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Positive Reinforcement Dog Training: A Humane and Effective Approach <u>Kayla Campagna</u>



Dog training is an essential aspect of responsible pet ownership, and the methods used to train animals have evolved significantly over time. Traditionally, many dog training techniques involved punitive measures, such as physical corrections or the use of shock collars, designed to discourage undesirable behaviors.

However, in recent years, positive reinforcement has emerged as the preferred training method. Positive reinforcement, grounded in the principles of operant conditioning, focuses on rewarding desirable behaviors rather than punishing mistakes.

This approach is more ethical and also has proven highly effective in modifying behavior, fostering a stronger bond between dog and owner, and reducing the negative emotional impacts associated with traditional punitive methods.

Positive reinforcement training is rooted in the theory of operant conditioning, developed by B.F. Skinner. Skinner's work on operant conditioning posits that consequences shape behavior. In this framework, behaviors that are followed by positive outcomes are more likely to be repeated, while those followed by negative outcomes are less likely to occur again (Reid, 1996).

This principle lies at the core of positive reinforcement dog training, where the dog is rewarded for performing a desired behavior. The reward can take various forms, such as food, praise, playtime, or even a toy.

The key to positive reinforcement lies in the immediate delivery of the reward, which helps the dog make a clear connection between the behavior and the outcome. This action can

The key to positive reinforcement lies in the immediate delivery of the reward, which helps the dog make a clear connection between the behavior and the outcome. This action can also be used on humans. "Human behavior is also regulated by positive reinforcement: child does homework, child is awarded good grade; child does chores, child is given allowance" (Reid, 1996).

This process reinforces the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated, ultimately shaping the dog's actions over time.

One of the most widely used methods within positive reinforcement training is clicker training. The clicker is a small, handheld device that emits a distinct, sharp sound when pressed. This sound marks the exact moment the dog performs the desired behavior, with the sound being immediately followed by a reward.

The benefit of using a clicker is its precision in marking the behavior, which accelerates the dog's

learning process by reinforcing the correct action. By associating the sound of the clicker with a reward, the dog quickly learns which specific behaviors are being reinforced.

As the dog becomes more familiar with the behavior, treats can gradually be phased out in favor of other rewards, such as verbal praise or social interaction. Food-based rewards are a common tool in positive reinforcement. Treats are particularly effective when teaching new behaviors because most dogs are highly motivated by food.

When a dog performs a desired action, it immediately receives a treat as reinforcement. As the dog becomes more proficient at performing the behavior, trainers may reduce the frequency of food rewards, instead offering praise or playtime as a form of reinforcement.

This gradual transition helps ensure that the dog is motivated by a variety of rewards, rather than becoming overly reliant on food.

Another technique is variable reinforcement. Once a behavior has been established, trainers can move to a system where the dog is rewarded intermittently, rather than every time it performs the behavior.

This unpredictability of rewards strengthens the behavior and makes itmore resistant to extinction.

Dogs trained with variable reinforcement are more likely to continue performing the desired behavior (Reid,1996), even if rewards are not given consistently.

Positive reinforcement is widely regarded as an

effective method for training dogs, and there are several key reasons for its success. It has proven highly effective in shaping a wide variety of behaviors, ranging from basic obedience commands like "sit" or "stay" to more complex ones such as retrieving or performing tricks.

By rewarding good behavior, positive reinforcement encourages dogs to repeat those actions, ultimately promoting a well-behaved and obedient animal.

The importance of your verbal command and praise cannot be overstated, as they can have a significant impact on the dog's response. "The sounds that we animals make when we're excited do a lot more than indicate our level of emotional arousal" (McConnell, 2002).

This aspect of positive reinforcement is crucial, as it engages the dog in multiple ways. "Our results suggest that a friendly voice during training supports performance and positive emotional responses in wolves and dogs" (Fonseca, 2023).

By understanding the role of tone, you can enhance your success in training a more obedient dog and create a more positive learning experience.

