

# Your Pet

## BEHAVIOURAL TRAINING



Registered charity no. 209642



**Dog training club:** Look for a recommended local trainer who is a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers and visit their classes before enrolling to ensure you would be happy to work with them. It may be necessary to arrange one-to-one training at first.

**APBC:** The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors has a list of behavioural therapists with extensive experience. They will tell you who is nearest to your area. You can also get advice from the many books written by these members.

The Animal Health Trust is not able to advise on specific behavioural problems.

The Animal *Health* Trust is an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the field of veterinary medicine.

It has pioneered many breakthroughs in relation to improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of animal disease and injury and is entirely dedicated to improving the health and welfare of cats, dogs and horses.

As a registered charity we receive no government funding and rely on charitable support in the form of legacies and donations to enable us to continue our valuable work. You can help us in the following ways:

- Becoming an AHT Friend
- Making a donation
- Buying AHT merchandise
- Remembering us in your Will

### To find out more

Telephone:

Fundraising Department on 08700 502380

Email: [fundraising@aht.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@aht.org.uk)

Visit our website: [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)

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Animal *Health* Trust  
*the science behind animal welfare*



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### Who benefits from behavioural training?

The majority of our pets would, to some degree, benefit from behaviour therapy. The aim of behavioural training is to ensure a comfortable and happy co-existence of pets and their owners. Many 'problem' behaviours are a perfectly natural action that your animal would exhibit in the wild. However, you would rather it wasn't done in your home. So the overall benefits of behaviour therapy relate to you, your pet and anyone who comes into contact with your pet.

### Which types of behaviour can be improved?

Any action that you feel is inappropriate is worth discussing with a professional who will offer advice. They are unlikely to tell you it doesn't matter because, if it interferes with your enjoyment of your pet then it should be investigated. Some of the common behavioural problems are:

- Phobias (ie fear of noises, strangers, etc)
- Aggression (towards other dogs or people)
- Separation related disorders (eg chewing, urinating or defecating in owner's absence)
- 'Spraying' by cats and 'marking' by dogs
- Basic training problems (eg pulling on the lead, no recall, stealing food)
- Chasing cars, trains, bikes, etc



There are of course many other problems that lead people to seek help, so never be afraid to ask for advice.

### Problems relating to a period of hospitalisation

You may have one of those pets who REALLY do not like medication, leading to temper tantrums and a possible confrontation between you and your pet. Try, in all circumstances, to avoid any situation where aggression may occur. Tablets are best hidden in a little piece of favourite food for these animals. If you are giving eye ointment or ear treatment, ensure that it is followed by something nice, such as a treat or a period of play, so that they associate treatment with a reward. Before you start, have everything to hand and try to have some assistance available where possible. If you still experience problems, talk to your vet about treatment at the practice; this will be more costly and time consuming but the priority is for your pet to receive its medication.

Aggression may also arise after surgery. If this does happen, ensure that your pet is provided with a quiet, safe area to recover from the operation. If the problem continues, talk to your vet, because it may be an indication of pain. Do check wounds regularly for swelling and follow veterinary advice regarding exercise and lifting.

### What has caused my pet's sudden change of character?

Behavioural changes can occur for many reasons. They may be due to a change of environment, a change in family routine, medical causes, dietary changes or a training problem.

Any sudden changes should be discussed with your vet. They could be medically related and, even if not, the sooner the behavioural problem is addressed, the sooner you can alter it.

When a problem occurs, keep a record of who was present, what happened, when and why. Then, armed with this information, you can seek help from one of the people listed below.

### Who should I contact for help?

There are several ways to contact people who understand your concerns and will help without pre-judging you or your pet. You need to find someone you trust and feel comfortable with as some behavioural problems can take time and effort to modify, especially if the animal has exhibited the behaviour for some time. Never expect 'quick fix' methods, as invariably they do not give lasting improvements.

**Your vet:** You should always seek the advice of your local vet first, as many behaviour problems are related to a medical cause. Also, many vets and nurses have studied behaviour therapy to some degree and can offer you basic advice.