

Why Bother Hiring a Professional Dog Trainer?

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With all the information available through the internet and the advice given by friends and family, why would anyone bother paying someone for help with their dog?

In many professions, especially in dog training, there is a lot of conflicting information on the internet and amongst the public. Here are some reasons to call your local positive reinforcement based dog trainer:

- 🐾 A professional dog trainer understands basic animal learning theory and how it applies to your dog and his/her issues. The friend who offered you advice likely does not know much about learning theory and therefore does not know how that advice could adversely effect your dog. They might not understand the consequences involved in using a certain method or even how to appropriately use a certain method.
- 🐾 A professional dog trainer has done research on different methods and knows how to recognize what results will or could occur. The internet provides a variety of methods to train your dog, but you have no way of knowing which ones could negatively effect your relationship with your dog. Even someone who has had lots of dogs through out their lives may not really understand why certain methods work and how they are changing their dog's behavior. Some methods work at first, but can lead to long-term behavior issues.
- 🐾 You should be able to trust that a professional has worked with lots of dogs of all shapes, sizes, and breeds. They should have a general knowledge of typical breed specific behavior and/or health issues and how those could be affecting your dog's behavior. It is important to recognize that a friend who has given you advice may not know about potential underlying issues related to the breed.
- 🐾 The internet is no substitute for an expert's eye. Professional dog trainers have practiced their observation skills for years and can spot things that you may have missed or thought irrelevant.
- 🐾 A professional will know how to change behavior while making the situation as safe as possible. There are ways to manage dogs that are aggressive and fearful in ways that will prevent anyone (dog or human) from getting hurt while still being able to change their behavior.
- 🐾 A professional will participate in continuing education. This means they should be on top of the game when it comes to new and more effective methods. The internet and friends are usually behind when it comes to new material and new studies on behavior. It can take a while for methods to become popular and be spread by word of mouth. Hiring a professional means they should know about what techniques are out there that will help you and your dog efficiently.
- 🐾 You wouldn't want a dog trainer doing your job so why would you try and do theirs? Their career is working with dogs. They have done the research and have the experience that friends and the internet cannot provide.
- 🐾 Professional dog trainers should have a basic understanding of normal behavior versus neurotic behavior which may require medication. Just like people, sometimes dogs need medication to deal with anxiety. There are also a list of behaviors which can be caused by changes in health (not always visible to the eye) that a good trainer should recognize. They will know when to refer to a veterinarian for a health exam or blood tests. This is something the internet or friends will not be able to tell you.
- 🐾 Socialization is generally misunderstood by many people. A professional will put you on track with your new puppy or give you the knowledge and tools to work with your adult dog's fears and anxieties. A professional should be familiar with a dog's developmental stages (both physical and mental) so that you can make the right decisions about proper socialization and health procedures.
- 🐾 Best of all, you won't waste anytime reading the wrong things on the internet. You won't have to decipher between correct material and out-dated information. You won't compromise your relationship with your dog by trying harsh techniques that have been discarded by professionals.



To find a local positive reinforcement based trainer in your area, check out the [Pet Professionals Guild!](#)