Positive reinforcement strengthens the bond between the dog and its owner (Reid,1996). Unlike punitive training methods that may create fear and mistrust, positive reinforcement promotes a relationship built on trust and mutual respect. When dogs associate their owners with positive experiences, such as rewards and praise, they are more likely to cooperate and engage in the training process. This trust-based relationship is essential for long-term success in training, as it encourages the dog to learn and perform behaviors in anticipation of positive outcomes.

Positive reinforcement reduces the stress and anxiety that can arise from punishment- based training methods. Research has shown that the use of punishment or fear-based techniques, such as shock collars or physical corrections, can lead to fear, aggression, and anxiety in dogs.

These negative emotional responses may worsen behavioral issues, making training less effective in the long run. In contrast, positive reinforcement fosters a positive and supportive environment in which the dog feels safe and motivated to learn.

By avoiding fear and stress, positive reinforcement helps dogs remain calm and confident, which is essential for successful training.

While positive reinforcement offers numerous benefits, has challenges. One of the primary requirements for successful training is consistency. The reward must be delivered immediately after the desired behavior to help the dog make the connection between the behavior and the outcome.

Additionally, trainers need to vary the rewards to prevent the dog from becoming overly reliant on a single type of reinforcement, such as food. This can be accomplished by gradually transitioning from food rewards to praise, playtime, or other forms of social reinforcement.

Another potential challenge is the time

commitment required for training. Positive reinforcement may take longer to produce results compared to more direct, punitive methods, but the long-term benefits of improved behavior and a stronger bond between dog and owner are well worth the effort.

Positive reinforcement is a humane, effective, and scientifically supported approach to dog training. By focusing on rewarding desirable behaviors, this method not only improves the behavior of dogs but also strengthens the bond between dog and owner and promotes a positive learning environment.

Research consistently supports the efficacy of positive reinforcement in shaping behavior, and its ethical foundation aligns with the growing awareness of animal welfare. Positive reinforcement stands out as the ideal approach for dog owners seeking a compassionate and effective way to train their pets.





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THE LONG-LASTING CHEVY ENGINE BY NICK SILEO

The Chevrolet small-block engine is one of the most iconic and influential engines in automotive history. Introduced in 1955 by General Motors, it marked a turning point in American- car engineering with its compact design, impressive power, and long-lasting durability.

Designed by Ed Cole and his team at Chevrolet, the small-block was lightweight, easy to manufacture, and capable of significant performance upgrades. These qualities made it popular across a wide range of vehicles and a favorite among hot rodders and racers.

The original small-block Chevy engine came as a 265-cubic-inch V8, producing 162 horsepower. At the time, this was a major advancement from the inlinesix engines that had been standard in most Chevrolet vehicles

Its performance made it quickly appear in everything from family sedans to high-performance Corvettes. Over the years, displacement grew, with versions ranging from 265 to 400 cubic inches, but the core architecture remained largely the same. This consistency allowed mechanics and car enthusiasts to easily swap parts and build custom versions.

One of the defining features of the small-block Chevy is its simplicity and reliability. Its pushrod design, castiron block, and overhead valve layout made it durable and easy to work on.

Mechanics could take apart and rebuild a smallblock engine with basic hand tools, making it ideal for shade- tree mechanics and street performance. Its widespread availability and relatively low cost added to its popularity.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the small-block had cemented its status in American car culture. It powered muscle cars like the Chevrolet Camaro, Chevelle, and Nova.

Racers embraced it in drag racing, stock car racing, and street racing, while weekend hobbyists found it to be the perfect platform for building street cars. It had unmatched adaptability, and even decades after its introduction, it continued to evolve through fuel injection, emissions controls, and other modern changes into the late 1990s.

The small-block Chevy remained in production in various forms for nearly 50 years. While newer engine designs have since taken over, especially with the rise of LS-series engines, the generation of Chevy motors following the SBC, the original small-block, still holds a revered place in the hearts of car lovers.

