

BOOK 2  
OF SIX BOOK SERIES

# DOG BITE PREVENTION



**PROCEDURES  
GUIDE**

Evaluate, React,  
Avoid a Dog Attack



**GARY JACKSON**

## Testing and Raising your K9

One of the most important things you can do is research the type of dog or puppy you want, and when you have this figured out, then you can get on with the job of raising the pup properly. If you get an adult, at least you can do some tests to see if it's going to fit your lifestyle; you could get a rescue, which is very rewarding, as you're saving a dog's life.

With all the research you have done, you now have chosen your breed and checked out a few breeders. Now you have selected the breeder, a litter is available, and you also know what sex you want. This is now the exciting part: where you get to pick your puppy from the litter.

The litter may be of eight puppies of four males and four females, or perhaps of only three puppies of two females and one male. You may have to pick between several puppies or only two; do you just concentrate on the sex you want or the entire litter and grade them all, picking the top two or three? Then there is the health of the pups and any faults that you can or cannot live with, or that may affect the working life of the dog. Looks are another thing that may be very important to you, and there may be one odd pup that is double the size of the rest of the litter. These are all factors to consider when trying to choose a puppy in a litter.

Then there is also the behaviour of the pups and how they respond to stimuli. Some can be dull, with no motivation, and others may be high-energy, chasing everything. Some will be independent, and others super-responsive to stimuli. In most cases, it is so hard to get a puppy without compromise, and if you wait for the perfect type of pup, you may never find one. In other cases, you may be lucky to get the genetic base you want with health, colour, drive, and everything else fitting to what you want. There may be only a handful of local breeders, and you may be forced to fly in a puppy without seeing it first, which is very risky.

When sourcing a puppy, I don't just show up when the pups are eight weeks of age only to find out the litter is poor quality or sick-looking or that most of the litter is sold. I will always ask if I can see the pups at around four to five weeks of age. This gives me a chance to speak with the breeder and check out the care they have for the pups and their knowledge of the breed. It's also a chance to see if they are a puppy farmer, which I refuse to buy puppies from. If everything looks good, then I start checking out the litter and the parents. In most cases, the breeder will use a stud dog, so the father may not be available to view.

On my first contact with the breeder in person, I will ask for all the paperwork on the litter, which can include the parents' pedigree papers and breed survey details and ask whether they are aware of any health problems in the breeding. I will also ask for all the medical certificates so I know that the pups are vaccinated and checked for—or on treatment for—internal parasites. A trick I have used with great success in the past is to ask the breeder on the phone if they would mind if I bring with me a veterinary surgeon friend of mine to check out the pups and ask some questions. The same works when I tell clients that have been told all this great stuff about a highly trained adult dog for sale, and they ask if they can bring Gary Jackson with them.

When I see the litter, I firstly check out the hygiene and how the pups are cared for by the breeder. I have seen some highly bred litters where the breeder has destroyed the pups' confidence by kicking pups out of the way or hitting the pups with the food bowl. Puppies that have been through traumatic experiences before eight weeks of age will be unsure of people or hand-shy; this is not what you want as your foundation for training.

Things I'll look for on the pups are fleas and ticks, rashes or crusted skin, or if the pup is covered with faeces. I will listen to the breathing for coughing, sneezing, vomiting, and any discharge from the eyes, ears, or nose. I check if they have diarrhoea and if they are skinny or pot-bellied. They may be dehydrated, so just pinch the skin, and it should pop back if the pup is well-hydrated. Next, I will look to see if they are lethargic or just have no energy.

If the pups in the litter have some of these problems, then it may be a good idea for 'thanks but no thanks'. If you feel the breeder is a puppy farmer or the dogs are in inhumane conditions, then report the breeder immediately. If you are unsure, then you can always pay to have a local veterinary surgeon check them out.

If everything adds up and the breeder is great, and the litter looks fantastic, then it is time to move to the next stage.

You are limited in the tests you can do on a litter of pups that are four weeks of age, but it is a great chance to check out how they interact with each other and their mother. In nearly every case, when I have checked out a litter early, the pups are feeding or sleeping. I ask the breeder if the pups can be removed from the mother and placed in another area, such as a grassed yard. This gives me a chance to check out how active they are in a new area; do they all just huddle together and whinge, or do they start using their noses and crawl aimlessly, exploring the new area?

I will place my finger on a bit of meat and hold it in front of a pup and start to see what interest the pup has in trying to get to it or not. I will also start using a squeaky toy or a whistle to see the reactions to the sound; they may be curious and even crawl towards the sound, or just tilt their head, or have absolutely no reaction at all. I will then throw a brightly coloured toy a few feet from the pups to see their interest or whether the pups show avoidance.

Another toy I use is a sock on a string, and this really gets them going.

Ultimately, the first visit to a litter is to establish a meet-and-greet with the breeder and check out the condition of the pups. Observe interaction and play to see if they are confident or dull and what kind of drives they have to play or for toys and food. You will also be able to narrow down your choice of pups to the top three or even down to one puppy.

If you, at this stage, have picked your puppy on the first visit, ask the breeder if you can place a hold on that puppy. Most breeders will be happy to do that with a deposit.

It's a good idea to bring a little collar to place on the puppy and take a lot of photos. If they all look the same, then bright pink nail polish on the nails can also help. Ensure you have a written receipt with details of your chosen puppy that is signed by the breeder.

I will contact the breeder via email and call every week to check up on the welfare of the pups and to finally organise a date to come back to pick up the pup.

If you haven't chosen your pup and wish to come back when they are eight weeks of age, you may find they are sold out or that most have deposits on them. Also, if you are a pain to the breeder, they may just say that there are no pups available for you. As a breeder, I have done this several times in the

past—the client just had to be rude or demand totally unreasonable requests, and that client went to the bottom of the list.

If you do get a chance to test out a litter of pups at around seven to eight weeks of age, here are some tips to assist you in this process.

As you are looking for your ultimate dog, you will be looking at the potential the puppy has for you to train it. For example, you may need a high-energy dog with a strong prey drive to chase toys and high food drive. A high-energy dog with the correct genetic base and high drives will be much easier to train. You may have the correct genetic base, but the dog may have no motivation and is arrogant or dull, making it hard to train, and you will consistently be motivating the dog.

You may not be looking for a high-energy dog as you want a calm and relaxed dog that is totally chilled out and will just be a great family pet. The biggest mistake I see over and over again is the family going to a top-of-the-range working dog breeder to buy the best, or else they go for the wrong breed, such as a Belgian Malinois. This mismatch will give the family a dog that doesn't stop and has so much energy that it can be a nightmare to live with. Other mismatches occur when families go for the looks, not knowing too much about the breed traits, and end up with a dog that's arrogant, too high-energy, or has high aggression.

Many puppy tests are based on a points system, or the puppies are graded by colour to categorise each puppy. For example, green may indicate a social-safe pup, yellow may indicate a high-energy and excitable pup, and red may indicate fear or aggression. These systems work well in pound situations where a lot of dogs and staff are involved. Law enforcement agencies also have their own systems for the evaluation of puppies and adults.

As you are just trying to find a puppy for yourself, I prefer to do a collection of tests to check the trainability of that dog. You may find the pup passes with flying colours in some tests and fails in others; then, you have to deduce the training potential and whether you can achieve your ultimate dog with this eight-week-old pup.

So, here is a quick shopping checklist:

1. You are happy with the breed and sex you chose.
2. You did your research on the different lines of dogs.
3. You did your research on the breeders.

4. You have found the right breeder and breeding program and, finally, a litter that is available.
5. You checked out the litter at four to six weeks of age, and they are all healthy, with the correct paperwork.
6. You know what you want in your ultimate dog.
7. You have already planned your puppy raising and training programs.
8. You are now ready to pick and take home your ultimate dog.

Now, let's get started; whatever tests you do with the pups, you can grade them into four categories, and you can give them a score within each category. Later, for adult dogs, we will use a complete psychological profile chart, and the tests will vary in accordance with the purpose of the dog. Different organisations call the puppy tests 'temperament tests', but temperament + environment = behaviour, so this means we are checking out the genetic base plus environmental factors. The pup may be totally genetically sound but abused by the breeder, causing a strong fear that is environmental. If the pup has a strong fear, regardless of what caused it, this may render the pup totally unsuitable for your purposes.

The four categories that all the tests will fit into are:

1. Positive response to stimuli.
2. Fear or nervous response to stimuli.
3. Aggressive response to stimuli.
4. Focus intensity and recovery timeframe.

The classification within each of these categories will be up to you, from extremely responsive to no response at all, so you might like to put together your chart to grade the pup's response on a scale from one to ten; or using colours like green, yellow, and red; or using levels like high, medium, and low.

The classifications I like to use within each of the categories are:

1. Extreme
2. High
3. Medium
4. Low
5. None

Some pups will have multiple reactions to a test, so I will give an example and outline how this would read on a chart:

## Test and Chart Example

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You roll a basketball near the puppy. The pup reacts with a strong focus and then chases the basketball until it gets two feet from it. Then it stops, its tail goes down, and it turns and shows indecision, and then it turns and barks at the ball. After a couple of seconds, the pup stops and stares at the ball for thirty seconds and then walks off to play with the other pups, forgetting about the ball.

1. Positive response to stimuli: High—Focus: Average
2. Fear or nervous response to stimuli: Low—Focus: Low
3. Aggressive response to stimuli: Medium—Focus: High
4. Focus intensity and recovery timeframe: Focus: High—Recovery: Slow

I would like to point out that fast recoveries are excellent, and a slow one in adult dogs is an indication of no socialisation or that the dog has been through a traumatic experience. Puppies that have strong fear at eight weeks of age are going to affect your training program with fear or dependency-related problems.

You may find only some of the tests are applicable, such as food motivation tests. The fear and aggressive response may not be applicable as the dog shows zero response to fear and aggression during the food tests, so the result may be:

Food test (test details here)  
Positive response: Low—Focus: None  
Fear response: N/A  
Aggression response: N/A  
Recovery time: N/A

So, in this case, the pup shows a low response to food motivation; is this because the pups were just fed by the breeder, or the pup was in sleeping mode, or does the pup just have no motivation for food? Other variables you need to consider are things like extreme temperatures or uncomfortable walking surfaces that will affect the pup's motivation.

These are just some of the variables that you need to consider, and by the time you have finished your tests, you will have a good profile of your potential ultimate dog and whether the pup will make the grade.

I find the best time to do the tests is mid-morning or mid-afternoon when the pups are most active, and ask the breeder not to feed the pups before you

get there if in the morning or a few hours before if in the afternoon. You may end up with passed-out pups that you have to wake up to try to do the tests.

You can also add notes to each test after you have graded the pup, for example: *‘The pup was totally relaxed while being handled but showed stress and nervousness when the feet were touched but recovered very quickly.’*

I also want you to pay particular attention to pups that have a fear of and slow recovery to tests due to being oversensitive. Fear is a natural reaction, and the pup should recover quickly, but if the pup cowers then does not recover and remains fearful of the item or the tester, it is an indication of oversensitivity, and the pup most likely will always be nervous.

### **Touch, Smell, Sound, and Visual Stimuli Tests**

First, watch the entire litter and how they interact with each other to get an idea of energy levels and rank within the pack. You may also see the most dominant pup and the runt of the litter.

1. Pick a puppy up and pat the pup all over from head to toe, including ears, tail, and feet.
2. Place the puppy gently on its back and lightly place a hand on its chest.
3. Place the puppy on its own in a grassed yard away from the mother and litter and observe if the pup plays and explores, sits and cries, or tries to get back to the litter.
4. Squeeze the pup’s ear or toes between your thumb and finger gently to cause minor discomfort to test sensitivity and recovery.
5. Place a collar and lead on the pup to test reaction.
6. Slowly take the pup for a walk, pulling gently on the lead.
7. Place some food a few feet in front of the pup, then hold the pup back with a hand on its shoulders.
8. Have someone hold the pup on the ground, show the pup some food, and walk twenty feet away; the pup is then released.
9. Rub food on the ground about ten feet downwind from the pup.
10. Place a plastic tub of food with a lid on and holes punched in it down in front of the entire litter.
11. Place bone down for the litter.



12. Place food in a bowl in front of the pup, and then put your hand in while the pup is eating.
13. Take the bowl away when the pup is in the middle of eating.
14. Place a tasty treat on a chair or similar object so that the treat is just out of reach of the puppy.
15. Blow a whistle with two short blows followed by several quick blows a minute later.
16. With your own voice, speak in high pitches to the pups and then lower your voice to a deeper sound.
17. Make three claps of your hand, then call the pups.
18. Shine a torch or LED light around the pups.
19. Show them a shiny object like a beach ball or reflective mirror.
20. Use a squeaky toy and throw it near the pups.
21. Tie a sock on a string and drag it around.
22. Put food in the sock and drag it around.
23. Test possession level and intensity when the pup is playing with a toy or food.
24. Place food and toys in the basket to test interest.
25. Return all the pups to the mother and enjoy.

When you have done all of these tests or some of them, you will have a much better idea of if your puppy will make the grade. The more active and the more motivation the pup has for food and toys, the easier it will be to train. If the pup has great focus, this is also a bonus.

If you do these tests and find the pup is scared of many things and has slow recovery or sits down and has little motivation, then this pup will not be suitable unless you want a simple, relaxed pet.

You will also see highly strung and dominant pups that may be stubborn and can also be a pain to live with and train.

To sum up, there is no guarantee that you will get your ultimate dog from a puppy you choose; however, with all your research on the right breeding program, getting the right litter, and selecting the right puppy, your chances are very high. Now it's up to you to raise this pup and train it into your ultimate dog.

I think all of us have heard horror stories of disobedient dogs that chew up everything, bark at nothing, show aggression to dogs and people, jump on guests—and the list goes on.

Most of these problems are directly related to how the dog was raised as a puppy, and if raised right, you may get the perfect pet. If you are raising a working dog such as a Belgian Malinois for detection or bite work, then the dog will have incredible amounts of drive and energy and will be very hard to live with. You will also be developing the drive in preparation for the dog's working life. There are, however, some things you can do to make life a little easier living with a working dog, and I'll get to that soon.

