

..... ASK THE TRAINER

BY LISA ANNE STELLA

Q. "How can I train my dog with my busy schedule?"

A. This is a common question asked by my own clients and all dog owners alike. My answer is to take 10-15 minutes a few times a day to reinforce the behavior you want from your dog while doing everyday things. It's as simple as that!



This will show them what you do want from them, while engaging them mentally. Try incorporating simple things like sit, down or waiting for their food or treat. Even a simple moment of eye contact can make a HUGE difference. The eye contact is to acknowledge you, which is respectful behavior, and then you reward them with the "thing" they want.*

Most owners think training their dog means standing in front of their pooch teaching a number of basic obedience commands. Although this can be part of your training regimen, the biggest impact of your relationship with your dog will come from the simple ways you interact with him throughout your day together.

Instead of blocking off an hour or more to train, practice these skills in short bursts throughout the day. This will also keep your dog engaged and looking forward to working with you. After all, without training, your dog will...act like a dog!

Dogs are extremely adaptable, but only if we show them what to do. Dogs will not figure things out on their own. We must show them what our rules and boundaries are in our home--our lifestyle rules. If you invest time now to work with your pooch a few times a day, every day, you will cash in on those dividends for years to come.

** "YOU PET WHAT YOU GET" My main rule to all my clients: when rewarding your dog with food, going for a walk, playing with a toy, giving affection or attention, etc., make sure your dog is calm. Only reward a calm state of mind.*

Lisa Anne Stella is owner of The Doggie Inn. Boarding and training dogs has become a full-time passion of hers for the last eight years. She has worked with many professionally certified trainers throughout the country, and built The Doggie Inn as a place to connect with your canine friend, and offer them a safe and comfortable haven while you're away. Visit: www.thedoggieinn.com