Its legacy lives on not only in the millions of vehicles it powered but also in the custom car community, where it remains a go-to choice for restorations and performance builds.



By Sophie Mumma

Brachycephalic dogs, with their short, smushed faces, are some of the most recognizable and beloved breeds. The pug is one of the oldest, most beloved and recognizable. These small, tan dogs have short hair, curled tails, and a flat, wrinkled face.

They are not everyone's definition of cute, but they were hugely popular in their country of origin - China. According to the American Kennel Club, the breed originated there in 400 B.C. as a companion for Chinese emperors and Tibetan Buddhist monks.

The wrinkles on their forehead were bred to look like the Chinese character for "prince," and these dogs were valued like royalty; some even had their own caretakers and guards.

The name "Pug" comes from these animals' resemblance to a formerly popular Chinese pet, the marmoset monkey, nicknamed "pug monkey."

Eventually, the dogs overtook the monkeys in popularity and made their way to Japan, Russia, and Europe; from there, they took over the world.

European monarchs and artists introduced them into high society and cemented their reputation as a prestigious pet. Today, they remain a top choice for pet owners with status who want a loyal companion in a tiny, uniquely expressive body.

Potential pug owners should know their little wrinkly forms are prone to several health issues, most commonly those affecting the structures of the upper respiratory system.

Brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome, or BOAS, results from abnormal anatomy associated with the pug's pushed-in face and manifests in signs, ranging from mild to severe.

Research from Cornell University shows brachycephalic dogs may have narrow nasal openings, thickened or elongated soft palates, or weak tracheas; it's difficult for the animal to take in adequate amounts of air, and this can cause problems from labored breathing and reduced exercise capability to collapse of the trachea. Fortunately, procedures can correct these defects and improve breathing quality.

If you want a pug, start saving. It's ideal to rescue for many reasons, including saving the \$800 to \$2,500 price tag for pug puppies. In addition to the upfront cost of the animal and its maintenance, be prepared for big bills at the vet to treat health concerns.



Twins Choose Different Services

Although Rich Hull served in the Navy, he may have a hard time deciding who to cheer for at the annual Army-Navy football game. His twin sons will serve in different branches of the military. Chris, a LCCTC student at Willow Street, enlisted in the Navy, but his twin brother, Joe, a CTC student at Mount Joy, enlisted in the Army.

After graduation from LCCTC, both will head to basic training, and then Chris will receive enginemen training at Naval Station Great Lakes, IL, and Joe will receive his advanced combat medic training at Ft. Sam Houston, TX.

By Chris Hull

As a twin, we share the same interests, such as fishing, the same friends, and lacrosse, but we have some differences. He is going into the Army to become a combat medic, and I am going into the Navy to become an engineman. Enginemen maintain the ship's systems, such as air conditioning.

Most of the time, we have the same interests. We are big fishermen and pretty much do it together with a few of our friends. We also got into the sport of lacrosse around third grade. Joe immediately wanted to play goalie, and I wanted to do the faceoffs.

We also decided to play club lacrosse together on the same club team in the summers for the last four years, but we can no longer play because we are graduating from high school.

Sometimes, we do not have the same interests. I'm a big bowler and am on the bowling team, but Joe does not like bowling and quit after his freshmen year because he did not find it a fun sport. But I still bowl all the time.

My brother and I enjoy very different music. I do like his musical taste, but he doesn't really like mine.

Another thing we don't share: I love cars and how they work mechanically, but he is going to school at Mount Joy CTC for emergency services and

working on getting his certifications for EMT and using those to his advantage in

the Army as a combat medic. I'm using my experience from automotive CTC

to work on mechanical systems in the Navy.

I think we chose different paths in the military due to the influence of our family. My dad went into the Navy, and my dad's dad went into the Army.

I got my love for mechanical things from my mom's side of the family. Her dad, who was also in the Army, was a mechanically smart person, and my brother was influenced to go in as a combat medic from my dad, who was a corpsman in the Navy.