When the dog's behaviour is broken down into three parts, it is so easy to understand why your dog does what it does.

### **Temperament + Environment = Behaviour**

The dog is born with a genetic base that cannot be changed, which includes the breed characteristics, and you will have variations within the breed. For example, you have dogs from working bloodlines that are strong in character with massive chasing or prey drives and pain tolerance that may be very suited to training.

The soft character dogs have lower pain tolerance, and generally, environmental factors affect them much more. This is why so much is focused on top breeding programs for law enforcement dogs; these breeders produce highly driven dogs with great potential to become police or detection dogs.

As another example, border collies, in general, are used to herd sheep and not cattle; they have great drives but do not have a strong defence and pain tolerance. This is why cattle dogs are perfect for the job of cattle herding.

You can also choose a mismatched dog for your lifestyle, such as a strong character, highly driven German shepherd, when you only have a small yard and are away most days of the week. The result may be terrible; the better choice would be selecting a breeder that breeds German shepherds for the family market that may be softer and less driven.

Environmentally, dogs can be given hundreds of problems, and you will get different behaviours in accordance with their genetic base and breed characteristics.

Let's first look at how to raise your pup, then, and what will be some of your dog's most likely behaviours when exposed to good and bad stimuli.

Do not take your puppy home from the breeder before eight weeks of age, as the pup needs this time to socialise with the littermates. Dependency,

separation anxiety, and overprotectiveness later in the dog's life can all be caused by taking the pup too early from the litter or too late from the litter. Having the pup sleep in the bedroom is another way of developing a dependent dog. Lack of socialisation during the critical period of development will also cause many problems. Stress and anxiety-related behavioural problems such as chewing and barking are also dramas you have to deal with if you get it wrong with the raising of your pup.

The most important time in your dog's life is called the critical period; the reason it is called this is that it is *critical*. Do not underestimate the importance of this time in a puppy's life. The critical period can be divided up into five stages, and each stage has a name and a timeframe. There are always arguments about the exact day of transition to the next stage and about when the critical stages finish. I don't want to get into this argument, so let's just say that from birth to sixteen weeks of age is really important. I will break it down to give you an understanding of the timeframes of the four stages and the different behaviours that may develop as a result of different scenarios:

### Stage 1

The pups don't open their eyes and ears until around ten days of age. Some may be earlier, others later. So, the senses the puppies have are thermal, touch, and smell. The pups will all group together to gather warmth from the littermates and the mother. When the pups are suckling their mother, their noses are pressed against her belly, breathing in the strong odour of the mother's body smells. This, over the next few weeks, will create an association between the mother's smell and food. So, the two big associations for the pup are body contact with the litter for warmth and the smell of the mother with food.

### Stage 2

The second stage of critical development is when the eyes and ears open, at around ten to fourteen days for the eyes and approximately thirteen to seventeen days for the ears. The pups will be starting to move about and become aware of their surroundings. This is when they start to develop really quickly, wagging their tail, crawling around more actively, growling, etc.

### Stage 3

The third stage is after three weeks of age, when the pups will be moving about a bit more and starting to have play fights with the littermates, and it's about the time they will start on solid foods. Human interaction is also good during this period, achieved by holding them or placing them in a grassed yard for thirty minutes or so.

### Stage 4

In the next couple of weeks, the pups will be exploring, playing, and discovering many sounds, smells, and sights. In the past, it was recommended that the pup stays with the mother until seven weeks of age, and then it was seven weeks and four days, but the accepted timeframe for the pup to come home now is eight weeks of age.

### **Problems with Taking the Puppy from the Litter Either Too Early or Too Late**

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Now, let's have a look at what happens when a puppy is taken away from the mother either too early or too late.

If a puppy is taken from the litter, as an example, at four or five weeks of age, then you can expect many behavioural problems as the dog gets older. At the age of four to five weeks, the puppy is still very dependent on the mother and the littermates by having consistent body contact with them. The puppy now has a very clear association of the mother's body odour with food, so this becomes a pacifier for the puppy. When the pup is in contact with the other pups and smelling the mother's odour, the puppy is totally content. This is why when you take a four-week-old puppy from the litter and place it in the yard on its own, most will yap and struggle to try to get back to the litter, so the pup will not settle. When you place two puppies in the yard, they may settle due to the body contact but will still try to get back to the litter.

What this means is that the pups are still very dependent on the mother and littermates, so if a puppy is taken at that age from the litter, the dependency will immediately transfer to the new owner. By the time the pup reaches eight weeks of age, the pup is already very dependent on the human, and this will

develop more severely over the next few months and, more than likely, the life of the dog.

If the dog is taken at the correct age of eight weeks and then spends every hour of the day with the owner, then that dog will develop a strong dependency and find it hard to be on its own. The fastest way to create a dependency problem is to have the new puppy sleep in the bedroom with you. I cannot stress enough how dependent this will make your dog.

The other side effect of the dog sleeping in the bedroom is that now you may have changed the rank structure. If you have children and you have the dog sleep in the bedroom, in the dog's mind, it is now number three in rank over the children as you have created a pack within a pack. When the dog believes it is higher up in rank over some humans, there are some things the dog may do to establish its leadership. It will go from doing nothing at all to being arrogant to the children, ignoring them, or standing in between you and your kids. Other acts can be urinating in the children's bedroom or rolling on the children's items to place their odour on top. In more severe cases, dogs will display dominant body language over the child with their tail and eye contact and even growl. In the worst cases, children are bitten or have been killed by the family pet all because of incorrect rank structure and dependency.

This is also why when you pat one dog, the other dependent one pushes in or growls at the other dog. If you have one dog that is allowed in the house and the other one is not allowed, then when you let the dog outside, the other dog may aggress it or enact small acts of dominance.

The next common way for the dog to become dependent on the owner is if the dog has a terrible experience concerning a person or another dog, making the dog a bit paranoid when it comes to the outside world. It is so important that from eight weeks of age, the dog gets heaps of socialisation and has good experiences. Try to avoid any traumatic experiences occurring for the dog in this early period.

I have seen many dogs that, through no fault of the owner, have been exposed to a traumatic experience, and it has affected the dog for years after.

The most common one is the puppy at eighteen weeks of age is taken to the off-lead dog park and is beaten up by a large dog and injured. As a result, the dog may be scared of all other dogs, just large dogs, just male dogs, or just black dogs—depending on what the pup associated with the experience. The result will be that when you take the dog for a walk, the dog will be sniffing

worriedly for other dogs, and its anxiety will be high. The dog's ability to learn will drop as the dog is under stress waiting for another dog to attack. When the dog sees another dog, it may try to hide behind the handler as the traumatic experience will develop a dependency, or the dog may puff its hair up defensively, growl, and even try to attack the other dog.

Other traumatic experiences can be from humans or cars, so the dog may react badly to raised arms, objects in a human's hands, or even car noises.

The next common way your dog could become dependent is that during the critical period of socialisation, which is between when you get the puppy at eight weeks of age and sixteen weeks of age, the dog has absolutely no socialisation and only sees the family and the inside of the fenced yard. The dog rarely sees people or other animals, and its entire world is in the yard. The result of no socialisation in this critical stage is, again, that the dog becomes dependent on the owner and is paranoid of the outside world and develops high suspicion. The dog will bark at anything that moves, from a strange noise to the neighbours' talking. The dog then becomes very territorial, so there is the continual marking of the fence line, and when the dog sees a stranger, it may display fear-based aggression. The unsocialised dog is afraid of everything, but over time the dog may respond to conditioning.

Here is a list of conditions that creates a dog that is dependent, experiences separation anxiety, or is overprotective.

1. Puppy taken from mother and littermates too early, e.g., at four or five weeks of age.
2. Puppy always with the owner 24/7, or 100% of the time the owner is home.
3. Puppy sleeps in the bedroom with the owner.
4. Puppy has a traumatic experience.
5. Puppy is unsocialised in the critical period before sixteen weeks of age.
6. Puppy remains with its mother and littermates for longer than twelve weeks.

If your dog has any one of the above problems, there is a great chance the dog will end up dependent, and the severity will be in accordance with the dog's genetic base; for example, strong character dogs have higher stress levels and are more independent than softer character dogs. Other dogs may have several of the above problems, such as being taken from the litter at four weeks of

age, having had a traumatic experience, sleeping in the owner's bedroom, being with the owner twenty-four hours a day, or being totally unsocialised. In this situation, the dog may end up as a basket case. When the dog is away from the owner, the dog will go into a total meltdown, shaking, panting, pacing, and howling until the owner returns.

So, here are some lists of things that happen with dependent dogs. Not all dependent dogs will have every problem, but they all will have some of them. Dependency then creates separation anxiety in the overprotective dog.

### **Dependency Problems**

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1. Sticking their nose in your armpit, groin, or bum all the time.
2. Chronic licking of your skin and mouth to gather odour.
3. Jumping to lick you on the mouth.
4. Will only sleep within your scent pool, within a few feet of you.
5. Follows you everywhere.
6. Tries to have constant body contact with you.
7. Takes any item with your odour on it, such as bras, underpants, etc.

### **Separation Anxiety Problems**

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1. Pacing at fence line for your return.
2. Panting—quick and shallow pants caused by stress.
3. Chewing items that have your smell on them.
4. Anxious chewing of furniture.
5. Howling or barking at nothing to relieve stress.
6. Sitting in the blazing hot sun or freezing cold, waiting for the owner.
7. Listening intently to cars blocks away for the sound of your car.
8. Digging a hole and lying in it on the fence line.
9. Chewing itself up.

### **Overprotective Problems**

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1. Aggression from behind the fence at all dogs and people.
2. Dog stands between you and any other person.
3. Marking another person or property.

4. Becoming agitated, with hair standing up on its back when people approach.
5. Showing aggression or launching an attack on people or dogs that get too close to the owner.

There are several more problems that may be associated with a dependent dog, so you can see now how dependency may affect your dog for life. This will affect the training and your lifestyle with your pet, so the bottom line is that the early weeks form the most important period in your dog's life; get this right, and you are well on the way to having the ultimate dog.

In twelve months of doing private lessons around three countries, here is one reason I discovered for dogs becoming animal- or human-aggressive, dependent, and nuisance barkers. The answer is a total lack of socialisation.

Now, think about this for a moment.

Here is the explanation: the first professional the new puppy owner deals with in most cases is their local vet. In many cases, the owner has been advised to keep the dog away and not to socialise the dog until it has all the vaccinations and checks, which in many cases occurs after the critical period. This advice is consistent with so many vets. So here is the typical chain of events:

1. The vet told the owner to keep the pup away until all the needles were completed.
2. The owner keeps the pup in the backyard until around four to five months of age.
3. The pup becomes dependent, develops separation anxiety, and is over-protective.
4. Pup matures, barks at everything, and cannot be walked as it is too aggressive.
5. The vet suggests getting the dog desexed, and you do.
6. The problem is still bad, so the vet puts your dog on medication.
7. You put up with the problems for the life of the dog or rehome the dog.

Puppy preschools are great, but many are run by vets in the same place where they treat sick dogs with parvo and canine cough and other diseases. The class is run by the vet nurse, and it's a great opportunity for the surgery to get clients for life and promote their services and pet food supplies.



In conclusion, it would be better for vets to tell all their clients to heavily socialise their pups in the critical period of development, but to avoid high-risk areas like dog parks and kennels.

### **How to Fix Dependency Problems**

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1. Place your dog in a boarding kennel for ten days in isolation. The dog will stress out and may go off its food, but it will adapt. The dog will be conditioned to spend long periods of time on its own.
2. Bring the dog back home and keep it in the yard and out of the bedroom.
3. If the dog can see you from outside, place it on a tie-out for some time each day, so there is no contact with you.
4. Put the water away from the back door in another spot, away from the house.
5. Feed the dog at random times and at different spots each day.
6. Place a smelly shirt belonging to the owner on the dog's bed outside.

Do this for around ten days, and then you can relax it a little; however, if you have the same routine as you once did when you bring the dog back from the kennels, then dependency will be the same after a couple of days.

It's amazing the things that can happen with your new dog during this critical time in the dog's life; you can have the most highly bred dog and still end up with a dud due to environmental factors.

Now, let's look at how you can develop your dog after getting it from the litter at eight weeks of age and how to do it right. I will also cover some other exercises you can do in accordance with what you want for your ultimate dog. For example, raising suspicion and developing a dog for guard or law enforcement work is different from developing a dog for a pet or as a detection dog.

Take your puppy from the litter at eight weeks of age and immediately start the socialisation with everything you can think of without scaring the puppy or giving it a bad experience. A great start is to book into a local puppy preschool; they do a great job, it's heaps of fun, and you will learn a lot from the very talented vet nurses. Just be aware that this may be a high-risk area for disease.

Dog parks are also great but be very careful that the pup does not get rolled by a bigger dog. Pups that have had a bad experience with another dog will usually develop animal aggression or submission to new dogs. A dog park is also another high-risk area for disease.

Animal aggression is directly caused by a lack of socialisation or a bad experience with another dog, so this is why it is so important you have a social animal by the time it is six months of age. If you have an animal-aggressive dog, I recommend you see a professional dog trainer for evaluation and socialisation in a controlled environment.

The pup should see heaps of people and be fearless of all, so the more people who come to your home, the better, and you can also get friends to take your pup down to the park. At home, get your pup used to spending time on its own. Condition it to stay in the garage or outside overnight, not in the bedroom.

When you bring your pup into the house, it will be overexcited and very active and may go to the toilet on the carpet, so I recommend you invest in a dog transport cage or cat cage for the pup. Place the cage in a high-traffic area of the house, such as between the kitchen and lounge, place the pup in the cage for around one hour and then put it outside again. This will achieve two things: the first is that the puppy is forced to remain calm in the house as it can only stand or lie down while watching the family. The second is that the pup will be less likely to go to the toilet in a confined area, especially if it is taken outside a few times a day.

