile with pride. They may even coo a few words of love or praise for their four-footed friends. Worse, they are often startled by the sheer possibility of someone not loving their precious pooch's antics. An untrained dog is not a pleasure to be around. Dog owners need to realize that dogs both want and need training.

The first reason to train a dog is, in fact, that it wants to be trained. Because dogs are descended from wolves, they understand and love pack behavior. In packs, one wolf or dog is the leader, or alpha. Many obedience classes help a dog owner learn to be the alpha. Through a system of praise and rewards—and a lot of patience—dogs can be taught to sit, stay, and come on command. Dogs do still need some time to romp freely on their own, of course. But, in general, you should be the leader, and your pet should be the follower.

Training dogs is good for other reasons too. If you can no longer take care of your dog one day, the chances of your dog finding a new home are greater if your dog is trained and obedient. Furthermore, others are likely to be less fearful



and act more friendly and welcoming toward your dog if they are sure the animal is under your control. Your pet will enjoy the extra interaction and the attention it will receive from others.

Finally, training your dog might even save its life at some point. When a door is accidentally left open, an untrained dog may run off. It comes back when it feels like it. Or it doesn't come back at all. A trained dog, in contrast, can be called back to you promptly—before it is hit by a vehicle. The effort you put into training will also pay off when you take your dog for a walk. Trained dogs cross streets more safely. They know to stay by your side and obey your commands.

They will be far less likely to become distracted by traffic or another animal.

Do your dog a favor and get it trained. You'll quickly notice how others will enjoy being around your dog too.



Sleuth Work

Gather Evidence Find three pieces of evidence that the author gives to support the opinion that all dog owners should train their pets.

Ask Questions List three questions related to dog behavior and dog training that you would like to ask a dog expert.

Make Your Case Do you think unleashed dogs should always, sometimes, or never be allowed in public parks and beaches? Why? Draw on text details to help explain and support your viewpoint.