I was influenced to go into the Navy by our dad, but my job was influenced by our grandpa. My brother was influenced to go into the Army by my grandpa, and his job was influenced by my dad.

For the most part, having a twin is like having a younger or older brother who just shares a lot of interests and sometimes the same personality, depending on the situation, along with the same friends and people we hang out with, and

who also looks just like you.

Healing Animals Goes Back A Long Way

By Angi Rivera

Animal, or veterinary medicine, is a specialized field dedicated to the health and well-being of animals. This branch of medicine includes a wide range of practices aimed at diagnosing, treating, and preventing diseases in animals from domestic pets to wildlife

Animal medicine dates back thousands of years because ancient civilizations recognized the importance of caring for animals, particularly those domesticated for agriculture or companionship.

The roots of veterinary medicine go back to ancient Egypt where veterinarians cared for horses and livestock. The Egyptians documented their knowledge on papyrus scrolls, which included information about animal diseases and treatments.

In ancient Greece, Hippocrates, often referred to as the "Father of Medicine," wrote about animal health, emphasizing the need for a systematic approach to veterinary care.

Over time, animal medicine evolved significantly. In the 18th century, the first veterinary school was established in Lyon, France, by Claude Bourgelat.

This marked a pivotal moment in veterinary medicine because it formalized the education and training of veterinarians. Veterinary schools spread across Europe and eventually came to the United States. Cornell University in New York established the first U. S. veterinary college in 1868.

Veterinary medicine includes surgery, internal medicine, dermatology, emergency care, and exotic animal medicine Vets perform diagnostic tests, interpret results, and develop treatment plans tailored to individual animals. They also play a crucial role in public health by monitoring diseases transmitted between

humans and animals, called zoonotic diseases.

Animal medicine has expanded beyond traditional pets and livestock. Today, veterinarians care for a diverse variety of animals, including birds, reptiles, and marine life.

Technology has advanced and transformed the field, enabling veterinarians to use sophisticated diagnostic tools, such as ultrasound, MRI, and endoscopy. These have improved the accuracy of diagnoses and the effectiveness of treatments.

Preventive care is a significant aspect of veterinary medicine. Regular check-ups, vaccinations, and parasite control are essential to maintain the health of animals.

Veterinarians educate pet owners about proper nutrition, exercise, and behavioral training to ensure their animals lead healthy lives. This preventive approach enhances the quality of life for pets and reduces the risk of costly medical interventions in the future.

The bond between humans and animals has fueled the growth of the veterinary profession. As pet ownership continues to rise, so does the demand for veterinary services.

Veterinarians often advocate for animal welfare, participate in initiatives to promote humane treatment and responsible pet ownership. They also contribute to research to understand animal diseases and improve treatment.

Animal medicine is a vital field that addresses the health needs of animals and enriches the connection between humans and their pets.

The evolution of veterinary medicine, from ancient practices to modern advancements, reflects the growing recognition of the importance of animal health in society.

As the field continues to develop, veterinarians will remain at the forefront of ensuring the well-being of animals and enhancing the human-animal bond.



By Isabella Schmid

Veterinary technicians do more than take care of animals and do what the vet says. They bond with clients and their pets, but, above all, they help owners better understand their pets.

Vet techs learn it's not just about the patients. They learn to help themselves. Some vet techs can face negative consequences: burnout, compassion fatigue, and suicidal awareness. It's important to know your team members' mental and physical states, to be there for each other

If vet techs can't work as a team, you might as well save yourself and leave that practice now before you drown with the rest of them.

Veterinary technicians make up the profession's backbone. They are an essential piece of every practice. No matter how many techs work at a hospital/practice, veterinarians know each is crucial to the practitioner, the clients, the patients, and the clinic.

Vet techs are first responders, skilled nurses, nurturing caretakers, and determined to improve the

quality of life for all pets. They usually are the first face the client sees at a practice, the first face a patient sees when they wake up from anesthesia, and almost always the last person to walk out of the hospital at the end of a long, stressful day.