Another tip to help the pup learn to pee outside is for the owner to pee in the area you want the pup to go. Female owners can pee in a cup and transfer it to the designated area. The pup will learn very quickly that this is the toilet area, and you will get fast results. When you are outside with your pup, and it goes to the toilet, repeat a word to it such as toily or pid, and after some time, you will be able to say the word to your dog, and it will go outside to the toilet on command.

If your pup is exposed to bad stimuli, this may affect it for life; now, let's look at examples and consider the possible outcomes.

A strong character dog that is unsocialised may develop into a fearful biter and is a danger to people and animals. As this dog matures and becomes more confident, its aggression levels will increase to strong, defensive aggression. Some of the body language the dog will show will be raised hair on the

base of the back, and extremely fearful dogs will have raised hair from the shoulders down to the base of the tail. This dog will have an aggressive bark and ears flattened against its head. As this dog is scared of the outside world, its confidence is highest in its own property, with the owner inside and the security blanket of a fence in front of it.

A soft character dog may react with submission and be more likely to be dependent on the owner.

One thing you should never do to any dog is to hit it with your hand or an object as a punishment. When the owner does this, they will usually yell at the dog as well. As the dog associates pain with the raised voice, the dog will become vocally dominated and react with submission when any person raises their voice. You will end up with a cowering dog that is scared of you and other people.

By the time your pup is six months old, it should have been heavily socialised to people, dogs and other animals, and traffic. It should also be comfortable spending time on its own, so you should end up with a social and safe dog in the community. By taking the puppy with you in the car, you can visit many places to expose it to the views and smell of that environment. The beach is a great location to take the puppy, or a crowded marketplace or sports match—but don't overdo it. You can start off with the pup in the car, watching and smelling the new environments. Having toys and food to change the puppy's focus can also help a great deal. You can also give people food treats to give to your puppy so that the association with people is great pleasure.

You will need to walk the dog on a lead, so here are some tips: when you first place your puppy on a lead, have it on a flat collar. Do not use a choke chain, and do it at home. Condition the puppy with a collar first, then put the lead on it in your backyard. Let the puppy pick up the lead and drag it around a little. Next is to have food treats to change the focus, then you can hold the lead and walk around with the puppy. If you place a lead on the pup for the first time and then drag the puppy, trying to get it to walk, then the association will remain negative, and the first reaction will be avoidance behaviour.

At this stage, we are not trying to teach the puppy any obedience at all, just that the lead is fun and associated with praise and treats. When this is achieved, you can have control of your puppy in different environments, from the park bench on a busy street to the beach. You know you did it right when you go

to pick up the lead at home and the pup gets excited because it associates this with positive things.

By the time the puppy is six months of age, the socialisation should have exposed the pup to everything it may see in its life. So, as a checklist: heaps of people, smells, work environments, traffic, dogs, and farm animals. Walk through the forest, beach, parks, and town to expose the puppy to everything, including noises.

### **Conditioning the Pup to Love Obedience**

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Now the pup is conditioned to the lead and associates that with happy experiences, but what about doing obedience training with the pup?

I will start to condition the pup to commands from eight weeks of age, but I will use absolutely no force at all, and I will make it fun with food and praise. I will keep the state of training conditioning less than one minute long, but the repetition will last for months as a fun game, and the pup will learn at its own pace.

At eight weeks of age, I will use small, soft meat treats and hold them just above the pup's head and say *sit* a few times; if the bum goes down as the dog is looking up, then I immediately give the pup the treat and praise with 'good boy/girl'. Don't be in a hurry with this one, as it may take two days or two weeks, but once the pup creates the association with sitting for a treat, then you are on your way.

For *heel*, I will do this off-lead with a puppy by walking, holding a treat to my side around the height of under my left knee. As the pup walks to try to get the treat, I'm repeating the command *heel* in a happy voice and 'good boy/girl', so again the pup is learning without knowing. I will also give the pup the treat and then have another one so the pup learns to walk beside me and gets treats along the way.

I would also like to point out not to go overboard on the obedience at an early age—I have seen many puppies and young dogs wrecked because the owner did so much repetition and raised voice correction that the pup hated the obedience and worked through fear. What the handler has done in this situation is diminish the dog's drive and confidence before it has even developed. I have seen many dogs that were then unable to complete training in detection and protection due to a lack of confidence and diminished development totally caused by the handler. Don't make this mistake.

Many police departments do so much work on obedience first that this then overrides other exercises from the handler, placing the dog in a *stay* situation a lot of the time; for example, the dog may be so obedient that the handler gets beaten up and the dog won't move (because it has not been commanded to) in case it gets in trouble. Then there is the detection dog that does the behaviour of searching as an obedience command but is looking for nothing, or the dog just cowers when the handler gets close. In all these cases, obedience can override the dog's other functions, so go easy.

When I train detection dogs, I do absolutely no obedience at all and just develop a dog 100% focused on getting the target odour. When this is done, then I will slowly do the obedience training separate from the detection and then bring both together. This is also the case in training personal protection dogs, as I will do the protection first to get great confidence and drive with the bite work, then do the obedience separately before I bring the two areas of training together.

Develop the dog's drives first before anything else in adult dogs—but in pups, only use positive training and associations and build drives before any form of enforcement is used. The foundation of socialisation and positive training in the pup will develop a great attitude, and this is the foundation for all your future training. Remember: **Temperament + Environment = Behaviour.**

You can do a first-class job developing a pup from eight weeks of age, but if the genetic base is wrong for what you want, you will get a dud. Some people get lucky and get such an awesome genetic base in their dog that they can make a heap of mistakes and still end up with a great dog.

So, if you have a great genetic base, you got your pup at eight weeks of age, and you have socialised the dog heavily, then this is a great foundation for every type of training. The first thing I suggest is to start conditioning the young dog for the future worksite, so if you are going to train your dog as a narcotics detection dog for employment on the docks, then start getting it out to smell all the odours of the docks, go on ships, etc. If it's search and rescue you want to train for, then expose the dog to the natural environment.

Agility is also another good skill to condition the dog for on different surfaces, and I always found that the children's playground is the best to start off on. Stairs, buildings, elevators, travelators, and car parks are all great for conditioning, too.

Please don't underestimate the importance of socialisation and the conditioning process, as many dogs have been rendered useless for their speciality work as a direct result of this, even though they may be excellent in that field. Here are some examples:

1. A search-and-rescue or environmental dog that is animal-aggressive and would rather chase an animal than look for the target odour.
2. A protection dog that won't bite a decoy due to fears such as stairs, a raised arm, loud noises, etc.
3. An area protection dog that is useless when someone has food.

There are many more examples, and there are many more conditioning exercises that you can do to help prepare your dog for its working life. With the above examples, they may all have been avoided in some of the following ways:

For example 1, the handlers socialised the dog heavily to animals and the environment and used correction if the dog showed any interest in other animals.

For example 2, the dog was conditioned early in life to objects and hands raised above the dog's head. This will help in protection training with the decoy. Running up and down stairs and exposure to loud environments as a pup would also have made a big difference, so neglect in conditioning back then could mean being assaulted due to the dog's failure now.

In example 3, the handler could have bait-proofed the dog, made the dog sit and wait for the food until the command was given, and used treats in stranger avoidance training.

A very important step in getting to your ultimate dog is the development of natural drives so that, as a trainer, you have something to work with. At this stage, if you have a dog with a great genetic base and you heavily socialised the pup during the critical period and conditioned the young adult to future working environments, then you are on the right track. Development of drive does not just start at six months of age; this is a process that is started at eight weeks of age or earlier and continues throughout the dog's life. Back in 2001, to prove this, I got a Malinois puppy obsessed with a sock on the end of a stick, and with the use of frustration, this pup went crazy trying to get the item. I then associated the sock with the target odour of marijuana, and by

the time the pup was eleven weeks of age, the pup was doing off-lead drug searches with an active indication, becoming the youngest detection dog ever. The videos of this are on my YouTube channel at <<https://www.youtube.com/user/garymnk9/videos>>.

Let's look at some suggested exercises for a future guard or law enforcement dog, a detection dog, or a search-and-rescue dog. We will consider that the dogs have the right genetic base for the job, are well socialised, and are conditioned for future work.

The family home protection dog should be heavily socialised until around six to eight months of age; then, at this point, break all socialisation in the household. What this will mean is that over a few months, the dog's suspicion levels will rise towards strangers behind the fence. When the dog barks from behind the fence, give an excited **watch** command followed by 'good boy/girl'. In the early stages, the dog may come back to you or just wag its tail at you and then refocus on the threat. You will find in only a few short weeks that the dog will start to become reliable behind the fence, being a good home alert dog, but the dog is only as good as its suspicion levels at the time.

To raise its suspicion levels, you may need to hire a professional dog trainer to stalk the dog from behind the fence at a distance. When the dog locks on eye contact with the decoy, the decoy crouches and returns heavy eye contact. This will be considered by the dog as a threat, and the first reaction may be ears forward, a puff of the lips, a small growl, or barking and running towards the fence. The very moment any of these things happen, the decoy spins around and runs away behind a car. The dog will figure out that it has won, so we have raised not only the suspicion but also the confidence.

This can be repeated only one more time, and that's it, no more. The decoy then disappears, so no hanging around talking to the handler in front of the dog. After only one or two of these sessions, the dog may become more reliable behind the fence and, in combination with praise from the handler, the dog may only need one to three sessions.

Developing a law enforcement dog for doing street work will include, in the training program, bite work on a body-bite suit and concealed arms and basket muzzle. The dog can be developed much earlier, so the foundation is strong with high suspicion and strong focus. An important part to remember here is to not agitate your own dog unless it's just a game. The first time the dog sees a decoy, it should feel threatened. If you have an inexperienced decoy or

agitate a dog when it's too young, then the dog will not be threatened and will have no suspicion towards the decoy. You may end up with an equipment-happy puppy that will only chase an arm pad and never bite for real.

In the early stages of development, you can play rag games with your puppy and develop its bite by playing with a rag in tug-o-war, letting the puppy win. Ball games are also important to develop a strong prey drive and chase. This will also improve focus in training for things like obedience. With a young dog of around ten months, you can get your partner to handle the pup on a lead, and you can stir the puppy up with a rag. The pup should feel absolutely no threat but should be excited to chase and bite the rag as a game. When the pup is biting the rag, you can create a small fight, placing your hand over its eyes, etc. and letting it win. When the pup's drive develops, it will be able to run off-lead to bite the rag. You can also place the pup behind a chain-wire fence or screen door and stir it up with the rag. The frustration works so well with this scenario, with the pup's intensity rising, and you will get even more barking.

To give you an example of how powerful frustration is, in protection, I have had many dogs in kennels that, when you test them and start training them in protection, are very average with low drive; they may bark but with no intensity. The handler will place the dog in a kennel with four other dogs in other kennels.

The decoy would run in and agitate the dogs, and within minutes, the average dog becomes very intense with the frustration of being behind the fence and the excitement of the other dogs barking. After a couple of sessions of developing confidence and drive behind the fence, the dog is brought out on a lead again, and the intensity has tripled.

At this point, the young adult should be able to run and grip a tube or rag and fight for it with excitement and win. When the dog sees a ball or rag, you should see an intense focus and drive to get it. I recommend that when the dog first sees the decoy, it is about fourteen months of age, and the decoy wears no protective gear to avoid the pup becoming equipment-happy. The dog should feel threatened by the decoy, and as a result, the dog will respond in an aggressive, serious, and defensive manner and win. The decoy should not ever back the dog down as this will destroy its confidence; they should only be enough of a threat that the dog is agitated but wins.

The decoy can also use the frustration of being behind the fence as a tool, which will also give the dog a security blanket. Praise from the handler



and distance from the decoy also helps. This is why you need an experienced decoy; if the threat is not there, the dog will see it as a game or become equipment-happy, and if the decoy is too threatening, then the dog will show avoidance behaviour and lose confidence. When the decoy does it right, the dog should show serious aggression towards the decoy, and when the dog gets its first bite, it should be able to go straight onto the body-bite suit for leg or arm bites.

In detection work, there are many average dogs out there, and you really need a dog that is obsessive about a toy or has extremely high drive for food treats. It's not good enough just to have a dog that chases the ball—yes, it may love the ball, but that's not good enough. A trainer may view over fifty dogs to get the right dog with the perfect drive to start as a detection dog. If you have raised your dog for the specific purpose of being a detection dog, then the development of drive begins at eight weeks of age. This is the type of drive you need for a detection dog: the dog must be ball-mad—you throw the ball a hundred times, and the dog is still going to keep getting it, with little loss of enthusiasm. If you throw the ball in the bushes, the dog should be searching non-stop until it gets the ball without encouragement, even if it takes twenty minutes.

If the ball is left with the dog, it will spend its day carrying it around and dropping it at your feet to throw it again. If you place the ball on the other side of a wire fence, you want the dog digging, barking, and putting paws through the fence but not leaving. The same should occur if you put the ball in a tree that the dog cannot reach. The necessity for this drive is so you can carry out long searches without having to worry about motivating the dog all the time. Even after a big day when the dog is tired, you can still do more searches. This drive is developed environmentally and also from the dog's genetic base and breed characteristics.

So, here are some exercises to help develop drive in your dog. When you first get your puppy at around eight weeks, after it has settled in, you can start by playing games with it using, for example, a tennis ball on a string. You can encourage the pup to play and fight for the ball with retrieval and other actions. When you have finished the game, put the ball away until next time.

Another good game can be to place the dog behind a screen door and tease the dog with the ball from several feet away. I will then bounce the ball off the screen door, and by this stage, the pup should be losing its mind with

excitement. This frustration will quickly develop the dog's obsessive desire to get the ball.

I will also deprive the dog of the ball for a few days, then get it out and do the same exercise against the screen door. Then I place the ball in front of the door; the dog will be so frustrated that it will pull on the door to try to get its beloved ball.

The ball goes away, and then I do another session like this the next day; in this case, I have used only frustration, and the dog is now totally obsessed with getting the ball. Another tip is that if you know what detection you will be teaching your dog in, such as narcotics, then place the ball in a bag sealed with the target odour to start off the association with the narcotic smell.

