



How to choose a dog trainer

If you want a truly dog friendly trainer or training class that uses modern, scientifically researched positive reinforcement training techniques, you need to research dog trainers' advertisements and website as well as talk with them.

Certainly the tools that may be spoken about (choke, prong or shock collars) are a dead giveaway of negative or forceful training methods. But there can still be force and coercion used even if these "training" collars aren't suggested. Beware of yelling, poking, jabbing, objects being thrown at or near the dog, loud noises used for startling, physically forcing dogs into position, alpha rolls or any kind of pinning, etc. Any reference to the words "alpha" or "dominance" should also make you sit up and take notice, as that's a good indication that the trainer is leaning on that nonsensical old myth.

The best way to determine whether or not a training class is right for you and your dog is to ask to sit in on a session. If your trainer won't allow this, that could be a warning bell. Look for signs of stress in the dogs, such as tails being held low and into the body, mouths tensely shut, avoiding eye contact, crouching.

You should see happy, eager, relaxed dogs and people having fun. If you feel uncomfortable with anything that you see, look elsewhere.

Here are some questions you can ask when choosing a dog trainer. If the trainer cannot answer any of the questions, you should look elsewhere. Your search should include such professional dog training associations as the:

- 🐾 Delta Society at www.deltainstitute.com.au
- 🐾 Professional Pet Dog Trainers Association of Australia at www.ppgaaustralia.net.au
- 🐾 Association of Pet Dog Trainers Australia at www.apdt.com.au

Here are some questions you you should ask when choosing a dog trainer:

- 🐾 What training methods do you use?
- 🐾 What is your educational background in the area of dog training and behaviour?
- 🐾 What is some recent continuing education that you have attended?
- 🐾 What equipment do you use?
- 🐾 What kind of follow-up do you provide on you work with clients?
- 🐾 Can you provide a list of clients we can contact for references?
- 🐾 Do you belong to any professional associations, and if not, why not?
- 🐾 What are your credentials or certifications?
- 🐾 What sort of services do you provide for pet owners? Do you provide specialised services such as therapy dog training, competitive dog training, service dog training?