Some people describe vet techs as the heart and soul of a veterinary practice because they perform a variety of tasks daily. Without veterinary technicians, providing healthcare to patients becomes monumentally more difficult.

The vet tech is similar to a nurse in human medical care. Which means vet techs provide a lot of the same kind of care nurses do, such as inserting IVs, assisting with euthanasia, and attending to wounds.

When animals are rushed into a veterinary hospital, vet techs are the first ones to provide care and make an initial assessment. Often, situations like this create tension and pressure, so it's important to stay calm and collected under pressure.

This is something vet techs are known for, and having vet techs with a strong demeanor can significantly impact the outcome of an emergency. Veterinarians often rave about their vet technicians. Pet owners also rely heavily on them. Vet techs conduct most of the communication with pet owners.

Veterinary technicians are the mitochondria of a veterinary practice, and they strive to improve the lives of all pets and owners. They're compassionate, honest, strong and will do everything to make sure they do their job well.



BY MAGGIE REINHART

Rain fell on the windshield as Emily gripped the steering wheel; the wipers barely clearing the storm. Her GPS had long since lost signal, and the back road she'd taken to avoid traffic now twisted endlessly through dense forest. The gas light blinked ominously.

As the car sputtered to a halt, she cursed softly, pulling over to the muddy shoulder. No signal. No lights. Just trees, rain, and darkness. Emily stepped out, pulling her coat tighter.

She debated walking back the way she came; maybe she passed a gas station? But which direction had she even come from? The storm blurred everything.

A flicker of light down the road made her heart jump. Headlights. She waved her arms, relief washing over her as a battered pickup truck slowed beside her.

"You all right, miss?" The driver leaned out, a middle-aged man in a camo jacket, scruffy beard on his face.

"Ran out of gas. No signal," she said hesitantly.

He nodded. "Hop in. I'll take you to the nearest town.

Just a few miles down."

She felt weary, but what choice did she have? She climbed in. The truck smelled like damp leaves and oil. The man didn't speak much. Just grunted and kept driving.

Emily checked her phone. Still no signal. The road kept twisting deeper into the woods. She glanced at the dash. No GPS. No radio either.

"How far is the town again?" she asked.

He didn't answer but just smiled faintly. Her heart sank. Minutes passed. No sign of any town. Just trees. Trees and more trees. Then he turned off the road, down a narrow dirt path.

"Hey, where are we going?" she asked sternly.

"Shortcut," he said.

"Stop the truck," she yelled.

He didn't. Emily reached for the door, but it was locked.

"Let me out. Now."

He didn't answer. A clearing opened ahead. A decaying shack loomed in the shadows, half-swallowed by ivy. He stopped the truck and turned to her.

"You'll be safe in here."

She lunged for the keys, but he grabbed her wrist, rough and fast. She screamed, struggled, kicked. Darkness followed.

She woke on a filthy cot, wrists tied. The room smelled of mildew and rust. A single bulb flickered overhead. No windows. Just a wooden door. Footsteps.

He entered, holding a rusted knife.

"You're lucky," he said, voice low. "Some people never get found."

He turned his back to fiddle with something on the counter. She spotted a loose nail sticking out of the cot's wooden frame. She scraped her bonds against the nail, over and over, until her wrists bled. The ropes broke loose. The knife scraped metal behind her. SNAP.

She sprang up just as he turned. He lunged, but she ducked, grabbing the lamp. She swung hard, metal against his skull. He dropped.

Panting, trembling, she ran. Through the door. Into the woods. Mud sucked at her shoes, branches clawed her skin, but she didn't stop.

Hours later, headlights. Another car. A real one. She stumbled into the road, screaming. She was safe.

But even now, in her bed, years later, she still dreams of trees and the sound of that truck engine coming back to take her



Author pictured here:

Maggie Reinhart



The Hawk was selected via a democratic process last winter / spring, through Google Forms sent out to students and faculty. The final design combines several student designs, pieced together by our Visual Communications instructors.