Another exercise you can do to help prepare your dog for detection training is to have the dog do a passive sit when it finds the target odour. Command the dog to sit, then say a reward word such as **yes** and throw the ball at the same time. This will link the two associations. Then at a later stage, you can have a clean ball in your pocket, and when the dog finds the target odour of your other ball in the target odour, you can say **sit** and bounce the ball in front of the dog. The dog will pick this up quickly. Then you will see the dog actively searching to find the target odour and sit without any command from you. I will stop it here, as one of my future books will go deeper into detection training.

In conclusion, you will need a combination of a strong genetic base, breed characteristics, heavy socialisation, development of drive, and training to develop your ultimate dog. If any one of the above is missing, then it will affect your end result.

The first step is to ensure you know exactly what you want a dog for. You may want your dog as a pet or family guard dog or as a working law enforcement dog. Others may want a detection dog, or you may just want a dog with training potential so that you can resell it.

In the last chapter, I spoke about all the places to start looking for a dog, so now you have found one advertised, and you want to check it out. Remember to have your list of questions for the seller that covers medical history, why they are selling, etc. In most cases, you can determine on the phone if the dog has potential based on the seller's information; if things look good, then you can organise a viewing of the dog.

Remember, if you tell the seller what you want the dog for, then they will tell you either that the dog is suitable or that they don't want the dog to

go to a home like that. Instead of saying, ‘I would like the dog to be a family guard dog,’ ask, ‘Can you describe the dog for me—is it aggressive, goofy, submissive—and what’s it like with other dogs and people?’ I will get so much information from this question, and then I will ask, ‘How do you punish the dog?’ The seller may open up, telling you that the dog is great with people and will lick anyone to death, but it doesn’t like small dogs, and when it’s in trouble, the owner will yell at it and give it a clip behind the ears.

So, this dog potentially has been suppressed, is vocally dominated, and will be hand-shy, scared of raised voices, and also possibly animal-aggressive. The dog may be suitable genetically but destroyed environmentally, so it may not be suitable for a guard dog. You may be able to override some of the fears, and the dog’s ball drive may be excellent, in which case, it will still be suitable for detection training.

I have still gone out to look at many dogs I believed were write-offs on the phone, and some I have purchased and they turned out great. Others have been a waste of time, so prepare to view several dogs before you find the right one.

When I make an appointment to view an adult dog, I will get there as soon as I can—as most dogs are sold straight away, you will miss out if you’re late. After I have got most of the information from the owner, I will request the following: ‘I would love to see what the dog is like if I just approach without the owner there so I can see its personality. Is it possible you can have the dog in the yard and don’t feed the dog before I get there?’ The reason for this is that the influence of a dependent or overprotective dog on the owner is huge. With the owner holding the dog on a lead or in the front yard, the dog may have enough confidence to run at the fence and aggress and look strong and confident. Without the owner there, the dog may do nothing or hang around the door or show a playful submission. So, you may get two totally different reactions from the dog depending on the owner’s presence. With the first response mentioned, with the owner there, you may pass the dog for protection and fail the dog for detection. With the second response mentioned, without the owner there, you may fail the dog for protection and pass the dog for detection.

In my next book, I will be going into extensive detail on dog evaluation and psychological profile charts and testing for many types of dogs for training or rehousing. When you look at an adult dog, in most cases, you are limited to

the number of tests you can do at the dog's home with the owner there. Some owners don't take it too well if you show up with a body-bite suit for a full evaluation of the dog to see if it is suitable. This is where some more discreet tests can be done to work out the dog's potential. You can also ask the seller whether you can bring it back in a few days if the dog doesn't work out and offer to pay a fee for the inconvenience. Most sellers love this idea as it's the best way to ensure the dog has a great home and is not going to be resold or taken to the pound.

When I approach the house, I will slam the car door as I'm closing it or whistle so the dog can hear. I will then look for the many reactions the dog has. The reactions may range from no suspicion and ignoring me to hectic aggression from behind the fence. If I'm looking for a dog for training as a guard or law enforcement dog, I want high suspicion and for the dog to be confident enough to run to the fence barking with deep, guttural aggression. Hair standing up on the back occurs when the dog tries to make itself look bigger, and it is defensive body language that also comes with a host of other behaviours such as hectic barking and having ears pinned back. These behaviours suggest the dog is defensive with an element of fear-based aggression to the threat. The lack of confidence may be as it is on its own, but it may be different when the owner is with it. If you give this dog a small threat with eye contact and a sharp movement, then freeze and run away, you will find the dog will chase after you down the fence line. The difference with the aggression is that the fear will be less, and the defence will be a little higher. As you have darted off, the dog's confidence increases, and so does its prey drive to chase.

I have seen many dogs that will stand well back in the yard and bark as they lack confidence, and yet with a small agitation session of two minutes and a win, the dog is a totally different dog.

You may also come across very dominating dogs that will stare straight through you and give very little display behaviour except for a slow walk and deep growl. I find that although these dogs may do bite work, they are very arrogant with the handler as they are mostly unsocialised.

You may find other dogs run up to the fence and are all excited and happy, with a great attitude as well. Many dogs have a great genetic base for protection training but have been well socialised with people, so the suspicion is not there, and this is when you will need to do a suspicion test on the dog to see how it reacts. As you are still on the other side of the fence, I would then hit the

fence with the back of my hand near the dog and retreat sharply to try to get a reaction, as some dogs may only respond with aggression to a little extra pressure.

Signs of high levels of fear in a dog are hair standing up on shoulders that continues to the base of the tail, hectic aggression with a high-pitched bark or squeal, ears pinned flat against the head, peeling the lips up only to show front teeth, or the tail puffed out and erect. Dogs that exhibit these signs may not be suitable for what you want. The fearful dogs will develop a strong dependency and, in their own environment, may look and act normal until they are exposed to a new environment or stimulus, when they will revert back to being fearful.

Once you have a basic profile on the dog and can establish that the dog is confident or has potential, you can do some more tests to see if it will make the grade.

I would not consider a fearful or highly submissive dog with slow recovery as a candidate for your ultimate dog. Many have tried in the past, and although they may make some progress, dogs like these are near-impossible to train as anything more than a family pet. As a professional, I can ask the owner to hold the dog on-lead so I can do basic agitation or a stalk test to see the reaction; some will explode with aggression, confirming they have the potential for more training. I will not, in this book, show you agitation tests for the dog as, if you get it wrong, you may get chewed up.

Further tests can be used to figure out what drives the dog has for the purpose of training.

You may want a law enforcement dog and find one that has great aggression but the motivation of a wombat with no food drive and no ball drive, so if you can't motivate it, then the training program will fail, and most of your training will be about trying to get the dog interested.

The four categories that all tests will fit into are similar to the puppy tests.

1. Positive response to stimuli.
2. Fear or nervous response to stimuli.
3. Aggressive response to stimuli.
4. Focus intensity and recovery timeframe.

Again, you can grade the dog how you wish to in each category, and the final results provide your full profile of the dog in initial testing. If you are satisfied

that the dog has great potential from here, then there is a second series of extensive tests to do as well in the next fourteen days.

Have the owner of the dog perform the first test so you can observe the interaction and also how the dog is treated. You don't want to take food away from a strange dog in case you get bitten, so ask the owner to do it. The below tests will give you either a pass or a fail. If the drive is low and the potential is bad, then thank the seller and move on to the next dog. If the below tests are passed, then you can move on to the second lot of tests.

1. Observe the dog's interaction with the owner; is the dog happy, defensive, scared, or independent?
2. Ask the owner to show you any obedience commands the dog may know. You will see how the owner trains their dog and with what equipment, and if they are hard or dominating over the dog.
3. Ask the owner to put the dog in a *sit/stay* position and walk away so you can see what the owner does if the dog gets up.
4. Ask the owner to raise their hand above their head in front of the dog and swing their hand down to the dog's face, stopping just short. Does the dog cower, blink, or is there no reaction?
5. Ask the owner to pick up a stick in front of the dog and raise it above their head.
6. Ask the owner to put the dog back in *sit/stay* and approach the dog at a fast pace, front on.
7. Ask the owner to raise their voice in a deep, guttural manner near the dog. When dogs have been smacked, the owner usually raises their voice, walks aggressively to the dog, and smacks it, so the dog may respond with the same fear to points four, five, and/or six.
8. Ask the owner to get a bowl of food for the dog and place it in front of the dog and then, after a few seconds, take the bowl away. Does the dog accept this or show aggression and possession over the food?
9. Ask the owner to get the dog's favourite toy and throw the ball for it to grade the dog's drive.
10. Ask the owner to get a dog rope and play tug-o-war with the dog to grade intensity.

Perform additional tests to check for stability, noise, and touch, and you can get a reading to see what the dog is like with body sensitivity, nervousness,

suspicion, and anxiety. There are other areas of behaviour, including the different types of aggression, dependency, keenness of the dog to learn, or how stubborn the dog is. If you are looking at dogs that have got aggression, then don't do the tests that involve close contact, or you may just get bitten.

1. Walk outside the yard and then walk back in.
2. Praise the dog and place a lead on it, then walk back out the gate. This is to see the excitement levels or stress of the dog and focus on the handler or the outside world.
3. Walk the dog past a house that has dogs in the yard to see its aggression level, pulling, sniffing, and body language.
4. If the dog shows aggression, place it in a *sit/stay* position about twenty feet from the other dog and check focus and response to your commands.
5. Take the dog back to the yard and gently run your hands over its head and shoulders and down its body, checking for relaxing composure or a stressed state.
6. Lift one leg up and put it down, and stroke the tail.
7. Rub the ears and lift the lips or open the dog's mouth.
8. Make a loud noise with a newspaper hitting a wall or table near the dog while the owner holds on to it on-lead. This is to test for fear and reaction and, most importantly, recovery time.
9. Open up an umbrella in front of the dog.
10. Both you and the owner walk out the front gate, leaving the dog behind to check dependency and stress or barking to get out.

The first ten tests with the owner handling the dog give you an overall profile of the dog, and the next ten cover how the dog interacts and tests for stress and being handled. The next group of tests is to check the drives of the dog for training.

1. Throw a ball across the yard while the dog is on-lead and release the dog after the ball has stopped (ball is live prey).
2. Throw the ball up in the air or bounce it off a wall, then hold the ball to check the reaction of the dog (ball is live prey).
3. Walk around with the ball in your hand, held out at around chest height, to check if the dog follows you everywhere or leaves (ball is live prey).

4. Check the dog's reaction when you try to take the ball from it. Does it drop the ball at your feet or run away with it so you have to pry it out of its mouth?
5. Hold up a tennis ball in front of you to see the dog's reaction and focus. Is the dog hypnotised by the ball, or does it have only limited interest? (Ball is dead prey.)
6. Have the owner hold the dog on-lead as you walk away with the ball and place it down out of sight of the dog. After one minute's wait, release the dog to see its interest in dead prey over time. You will be checking for intensity of search, including sight, smell, and speed (ball is dead prey).
7. Place the ball under a heavy pot, bin, rock, or another item with the dog out of sight. After one minute, release the dog and say, 'Where's the ball?' Check for drive and length of search, if any, as some dogs will only respond to live prey. Check drive for trying to get to the ball, including digging, chewing, etc. (ball is dead prey).
8. Place the ball on the other side of the fence line and release the dog to check the intensity and timeframe the dog stays at the fence line (ball is dead prey).
9. Place the dog behind a fence or screen door and bounce the ball off the screen to check intensity and frustration levels (ball is live prey).
10. Have the owner hold the dog on-lead, show the dog a treat and a ball, and walk across the yard, placing them down side by side. Release the dog to see which one it goes for first or if it eats the treat and then grabs the ball.
11. Have the owner hold the dog while you place a ball across the yard, walk back to the dog, show it a treat, and place several treats before the ball to check if the dog searches for all treats first or goes for the ball.
12. Hold food up near your face to check focus, intensity, and timeframe. Give the dog the food to check if it snaps it out of your hand or is gentle.
13. With the dog off-lead, walk around holding food by your left side to check if the dog mirrors your movements.
14. Have the owner hold the dog on the lead while you place food down under a pot or bowl to check intensity and search time.
15. If possible, form large distractions around the dog while you are offering food to check distraction levels.
16. Have the owner hold the dog and then, with a dog rope toy, swing it around to check the dog's drive. Let the dog grab the toy and play some tug-o-war to check intensity and fighting drive; let the dog win.



17. Have the owner hold the dog while you stir the dog up with the rope, run across the yard, and have the dog released to see speed and bite on the tug, plus intensity. Let the dog win.
18. Place the dog away for ten minutes, then place the ball and the tug in a tree or at a height just out of the dog's reach. Let the dog out and check for wind scenting, focus, and intensity.

As a dog trainer, you have your toolkit of tricks to get the most out of training your dog, which includes treats, toys, leads, etc.; squeaky noises to motivate; hand praise and vocal praise; your body language; clusters of associations; frustration; clickers; and other markers, just to name a few. When you choose a dog with the right genetic base and a collection of natural drives that has been well socialised, you are well on your way to having your ultimate dog.

If the foundation is weak here, then you will be fighting a never-ending battle to train your dog, trying to compensate with motivation and confidence building. I have seen many people work with unsuitable dogs, and it will only bring heartache as more time is spent developing the dog than training it and, in the end, you will have a dog with limited potential.



Gaz at the University of the Sunshine Coast with Snowy the lizard egg detection dog and Maya and Archie the koala-detection dogs. Maya is on the cover of the *Ultimate Dog* book.

## **Dog Trainers and Tools of the Trade**

**T**here are many ways to train a dog and, in the past, people would use a variety of tools to work with dogs to get the desired behaviour. With the current involvement of the RSPCA and other organisations in the dog-training industry, they are trying to push totally correction-free training. So, in the past, we were all dog trainers; nowadays, we are classified according to what type of dog trainer we are. The two most common types are the balanced dog trainer and the pure-positive dog trainer.

### **The Balanced Dog Trainer**

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I first must let you know that I am a balanced dog trainer. In many years of training, this name was not known until new types of trainers started to appear with many different methods. It led, several years ago, to dog trainers not being able to just call themselves dog trainers, as members of the public were starting to ask what type of dog trainer someone was and whether they used choke chains and other questions like this. A lot of this was pushed by welfare organisations and dog trainers' groups promoting their methodology.

The balanced dog trainer will teach the dog boundaries with the use of both praise and punishment. In other words, during the training of a dog, the balanced trainer will use food and praise and pats as rewards for the desired behaviours. However, if the dog displays an undesirable behaviour, then the balanced trainer may distract the dog and continue with positive motivation, but if the dog continues to ignore the trainer, then they may give a small correction. The correction used may be a quick jerk motion of the lead that is attached to a choke chain or collar.

With the combination of praise and correction, the dog will understand its boundaries. In a ten-minute training session, the praise, motivation, and treats

may make up over 80% of the session, with another 18% being neutral time (time without any praise or correction). This then leaves only about 2% where the dog may need correction. The balanced trainer will only utilise a correction in a limited manner. This methodology is great for teaching commands such as heel, sit, drop, and breaking from the stay.

The balanced trainer will also not discriminate with any training tool but keep an open mind to all that is available. Many dogs are trained on a collar, and others require a choke chain. If you have a dog with high pain tolerance, you may decide to utilise a pinch collar or electric collar. In the next chapter, I will review all these items.

As an example, if you're working with a law enforcement dog, you may find the drive is so strong to get the decoy that you can give very hard corrections on a collar or choke chain, and the dog ignores it, so you will need something else to shape their behaviour. Other dogs can have very high animal aggression, and no amount of yelling or distraction or offering the dog a treat will stop this so, again, the balanced trainer will use correction methods in accordance with the breed and character of the dog being trained.

If a dog only requires a correction level of a three out of ten, and you give the dog a six, then you are being cruel. If the dog only requires two or three corrections in a session and you give it ten corrections, you are being cruel.

The balanced trainer should not be confused with harsh and cruel dog trainers. I have seen a few over the years who disgust me with the level of correction they use. Although they may utilise the same tools as a balanced trainer, their training methods are based on total dominance over the dog. The dog will perform only through fear of being hit or after extreme use of corrections. These trainers normally have limited experience or only see the dog as a commercial product, and they will be hard on the dog to get fast results for the client.

In summary, the balanced dog trainer is my number one pick to have your dog trained for operational work. A dog trained with balanced training will understand boundaries and also establish the dog's handler as the leader of the pack.

## **Positive-Only Dog Trainer**

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The positive-only dog trainer will only use praise and treats by rewarding the behaviours they want in the dog and ignoring the bad traits. The positive trainer

is against all forms of punishment and correction, so no choke chains and no forms of correction are used.

This methodology has become more popular over the years and is usually pushed by welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and some dog trainer groups.

The trainer will have lots of treats to get the behaviour and obedience they want from the dog, and trainers will use these methods for teaching trick dogs or for obedience competitions. If you have a happy, food-motivated dog, these tactics work well to achieve behaviours with a happy attitude. Positive training will work well in the training of detection dogs because for a dog to be suitable for detection work, the dog is tested for high retrieval drive and food motivation, so rewarding the dog with treats and toys when the target odour is located is a good training technique.

Positive trainers, when teaching a dog not to jump up, will turn their back on the dog while telling the dog to sit and then reward the dog with a treat. The positive trainer will always condemn any training method or dog trainer that uses any form of force on the dog.

It sounds great—everyone has lots of fun learning together, so for teaching tricks or detection or obedience and agility in the ring, positive-only training can be very successful.

Now let's look at reality; I know this will receive some criticism from the positive trainers' camp, but as I said before, I want to give you the facts without the sugar-coating.

Many dogs today are injured or have been killed or put down as a direct result of positive-only training. Firstly, teaching a dog with positive motivation is excellent training and develops a great attitude in the dog, but this is not the problem. Because the dog is given no boundaries, the dog will respond in accordance with its motivation for treats. The problem is that not all dogs are happy, well-socialised dogs that will do anything for a treat or a toy. The positive methods may be excellent in the dog obedience ring, but in reality, it's a different story.

As an example, not one totally positively trained law enforcement dog will work in a realistic real-world environment. Out of the thousands of police dogs and working dogs trained, zero would pass any certification using positive-only training methods.

You may say that dolphins are trained in a positive-only way, and you would be correct; however, dolphins are very social animals. They are removed from

the wild and placed in isolation tanks, then bribed with food to do tricks. In other words, negatives are placed on dolphins through environmental isolation so that the training can be positive-only.

Many dogs may be animal-aggressive or mistreated, or not food-motivated. The dog may have anxiety, fear, aggression, dependency, or a high distraction level that will override treats for behaviours.

The most dangerous training method the positive-only trainers will use is on animal-aggressive dogs. I have seen many try to stop this problem, from welfare groups to trainers, and remember, they do not give any correction. The method is typically that, when the dog starts aggressing, the trainer tells the dog to sit and distracts the dog with a toy and maybe turns the dog around and walks away. This will raise not only the frustration levels of the dog but also the aggression. Instead of the dog being sorted out on the spot with a correction to stop the behaviour, many sessions of training can be completed without the dog ever being fixed.

Welfare organisations will not allow their staff to use a choke chain, so when they try—and fail—with their positive-only methods, they then put the dog on medication; then, when that doesn't work, the dog can't be rehomed and is put to sleep. I have many stories about the failures of the positive-only training methodology being used on aggressive dogs, and I'll share just one more.

A welfare group had a staffy cross that was a beautiful dog but had high animal aggression. In the time of their positive-only training sessions, this cute little staffy cross attacked several dogs, causing big injuries and pain to these innocent dogs. The staffy cross dragged a dog's leg through a cage, and that dog was put to sleep due to the injuries. This staffy cross killed another dog. In the end, this sweet little staffy cross was put down because they would not consider using corrections to fix the problem.

I have witnessed many animal-aggressive dogs that were under instruction from a positive trainer when, after several private lessons, the problem was still big. I would come along, and in one session, the problem was fixed. This is because I will use a choke chain, and I will give the dog a correction if necessary, so the dog figures out very quickly what the boundaries are. I can teach an alternative behaviour to the same situation. There is a place for positive-only trainers, and that is to enjoy their dogs in the obedience ring and doing tricks. When they try to push their methods onto people with aggressive dogs, however, they are in fact endangering the community.

I have known many positive-only trainers over the years, and when they are training with all their positive methods, and the dog gets distracted, often they will slip in a small correction or two to enforce the exercise—but shhh, don't tell anyone.

Conclusively, positive-only training has its place and can be very good in shaping behaviours, but you also need balance and to set boundaries for your dog. We now have an entire generation of dog owners brainwashed into not disciplining their dogs which, as a result, creates many problems for dog owners.

There is so much equipment available to dog trainers and handlers that will assist you in training your dog. I want to go over some of the most popular of the vast amount available and give you a balanced view of each product. You will be able to decide which is the best type of equipment to purchase and create a checklist to get each item that is compatible with your dog and training.

When I started out, I could not get any decent dog gear, so I had a lot of my stuff custom-made to suit what I wanted in my professional career; other items I imported from specialist stores in Europe. I also went out of my way to get the best of the best and the latest designs in everything from collars and harnesses to body-bite suits. I soon had a collection of hundreds of dog-training items in my equipment room for every occasion and found that many of the items were never or rarely used. So here is some info to help you get the best equipment suited to you.

Pet stores usually sell cheap rubbish made from overseas factory lines, from cheap choke chains to collars that snap in half at the clip. I would stay away from most training equipment from the pet store, but it is a great place to stock up on other items, including shampoos, bedding, bowls, and toys.

If you go online, you will find many dedicated canine equipment stores that specialise in top-of-the-range law enforcement training equipment, from body-bite suits to collars and electric collars, or you can custom-make your own lead and collars to suit your needs. My recommendation is to use a pet store for basics like toys and bedding and specialist canine stores for everything else except for a few custom-made leads and collars made by a craftsman.

Some trainers will recommend that you should only train with a collar or a choke chain. Others will be disgusted that you use an electric collar or pinch collar, so the opinions will be coming at you thick and fast. The reality is that all these items in training can be cruel and abusive, but only if

you use them that way. All items in training can be very humane and deliver a great attitude in the dog if used correctly. So, it's all about how you use the item in training.

One person may walk their dog on a collar and give the dog over 100 corrections on a walk, while another may have the same type of dog and use a choke chain and give only five corrections before the dog then walks beside the handler for the rest of the walk. Every dog is different and has different pain tolerance levels and different levels of distraction. You may be able to work with your dog on a collar most of the time, but on other occasions, you may need a pinch collar.

The dog may have a high level of animal aggression or high drive for sniffing the ground, and this will play a part in what equipment you will use. If your dog has high food and toy drive, then you may be able to work the dog on a collar.

The bottom line is, do not be against any dog equipment; all of the different items, if used correctly, can be wonderful, but every item is not suitable for every dog.

Here are tips on a few items.

### **Daily Collar**

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A collar on a dog is a standard piece of dog gear; in most cases, dogs will wear a collar every day of their life. The collar is also used to hold tags with the dog's name and your phone number in case it gets lost. When fitting a collar, ensure it is on not too tight but tight enough that you can't pull it back over the dog's head. You should be able to slide your fingers under the collar, which will be enough space for the dog's comfort.

Before I get into the collars for training, I just want to cover some tips on the dog's daily collar. When choosing a collar, try to avoid the thick, heavysset leather collars or collars over two inches wide. Dogs that wear these collars can develop hot spots under the collar as the collar can hold a lot of moisture. Dogs can also develop an allergic reaction to some dyes used in the manufacture of the collar. If you have a collar that's on too tight, in extreme cases, the collar cuts into the dog's neck, and some may require veterinary treatment. There also have been terrible cases where a dog is fitted with a collar that is too loose, and as a result, a second dog gets its lower jaw caught in the collar, causing horrific



injuries. Heavy-duty collars can act as a noose for the dog, with many dogs getting caught jumping over fences and hanging themselves. Other dogs can get their collar caught and, as they twist to try to escape, the collar twists and chokes the dog.

My advice for a daily collar is to get a cloth collar with a plastic clip of around 25 mm wide. If the dog, through misadventure, gets caught on a fence or with another dog's jaw, then the collar should snap off, saving the dog's life. This is not the same collar you use when training or taking the dog for a walk.

In obedience, you can use a 25 mm-wide leather or canvas collar clipped to your obedience lead. The ring is the weakest point on the collar, so if the ring tears the leather, you want the ring to slide and not separate from the collar. Some collars have the ring attached with a separate piece of leather; when this tears, you will lose your dog.

For protection, I would recommend a 50 mm-wide single layer of leather or canvas as a collar. The double layers become very stiff and can be pulled over the dog's head. The inside of the collar can have a felt layer for the dog's comfort, and the clips should be heavy-duty stainless steel. For safety when working dogs in training or operational duties, always clip your lead to the collar and also use a choke chain for backup. I have seen, many times, dogs aggressing on the lead and spinning around, only to pop the collar. You can also use collars 25 mm wide, which are also very strong and are a good choice for operational work. A heavy-duty dog collar will outlive your dog and last for twenty years if you look after it.

A collar is a great choice for working with puppies and new dogs to shape behaviour with food and positive motivation. If you have a high-energy dog with a strong drive, you may find you will be giving multiple corrections, and the dog just ignores you, so you may need to use stronger corrections with other types of equipment. I will always, with repetition and positive motivation, try to get the behaviours followed by using small then larger corrections using a collar if the dog needs it. This will be done before I move to a choke chain.

If a dog only needs a correction level of three out of ten and you give it an eight, then you are being cruel. You need to evaluate the dog and use only what is necessary and get the balance right so you can achieve results with a happy attitude.



## **Lasso or Training Collar**

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The most common types of lassos are those that use the rope with the metal ring on the end, and when I was a kennel operator, this was the greatest bit of equipment I had. As I was moving dogs all the time from clients to kennel and hydrobathing, etc., the lasso was very convenient. The lasso is also much safer when handling aggressive dogs; many handlers have been bitten trying to get a collar or choke chain on a dog. I will use the lasso and a stick to place it over an aggressive dog's head in a kennel, allowing me to be at a safe distance on the other side of the gate. In every kennel I have been to around the world, from private to government pounds, animal control or military, the kennel staff always have the lasso to move dogs around.

In training, the lasso will pull tight on the dog's neck and then release, much the same as a choke chain, so the lasso is a good choice of product that sits somewhere between a collar and a choke chain. When testing out several dogs in protection, I have used the lasso, as it was much faster than fitting each dog with a collar.

## **Choke Chain**

And now the big one, the check chain or choke chain. This is the single biggest argument among all dog trainers. Balanced trainers will use choke chains if needed, and positive-only trainers will never use one and tell everyone that they are cruel. Dog welfare organisations will also push to ban the choke chains, using propaganda to define them as cruel. The campaigns against choke chains by welfare organisations have been so big that some companies or individuals of the public will not use any trainer that uses a choke chain. We now have dog trainers that actively promote that they don't use a choke chain with slogans like 'Choke Chain Means Pain' or 'the Gentle Modern Method', etc.

Like any equipment, the choke chain can be cruel or very gentle, depending on how it is used. If you place a choke chain on a dog and then you go to the park with the dog pulling and choking itself the entire way, this may be considered cruel even though you gave the dog no corrections at all. You may also walk the dog to the park giving multiple corrections to the dog on the choke chain, and the dog keeps pulling. This is because the drive to get to the park overrides the correction given, and the dog may not understand why it's getting all the corrections.

The dog will be distracted and excited and may feel threatened by other dogs' smells or be dependent and overprotective on a walk to the park—then the handler is yelling at the dog to heel and is giving corrections. So, in this case, the handler has put the dog into this position of stress and mass distraction, and as a result, the dog cops more corrections. So now, the choke chain is being overused due to the handler's mistake of placing the dog in this situation before the dog understands what is expected of it.

When you place a choke chain on a dog, hold one ring and pass the chain through the ring so it becomes a lasso. When you hold the chain in front of your face, it should be in the shape of a letter p when you place it over the dog's head. The reason for this is that when the dog is on your left-hand side, the chain will always become loose as the ring slides down the chain. If you hold the chain in front of you in the shape of the letter q, then when on the dog, the ring cannot slide up, so it can choke the dog by not releasing instantly. The choke chain should be loose on the dog nearly the entire time. When you do a training session with your dog on a choke chain, start off in a quiet environment first, such as your backyard. You can start off with food training and highly motivational praise to get a happy attitude. You can start the dog off in a sitting position and then start some heeling; in this case, you have eliminated a great deal of distraction.

When doing a turn, you may crouch down closer to the dog and at the same time say *heel* or whistle or use food to get a behaviour without correction. When giving a correction with a choke chain, firstly have the chain loose around the dog's neck, and with a quick jerk action on the lead, snap the lead towards you and release immediately. If the dog is pulling on the choke chain, you can push your hands forward, holding the lead to create a loose choke chain for a second, and then snap back. In a ten-minute heeling training session, you may have eight minutes of vocal praise, two minutes of physical praise, thirty seconds of offering treats, and the choke chain is always loose for the entire session except for maybe ten corrections, which will account for around five seconds. The correction used is only enough for the dog to learn and should not be overused or severe. The advantage of using a choke chain is that you can precisely mark a behaviour and set boundaries very quickly. Once the dog understands the behaviour in a quiet area, then do the exercises with small, then larger distractions. The choke chain is also so valuable when marking bad behaviour problems such as jumping up or barging in when a

door is open. A choke chain is also a great tool for animal aggression problems.

In conclusion, the choke chain is a great tool in dog training if used correctly and is fast and efficient. It can be misused, but that all comes down to the trainer. A lot of dogs don't need to be worked on a choke chain at all, and puppies should not be worked on choke chains. The choke chain can be used on all young and adult dogs, from toys to giants. On a puppy, I will use a collar, then as the pup gets older, I will use a collar and food motivation, and then I will use a choke chain to refine exercises and establish boundaries.

### Head Halters

The head halter can be a great tool to teach focus and for the dog not to pull on the lead. Many elderly people have the head halter on their dog, and they all say it's the only thing that controls their dog. As the dog tries to run forward, the head halter will pull the dog's head back, so this will restrict its pulling.

One issue with the head halter is that when a dog is overexcited, it can start to walk like a crab or spin around and pull backwards. The head halter is also the piece of equipment your dog is most likely to escape from. I recommend the head halter on beginner dogs to develop good focus towards the handler. You can guide a dog's head towards you with the gentle guidance of the lead and also with food treats. I recommend you use the halter in a quiet area and also give the dog time to get used to having something strapped to its head. You can also use the halter in conjunction with another lead and collar; this also works well as you have two leads on the dog, one to the collar and one to the halter. The dog may be okay on the lead but just pulls every so often, so instead of a correction on the collar or choke chain, you may just give low-level guidance or correction on the head halter.

**Please note that pinch/prong collars are not legal for use in some states. It is also illegal to import pinch/prong collars into Australia. Please consult the relevant animal welfare organisation in your state to check the legal status of these devices.**

### Pinch Collar

When I first looked at a photo of a pinch collar back in the 1980s, I was horrified, thinking about how cruel anyone had to be to use this. When I

first picked one up, I was against them immediately—this is because I had no understanding of the pinch collar. I made my opinion based on total ignorance and without research, which is very common in the dog industry.

After watching some old VHS videotapes and reading magazines, and talking to different people about pinch collars, my attitude and opinion on them changed. I then purchased some different-sized pinch collars and started to use them on some dogs that were in training for personal protection. After fitting the pinch collar correctly, I started out with very small corrections and found the dogs responded so much quicker in obedience than with a choke chain. A handler can give a dog a hard correction on a collar with sometimes little to no effect. On a choke chain, a firm correction can be given, but on a pinch collar, the correction is much gentler. When I take a dog out on a choke chain, the dog can start off dragging me down the street, but with a pinch collar, I can hold the lead with one finger.

The way the pinch collar works is that it distributes even pressure around the dog's neck without choking the dog. As the dog starts to pull, the pressure increases, so in most cases, the dog backs off. I found the big difference with doing obedience with a pinch collar is that I will use fewer corrections and much lighter corrections, and the dogs end up with a much better attitude. I will not use a pinch collar on pups or soft character dogs, and even on hard character dogs, I will firstly condition the dog and start off with very light correction.

The pinch collar works very well on strong character dogs or dogs with high drive and also outright stubborn dogs that clearly know an exercise but just refuse to do it.

In law enforcement circles, the pinch collar is an essential piece of equipment as the dogs in training have very high drive and pain tolerance. A common exercise the pinch collar is used for is to control the dog in a *sit/stay* position while the decoy is close by or for assisting in teaching the release command in bite work. Dogs in training for bite work may have such a huge drive to chase and bite the decoy that they will deliberately disobey commands because their focus is so strongly on the decoy.

The pain tolerance of the dog also increases massively, so it is common to see handlers yelling at a dog and giving huge corrections on a choke chain for the dog to let go. I have also seen many handlers hang their dog on a choke chain as it's the only way the dog will let go of the decoy. This is where a

controlled correction on the pinch collar can work by twisting the chain so the pinch collar clamps down and the dog releases.

Not all dogs have this high drive, and they only amount to a small percentage of the dog population; not all dogs require a pinch collar, but some do, depending on the training. This does not mean that all dogs in training for personal protection must be trained on a pinch collar; many can be totally trained on a flat collar only, but for some dogs, you will need more than a flat collar. For problem-solving, I recommend a pinch collar for animal-aggressive dogs to establish a *sit/stay* position around stimuli.

The pinch collar can be easily misused, and the handler can give very hard corrections on a dog that doesn't need them. I have seen a dog on which the owner left the pinch collar, and because it was so tight, the skin grew into it, and the pinch collar had to be removed by a vet. The same can also happen with a choke chain or flat collar. The bottom line is to use a pinch collar only if it's required; try a flat collar or a choke chain first. Condition the dog to the collar, and it will be a great training tool for you, or it could be a cruel tool—it's up to you.

**Please note that the legality of electric collars varies from state to state; their use is completely forbidden in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, and they can only be used in certain circumstances for containment in New South Wales. Please consult the relevant animal welfare organisation in your state to check the legal status of these devices.**

### Electric Collar

The electric collar would have to be the most hated tool by a large majority of people, as it is the most misunderstood piece of equipment. Just saying the phrase 'electric collar', you immediately think of a high voltage shock to a poor, innocent puppy dog and wonder how anyone could be so cruel. You might wonder what purpose such a cruel device could serve and think that the people using it must be reported. Electric collars are banned in many areas and some countries, with RSPCA and other groups actively trying to ban them.

On the other side of the argument, many trainers swear by them, and they are an essential tool for training dogs in many different areas, such as

search and rescue, police dog training, competition obedience dog training, and sheepdog training.

Everyone has an opinion about electric collars, and most are negative, so now I will try to give you some more information so you can make up your own mind. I firstly will clarify my involvement with electric collars and my opinion on their use, and then how they can be used and misused.

So here is my professional opinion on electric collars: electric collars are very cruel if used incorrectly, and for this reason, I oppose their use. However, if the electric collar is used correctly, they are a wonderful training tool that will cut down the number of corrections used in other methodologies.

I fully support the electric collar if used correctly in training dogs. I first used electric collars in the 1980s, and then in 1990, I was trained to use them correctly at West Virginia Canine College. I used the collars on some East Berlin Wall dogs that were imported into America when the wall came down and on several police dogs in training.

I was also trained to use the collars on search-and-rescue bloodhounds. A trail would be set up for the bloodhound where the tracklayer would run a mile trail. A second person with a dog on-lead would do a cross-track and stand with the dog a few feet off the trail. When the handler and dog came past, the bloodhound went off the track to greet the person and dog, and this was the point when the dog was given a pulse on the collar. The dog immediately showed avoidance and went back onto the trail to follow the tracklayer. After another session, the dog then ignored everything except the track layer's scent and was able to track through many distractions and ignore them all.

In police work, the electric collar was a valuable tool for off-lead bite work, giving great control over the dog from a great distance away. Since then, I have mostly used the electric collar on dogs with animal aggression problems, and this was a great way of solving the problem quickly without creating a bad association with the handler for the dog.

Other dogs I have completely cured of their problems include chicken killers, dogs with dog aggression and people aggression, dogs that are digging holes, jumping fences, eating bait, nuisance barking, and many more. I have also taught many exercises in training the *heel*, *stay*, and *release* commands, and many more. So, I support the correct use of electric collars, and I oppose the misuse of them. I will outline some more details so you can make up your own mind.

The collar has a setting of one to six or ten, with one being the weakest. The collar is fitted with a little box around the size of a box of matches. There are two metal probes that stick out of the collar and are around one inch long. When you place the collar on the dog, the box sits under the dog's neck so the probes make contact with the dog's skin. The handset has a few different settings, so you can adjust the pulse level from weak to strong. When you press the button, you have a choice of different types of pulses, from one quick, sharp pulse to a series of mini pulses. The collar also has a praise button that emits a ringing noise that you train the dog to associate with your praise.

In obedience, you can use the collar with very small pulses every time the dog leaves the heel position and use the praise when it is walking beside you. This low-level pulse is much more humane than a person giving corrections on a choke chain.

If the dog has animal aggression problems, you can pulse it on or off the lead by setting up a training session. Have a dog behind a fence thirty feet away, and when your animal-aggressive dog locks eye contact with it, pulse your dog. You will find the dog will get the association very quickly.

If you do the same exercise with the dog too close to the other dog, then the stress levels of the dog will be high, and you will need to use a much higher pulse, so start off at a big distance. In problem-solving, you can fit the collar to the dog and watch and wait for it to do the bad behaviour, such as run to the fence and bark or dig a hole and pulse the dog at the exact moment it does this.

In law enforcement training, the collar is the most valuable piece of equipment, giving the trainer greater control of the dog off-lead in protection work, from calling off an attack to releasing from the bite. Most dogs in training for law enforcement have very high drive and high pain tolerance, with the desire to bite being huge. I have seen many trainers over the years who have these dogs mid-bite of the decoy, and they are hanging the dog on a choke chain or pinch collar to get the dog to release, so this is the drive you may be dealing with. The same dog on the electric collar may just need a pulse or two to release with no other stresses. The dog is then rewarded with a re-bite and pulsed again to release. After only a couple of training sessions, you can yell *leave!* and the dog releases without the pulse being given.

The collar can also be used on soft character dogs to shape behaviours; in so many ways, the electric collar is a great training tool.

Now let's look at the bad side: if the handler turns the collar up too high on a soft character dog, this is very cruel, and the result will be the dog yelping. This is the most common mistake that is made with electric collars. If the problem the dog has is stress-related, then the collar will just put more stress on the dog.

The collar should only be used by professionals who know what they are doing. If members of the public use the collar, they should go through proper training before use. A person who does research by watching videos and reading books on the correct use of an electric collar will get fantastic results and a happy attitude in the dog, but if you don't know what you're doing, then don't use an electric collar until you have some type of training.

### **Electric Anti-Bark Collar**

The electric anti-bark collar is similar to the electric collar; however, there is no remote control, and the pulse is delivered another way. The collar has two probes that deliver the pulse and a third plastic knob that activates the collar when it detects vibration. The collar is fitted so this plastic knob is over the dog's voice box; when the dog barks, the vibrations trigger the knob, and a pulse is given. The collar has a cut-out switch, so it may only give a pulse when activated a minute apart; otherwise, the dog will be continually zapped if it yelps.

I have used these collars for many years, and they are fantastic at stopping barking dogs instantly and also for fixing animal aggression. When I had dogs come into the kennel complex for boarding, the dog may be highly animal-aggressive, trying to attack other dogs through the kennel. I would place a collar on them, and the change was remarkable. The most common reaction was that if the dog aggressed, it felt the pulse and stopped for a second. If the dog then aggressed again and got another pulse, the dog then walked around the kennel and got a drink of water. Aggressed again—got zapped. Then the dog sat quietly in its kennel, but if it decided to growl at another dog, it felt another zap. For the rest of the boarding, the dog would not be aggressing any other dogs and, in most cases, the collar could be taken off the next day. In the dog's brain, it created the association between aggressing another dog and pain, and after a few attempts, the dog stopped.

Now, if you had to do this with a choke chain and lead, the dog may associate the pain with the handler; the dog will be great when you're around



but animal-aggressive when you're gone. Also, note that the more you correct your dog and raise your voice, the more unsure a dog will be towards you as its handler. The collar eliminates this with the association of pain being with the aggression rather than the handler.

The barking dog is also the biggest problem for many people and local authorities, so the anti-bark collar is the best and most effective way of resolving the problem fast. The dog may bark through dependency, as it misses the owner, or because it lacks socialisation and its suspicion levels are high. In both cases, the collar will teach an alternative behaviour to the same stimuli. Once the dog gets one to four pulses, the dog will change its behaviour and be quiet.

I also want to point out that both dependency and lack of socialisation are stress-related problems, so even if you fix the barking, the dog may still be dependent, which is something that will have to be fixed separately. Other problems such as barking at the neighbour's cat are perfect problems for the anti-bark collar. I highly support the use of the anti-bark collar on most problem-barking dogs and for use by kennel operators and dog owners.

### **Citronella Spray Collar**

The citronella spray collar sprays a fine mist of citronella that is activated when the dog barks. This is the type of collar that welfare agencies recommend using to stop barking dogs.

Over the years, I have seen many clients who say the same thing: 'We tried that citronella collar, and it was useless—the dog emptied it and still barks.' The idea is that when the dog barks, the mist of citronella will distract the dog, and it will stop barking. Apparently, dogs don't like the smell of the citronella; however, I have seen plenty that could not care less. The dogs this collar will work on are dogs with a low-level barking problem, such as the dog that barks because another dog barks. The collar will distract the dog, and because the barking was not such a big deal, the dog does something else.

If the barking is based on high stress, as in a fear-based biter, in most cases, the collar is useless. Highly dependent dogs that stand at the back door and bark are dogs that a citronella spray collar will have limited success with.

There are many items promoted by different groups as highly effective problem solvers, but they never live up to their expectations. I have had several

clients that swear by them, and they have fixed the problem with their dog, but these are only a minority. Ultimately, citronella collars are a waste of money, and you will only see limited or no change in your dog unless you are of the small percentage of dog owners whose low-problem barking dog is helped by the collar.

### **Fence Containment Electric Collar**

In 1990, I checked out the first electric collar containment system in the United States. I was walking to the home of a police dog trainer who had an imported German shepherd that was a certified police dog. I had worked this dog on the body-bite suit; this was a tough dog called Rambo. As I approached the house, it had a totally unfenced backyard, and as I got to the road to cross, I noticed Rambo on the back porch. Rambo ran down the stairs, running straight at me, barking and showing aggression. I was frozen in the middle of the road, knowing that this dog was about to chew me up. Rambo ran down the grassed yard to the boundary and then just hit the brakes and stopped on the grass six feet in from the boundary and continued barking.

At this point, the owner came out and walked to me, and the dog stayed in the same position. As the owner walked up to me, he said, 'You're lucky that electric collar still works.' The owner was Mr Wayne Davis, the president of West Virginia Canine College. Since that time, I have seen many electric fences installed on properties around the country as their popularity grew. People who have containment systems usually swear by them.

This is how the system works: the property is set up with a buried wire around the boundary, connected to a box that is linked to an electric collar the dog wears. When the dog gets close to the boundary, the collar will make a warning sound, and if the dog remains there, it will give the dog a pulse. Once the dog understands this, it will stay in a totally unfenced area and stay within the boundaries that are set up.

There are also discs available that can be placed in garden beds so that when the dog tries to get into the garden, it is pulsed. These systems have been fantastic for people on large properties, and I highly recommend them as a containment system. Used correctly, you can have several dogs, large and small, all with collars on, contained to an area you choose. It is important that you train the dog so it clearly understands the boundaries.

The containment system will also come with a dog-training video and book to get the best results. Do not simply install the system and put a collar on the dog and let it figure it out itself—this would be cruel. The dog may get zapped and have no idea where it came from and get additional zaps, while other dogs may get zapped and try to run through the boundary.

The people who say the system does not work are the ones that do not train their dogs to understand. Some clients have reported to me that the dog knows it gets zapped but sprints over the boundary; the reason for this is that the dog was not shown to turn around when the warning beep goes off. Fence containment electric collars are a great system, but the training of the dog is an essential part of it.

### **Leads for Training**

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Whatever you have securing a dog—whether a collar, harness, or choke chain—is attached to some type of lead. My preference is a 20 mm-wide, 180 cm-long leather lead. I choose this as it gives me the freedom to do so much more with a dog, including giving it free space to run within a twelve-foot radius. If you want to work the dog on a short lead, then all you do is loop the six-foot lead in your hand, and it can be any size you want. I find that handlers who choose a small two-foot traffic lead are totally restricted with training options.

For protection training, I recommend a 25 mm-wide leather lead that is 180 cm long; the strongest leads I've had have been custom-made with seatbelt backing superglued to one side of the leather. Clips can be stainless steel or brass, but you don't have to get the massive clips that look more suited to securing a bull. The clip ring should be large enough to clip the collar ring and a choke chain ring. If the clip ring is too tight, then when the dog spins around, the clip can open due to the rubbing of the choker chain ring or the collar ring. I also prefer the bottom part of the clip to have a round ring that secures it to the leather lead; the tight, flat, square type always seems to tear the leather over time.

When holding the lead in protection situations, you pass your right hand through the handle and grip the lead—you can even wrap the lead around your hand a couple of times, with your other hand holding the lead further down. From here, you can slide your left hand down the lead and re-grip if needed. The best standing position when holding a dog pulling hard in

protection is the tug-o-war stance with your weight over your back leg and knees slightly bent.

If the lead is for general obedience, then I try to get the thinnest leather possible—around 15 mm wide—and a small brass clip. My custom-made obedience lead is 180 cm long and 15 mm wide, made of high-grade Australian leather. I also have used a beautiful thin choke chain that was steel-plated and the links slightly twisted so that the ring slid down perfectly. I had this choke chain sewn onto my custom lead over twelve years ago, and it is the same lead I use now. This lead has trained thousands of dogs five to seven days a week.

Out of all the equipment you may have, I highly recommend that you design and have custom-made your personal leads and collars with the highest quality leather. My personal leads and collars are Australian nut leather with seat belt material superglued to the back with a strip of felt. I have brass clips, buckles, and rivets with top-of-the-range stitching that is usually used to secure airbags in cars. I also have my gear leather-stamped and a microchip inserted.

### **Tracking and Search-and-Rescue Equipment**

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If you want to train your dog for search and rescue, here are some tips to assist you in getting the right equipment. Firstly, I have seen many people over the years who want to get involved in this kind of stuff, and it can seem like it's a good idea at the time. You have to be very committed to assisting others and spend a great deal of time training yourself to be an asset in search and rescue and not a hindrance. I firstly recommend you join the local search-and-rescue group for training in first aid, bush skills, and rescue operations before you even consider training a dog to find people. You will also have to ensure you have the proper clothing and survival packs and gather experience from search-and-rescue groups, including operational experience.

Most are very keen to start with this kind of work and then realise that it is not as exciting as they first thought.

If you've got this side covered and you want to get some gear for your dog, then here is a shopping list to get you started:

- Transport kennel with bowls and canine first aid kit.
- Leads and collars, preferably leather, so they don't get prickles stuck in them.

- A ten-metre-long tracking lead, but not made of soft cloth, as it will become full of prickles and will absorb water.
- A harness is also a must, and there are many different types of harnesses on the market. I always had one made of seatbelt material that fitted nicely to the dog with an attached jacket with *Search and Rescue K9* on both sides. I also had a lightweight harness as well. The dog gear placed on the dog can also be another association or trigger, so the dog starts to get keen as it knows what is happening.
- A good set of gloves to avoid rope burn on the lead.
- A fold-up bowl and water and canine first aid kit.
- Other useful equipment can include dog booties, neon sticks, a GPS unit to place on the dog, an HD video camera, etc.

When starting your new puppy in training, you may need a puppy harness, scent items, toys, and a food pouch that attaches to your belt. In most cases, when training tracking dogs, the only gear you need is a track layer, harness, and long line. If you are doing urban search and rescue for building collapse, then you will need more specialised equipment.

I recommend you talk with search-and-rescue groups in your area in regards to canine training and the standards they require. If there are no search-and-rescue groups in your area, then do your research online and join a club or association to get more information. Remember, in search and rescue, always follow the instructions of the police and ensure your dog is at an operational level before you volunteer to search for missing persons. People with poorly trained dogs arriving on the scene for a search can be a headache for highly qualified professionals such as police and search-and-rescue groups.

## **Personal Protection Equipment**

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If your ultimate dog is a law enforcement dog or security patrol dog, or even a family protection dog, then you're going to need a decoy. I have been a decoy for over thirty years in the training of law enforcement dogs for families, the military, prisons, and police, and the most important part of the training is having a great decoy who has experience and knows what they are doing. This also means that they have the correct equipment for the training of your dog.

In the early stages of training, you can develop drive yourself, but as the dog gets older, you will need the assistance of an experienced law enforcement trainer. Do not agitate your own dog, and do not use an inexperienced person to work your dog for protection, as this is the fastest way to wreck a dog. Also, be clear on what you want, as there are many sport dog trainers with experience, but you may end up with an equipment-happy dog that will never protect you for real but will run off-lead to bite an arm pad.

There are several ways to have your dog trained as a protection dog, and the most popular is to book the dog for a personal protection program at a dog-training kennel, which may be two to six weeks of full-time training. At the end of the program, you should see a demonstration of what your dog has learned and then follow up that training with private lessons.

The other popular way to train your dog for protection is to organise a series of private lessons with a professional dog trainer where you, as the owner, handle the dog and the trainer does the decoy work. It is important that you have a good decoy, and it's also important that the handler knows what they're doing as well to develop the dog. If you choose this method, then you may be the weakest link with your handling skills. The decoy and handler must work beautifully together, with the handler giving the correct command at the exact times to coordinate with the decoy's moves.

Verbal and physical praise is also very important for the confidence and development of the dog in training. The handler may have to correct the dog and make **sit** and **stay** commands and other exercises while the dog is stimulated by the decoy. The decoy is very important, and so is the handler, so this approach is something you must discuss with your trainer before considering.

If you seek the services of a professional, then they should have all the proper equipment to do the decoy work, and you, as the owner of the dog, may only require handler gear. I would also like to point out that many may claim to be a decoy and really have no idea what they are doing and may only have basic equipment like an arm pad.

Many dog trainers have different ways of training protection dogs, so here are a few tips before I get into a list of protection equipment. Some trainers will go overboard on the obedience training first, which can diminish drive before it's developed, or have the dog unsure of the handler if it has had continuous corrections. Others will instruct the dog or handle the dog before acting as a decoy for the same dog; this should not be done.

Other trainers will do every training session with an arm pad on, and the dog operates with prey drive to get the arm pad only, so when the dog gets to the training field, it sees and smells the arm pad and then the protection training is just a big game. Many handlers have found this out the hard way when they were attacked for real, and the dog did nothing or showed avoidance because it was the first time the dog felt threatened.

Arm pads should only be used for sport dogs and not for law enforcement training. Work out an entire training program with your trainer that includes evaluation, confidence building, development of drive, raising suspicion level, and bite development. A good trainer should be able to explain the entire process to you so you know exactly what to do as a handler, and you will see the dog progress each training session.

Equipment is important, as it has to be safe not only for the dog and handler but also for the decoy. I have had many close calls due to equipment failure or the handler showing up in flip-flops or other inappropriate gear.

The first thing is that the handler of the protection dog must have good quality footwear that fits well and has good grip. Ensure you have no loose jewellery or clothing that can get tangled up on the lead or the dog. Plan the session with the decoy first and ensure you know and can understand their instructions.

Another tip: be careful of sunscreen and moisturisers, as lotions will make the leads slippery.

As for the standard collar for a dog in protection, I recommend a leather, 50 mm-wide collar with felt backing. The double-layered leather collars become so stiff that they can pop over a dog's head. The agitation collar should only be used in training and not be the daily collar. The lead I recommend is a six-foot leather lead, 25 mm wide and stitched. Another great lead is the police dog lead that has two or three brass rings, and the handle is formed by securing the clip to one of the rings. The safety advantage is that the dog can be clipped to chain-wire fences if you get a dog that turns on you.

The buckle should be heavy-duty with a snap large enough to secure the agitation collar as well as a choke chain for backup. As a decoy working with many dogs, I have had several that have aggressed and then spun around, popping the collar off, but as the lead was also secured to a choke chain, I was safe from attack.

Some people will use harnesses for training their dogs, but I have never liked using these as a handler and especially as a decoy; the dog has more freedom, which is great but is more difficult to handle.

The choke chain backup should be high-quality stainless steel, which can be purchased from speciality stores or online. Many pet stores will only stock the cheap, crimped, overseas-made choke chains, and these are very dangerous. Another setup is to have a lead and collar on the dog and a pinch collar with a handle on it or a small tab lead. This will allow the dog to aggress on the leather collar, and when the handler wishes to enforce the *leave* command, they can use the pinch collar if needed.

If you are developing your puppy to be a future law enforcement dog, then you will need the puppy leads and collar and to develop the dog's drive with a ball or well-known Kong® toy. Rag games are also great as you only have to use a tea towel or sack for tug-o-war games. You can also use tugs that are a rolled-up sack in the shape of a tube. Remember: these are just games between the owner and the dog.

Some trainers will start off with a young dog of ten months of age doing rag games, then use the soft sleeve before using a hard sleeve to play as the pup is too young. This will make the dog see the decoy as a game partner, and the drive will only be towards the equipment.

The way I have always started a dog out is by doing the evaluation so that the first time the dog sees the decoy, the dog feels threatened. I will have no protective gear such as pads, etc., and I will be in street clothes and only carry a stick and a rag. When I do this test, I ensure the dog is a young adult of at least fourteen months of age. The dog may aggress and feel threatened by me, not thinking it's playtime with the sleeve. After the evaluation, I will do a small agitation session and then finish the training there.

Now we will have a dog that shows aggression to the decoy and is not equipment-driven. After several more sessions, the dog will have a serious level of aggression, and I still have not shown it any dog gear as of yet. When we get to the bite work, I do not use arm pads at all; I will use a body-bite suit. When the aggression is strong towards the decoy, then the dog may bite whatever is presented, so with a strong foundation, the dog can go straight onto a leg or arm bite in the first training session. I also do more agitation in street gear and then with equipment so that the dog is targeting me and not just the gear.



So, that brings us to the gear you need for protection work. A concealed training body-bite suit is the first piece of essential equipment for the decoy. If the decoy is new, or for extra safety, you need some boxes for your hands and high-quality shoes.

The second bit of equipment is a whip or padded stick; this will allow the decoy to crack the whip and whack themselves on the leg with the padded stick as part of the agitation. This also allows the decoy to conserve energy during agitation.

A basket muzzle is also essential to not only teach the dog to bite but also to fight the decoy who will be in street gear. In training, you can have the dog knock the decoy down and fight them, and then command the dog to lie down next to the decoy so you can frisk and cuff them. The basket muzzle is also great for keeping the public safe not only in training sessions but also if the dog is operational in public areas with many people around. Most muzzles have a quick release so that if a situation develops, the muzzle can drop off in a second.

The other essential piece of equipment is a concealed arm—both mini and full arm. This is a tight fit that has a rubber insert and laces up so the sleeve can be worn under a tracksuit. I have always hated doing decoy work with a concealed arm, as it is the most dangerous, and it really hurts. Every time I do decoy with a concealed arm, my arm ends up yellow and purple and bleeding. Most decoys won't use the concealed arm for this reason, but it is great for testing out dogs in an operational environment.

There are many other items on the market, but the above list is enough for a decoy. A lot of decoys are collectors and have a big collection of scratch pants, sleeves, bite suits, muzzles, and many other items for the training of law enforcement dogs.

As well as having the gear, you need to know how to use it. I have seen body-bite suits in perfect condition except for one arm ripped apart as the decoy only trains with lower arm bites.

Some police departments are disadvantaged by having to train their dogs on sleeves, and when the dogs are exposed to a bite suit for the first time, they fail and will not bite the leg or won't bite at all if the decoy's hands are in the air.

Your best option is to seek a professional law enforcement dog trainer that knows what they're doing and has all the gear. Do your research online and with experts in the field and work out what you want as an end result for your dog. Remember, when you train a protection dog, you also have to take

into consideration the rules and regulations of the local authorities and keep the dog secured in a dog-proof enclosure to keep the public safe from your dog. Proper signs and locks on gates are just some of the responsibilities of owning a dog that bites, so please be responsible and ensure you have all these areas covered.

### **Handler Equipment**

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If you are working as a professional law enforcement canine handler in detection or security, most of your equipment will be supplied by your employer. Many of us have to purchase our own gear for training and for operational duties.

I recommend you have some type of training outfit that you wear when you are training your dog; it not only has all your stuff in one place, but it also acts as an associative trigger for your dog. Dogs that are trained in bite work and detection react differently when you put on a collar compared to a harness.

When I do my training, although it's easy just to go out in the field in jeans and a T-shirt, this is great for small sessions on a nice day, but you will also get rainy days when you will be covered in mud. I have two uniforms that I wear in dog training: if I am doing several sessions a day, then I have a lightweight set of overalls I can slip on and off during the day and some slip-on shoes instead of the big heavy-duty lace-ups. If I am working with detection dogs, I will wear a fishing vest as it's waterproof and has lots of pockets to place all the gear in. I can load the front pockets with specimen containers with target odours, and the other pockets can have gloves, a spare lead, a small first aid kit, toys, treats, and anything else I may need in a session.

If I'm only doing a small session or I have another dog being trained on a different target odour, I will also have the fanny pack with target odours in one pocket and rewards in the other pocket.

In the car, I always have a training and comfort duffel bag that is filled with bowls, water, a jacket, leads, collars, choke chains, a first aid kit, and spare overalls.

All of the specialist training and operational gear can be purchased online, with a massive selection available for detection, search and rescue, and protection. There is also a big selection of professional handler gear, from tactical clothing to gadgets. Speak with your local professionals in your area for some more advice on what you need in training and operational gear.



Gaz during filming of the Ultimate Dog Training Online Program at Heliport Studios. Arriving by chopper, recording in the world class studios then flew out.



Getting animal control officers bit at dog bite prevention seminar on Sunshine Coast



My dad's Captain K9 costume on the right competing with the official mascot for the Dog Lovers Show in Brisbane.

## **Dog Training, Problem-Solving, and Seminars**

**O**ver thirty-plus years of dog training, I have seen heaps of different behaviour problems with dogs. Most can be fixed in one or two sessions, whereas other dogs have to be in-kennel for a training program to sort out the dramas.

As well as fixing the dog's problems, you have to explain to the owner what the cause of the problem is and how to fix the problem and maintain the dog so the problem doesn't come back. A lot of owners didn't have the time or patience to train their own dogs, so they just dropped their dogs off for a seven- or fourteen-day dog-training boot camp in-kennel program.

With obedience and problem-solving being the main part of the kennel business, we also provided decoy services for working dogs in security or home protection and had dogs for sale. I provided seminars on training and dog-bite prevention for service providers. All of the programs were in-kennel, where I would train the dog and demonstrate the training to the owner and then show the owner how to handle the dog. The only training we did outside the kennels was public speaking gigs, but most training was also done in the kennel complex.

After twenty-five years of in-kennel training, having to start again without a kennel facility was like an experienced bobcat driver without a bobcat. I now will travel to people's homes and train the dog there in front of the family and show them how to handle the dog. I can also fix a lot of the behaviour problems on the spot, and if I can't do it in a session, I will show the owner how to do it.

I have already covered the effects of dependency and separation anxiety and how to fix them. I want to cover a heap of the most common problems your dog may have and how to fix them. The quick tips will give you the tools

you need to resolve some of your dog's problems. I will also cover a bit of obedience training and, finally, the seminars on dog-bite prevention.

If I explain everything in detail for every problem, it will be a book in itself, so this is why I am making it brief and to the point of the most common problems.

### **Nuisance Barking**

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This is, in most cases, the biggest problem everyone has to deal with, especially councils with noise complaints. Barking is usually caused by a lack of socialisation during the critical period, so the dog's suspicion level is high, and it barks at everything that moves. The dog may be dependent and protective of the property or just likes to have a social bark at the nearby dogs.

If the barking is from lack of socialisation or anxiety-based, then place the dog in a kennel for ten days to break the habit and then manage the stress at home by placing a dirty rag loaded with your smell on it on the dog bed.

If you identify he is barking at people, you see hair standing up, and he looks stressed, then socialisation is what is needed. Take him for walks and introduce him to heaps of people, including giving the person he's meeting treats so they can feed the dog. Then have people walk past the property praising the dog and giving him a treat so it drops the suspicion level. If the dog is crazy over the postie, he will also associate the bike and helmet with them and may then respond to all motorbikes in the same way.

Leave a ball on the fence next to the mailbox and some treats and advise the mailman that every time he stops to praise the dog, throw the ball and some treats. This method is effective and can turn around a dog very quickly.

If the dog is always nuisance-barking at everything, then I highly recommend a bark collar, and this will fix the problem in as little as one or two sessions. You can place it on the dog for a small amount of time per day, such as 2 pm before all the school children walk home and take it off at 4 pm. If the barking is anxiety-based, the collar will raise the anxiety and may not fix the problem long term. If the dog is releasing stress from barking and then gets zapped, then the dog may then release it in another way, such as chewing. A heap of dog trainers don't recommend electric collars as it hurts their financial income. Some actively say how cruel they are, knowing that if the client gets one, they will fix the dramas in

a session, and they won't be able to sell their dog-training private lesson package to them.

Even though I have already covered the electric collar, they are great pieces of equipment that can fix many problems and train the dog to do many things without you yelling or correcting the dog on a choker chain. You can also hide with the remote and catch the dog in the act of doing something wrong such as stealing food off the table, etc. It is sensational for animal-aggressive dogs, turning killer dogs around to running around a dog park full of dogs.

Yelling **no!** at the dog may work and distract the dog, and—as with the citronella spray—sometimes your discipline will have the opposite effect on the dog. For example, if the dog barks, you yell out **no!**, the dog comes back to you, you say 'good boy', and then take him inside. Many dogs will do a negative behaviour to get attention.

### **Jumping Up**

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This is another big one, and so much pure-positive spin has been put on this, from turning around and acting like a tree to ignoring the dog for ten minutes until he calms down. Some will have a treat bag and consistently go out bribing the dog for weeks until the dog figures to sit and he gets a treat and not jump. Then the day you walk out with no treats, he jumps up on you.

The reason the dog jumps is either he has been encouraged to jump for a pat, or he just wants to give you a big kiss because he loves you.

So, here's how to fix the problem in as little as one session. Grab an assistant and get him to pat his chest while praising the dog, and in most cases, the dog will get excited and jump up. To the dog, jumping up is pleasurable, and you now need to associate it with a bad experience, so the behaviour is being linked with a negative experience. Much the same as a horse touching an electric fence—most only do it once, and they remember it for life.

Place a choker chain and a 180 mm lead on the dog. While the assistant is patting his chest, the dog will jump up. As soon as the front feet lift off the ground and connect with the assistant, you give the lead a sharp snap towards the ground from behind the dog. The quick correction will pull tight around the dog's neck only for half a second. After the correction, say 'good boy' and give him a pat. The assistant then repeats, and so do you. On average, it takes between two and six corrections for the dog to completely stop. The dog may



then jump to the side or just stand in front, wagging his tail. When this happens, the assistant bends over and gives the dog heaps of praise. In a session, it may be three jumps and three corrections and another six times the assistant encourages the dog to jump and then praises the dog.

The dog may then sit down; when this happens, go crazy with the praise. You can even have the assistant pat his chest, and when the dog doesn't jump, he says *sit*. When the dog does this, give it a heap of praise. Suddenly you have taught the dog an alternative behaviour. To complete the process, do this with two or three different people and two or three different locations. The same method can be used for opening and closing the screen door, teaching the dog not to jump up. I also will use this to stop a dog from entering different rooms of the house or so you can leave the outside door open.

Stand outside with the dog on a lead and have someone open the door. When the dog places one foot on the doorway, give him a sharp correction back, and you can even give a *no!* command or *aht!* The dog will pick this up quickly, and then you can start throwing the ball and food through the doorway and correct the dog if he chases it. Then you can walk it, and in most cases, the dog hits the skids at the doorway. This will take two to five sessions. You can polish it off by sitting at the inside of the door, and if the dog even puts a foot inside, yell *aht!* and place it back out, leaving the lead on for this exercise.

The finished product is that you can open the sliding door fully, and the dog stays outside, gets a pat from you, and doesn't follow you back in. You can also teach the dog a command like *inside* or *bed* so he will only enter the house on command.

## Mat Training

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Now for inside the house. It should be a privilege, not a right for the dog, so condition the dog for time out and being solo some of the time. When you start early in a dog's life, for calming the dog in the house and toilet training, use a crate. Later on, you can use the mat training, and this is how it works.

Go to the pet store and pick up a dog mat, or you can even use a piece of carpet. Place a treat on it and teach the dog to go to it on a command such as *mat* or *bed*, and when the dog figures this out, you just say the word, and he goes to it to get his treat.

Once you succeed here, bring the dog into the house on a lead and make him do drop stays on the mat while you're watching TV and still have the end of the lead in your hand. You can praise him and treat him, but if he gets up, say ***aht!*** and place him back in the down position on the mat. You may do a couple of corrections, but then the next step is when he gets up again, say ***outside*** and take him out. After ten minutes, put the lead on him and place him back on the mat. The dog must understand that he only comes into the house and lies on the mat and nothing else, so for a week, do this. When he gets off his mat, correct him or put him outside. The end result is that you can open the back door, and the dog waits for your command ***bed***, and then he walks in, sits down in the lounge area on his bed, and is happy. When they want to go to the toilet, most will leave the mat and walk to the door.

When my dog gets off the mat to play with the cat, I will say, 'Do you want to go outside?' and he will look at me and then turn around and go back to his mat. When he is ready, he will come and tell me he wants to go out.

### **Mouthing Hands**

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It's also a pain in the neck when the dog is always slobbering over your hands, and this is usually from food treating the dog or when you have a dependent dog. Some will spend the entire time trying to flick your hand over his head for body contact. Place a choker chain on the dog and hold the lead short around the buckle near the dog's head. With your other hand, start patting the dog, and as soon as the mouth starts to wrap around, say ***aht!*** and pop a small correction and then continue to pat the dog. The dog may do this two or three times, then you will be able to rub your hand all over the dog's face, and he will not mouth you at all. It takes one to three sessions to fix the problem. If the dog is a really submissive type, he may be doing this to show affection, and it may be a nervous reaction. You can place the dog in a ***sit/stay*** and then walk up and place your hand on his head, and as soon as he licks, pop a small correction.

### **Digging Holes**

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Digging holes is another big one that owners try to stop, but they are dogs, and dogs dig. There are many reasons why a dog will dig a hole, and here are some of them that you may identify as the reason your dog is digging. If your dog is



dependent on you, then he will be stalking you from outside at every window. The dog may dig a hole under the window to keep cool and so he can see, smell, and hear you. The dog may do this at the front fence as he is waiting to hear your car two blocks away when you come home from work.

Dogs may get a smell of animal urine, such as a cat or possum and dig the top layer of dirt and grass away to investigate further. The dog may want to bury a bone or other scraps and then push soil over it with his nose. There are other smells that will make a dog dig, such as the owner's smell or the septic pipes running under the spot. In a private lesson I did recently, dogs both dug in the same spot in the yard and nowhere else. The reason was that the laundry was on the other side of the wall, and the air picked up the dirty laundry smell and took it through a gap in the bottom of the wall, and it settled on the grass outside. Other dogs may just enjoy digging because the ground in one part of the yard may be sandy, and then they will lie in it to keep cool.

I have seen other dogs that hunt small lizards and mice and will dig a crater to get their prey.

There are many methods to try to fix the hole-digging problem, and they won't work for all dogs. Some methods will work great on certain dogs and be useless to others.

If you catch the dog in the act of digging, you can use the firm ***aht!*** or ***no!*** and it may work on some dogs and have no effect on others. The dog may then not dig in front of you but may continue when you're not there. You can put a small item with your odour on it or food in the hole and walk your dog to it on a lead and choker chain, and when the dog sniffs what's in the hole, you can say a firm ***no!*** and pop him a correction. This can be done a few times over a week at different holes, and the dog may show avoidance of the holes.

You can get a mousetrap and set it and place it in the hole, and the shock may work on some dogs; others will get even more curious. I have seen great success when a dog keeps digging under the fence, so the owner blows up a balloon and wedges it in the hole under the fence. When the dog paws at it, and it pops, it will usually scare the shit out of the dog, and he won't go back near it. An electric collar with remote control is by far the best and most effective way to stop hole-digging, but you have to be there waiting and watching with the dog wearing the collar. The easiest way is to place a tiny piece of food in the hole or even piss in it. Put the collar on the dog and wait in hiding at a window in the house. As soon as the dog puts his nose in the

hole, then pulse him. In most cases, you only need to do this once or twice. Vicks VapoRub® also works well—put this on objects you don't want the dog to touch, including in a hole.

## **Food Aggression**

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Food aggression or resource-guarding can go from bad to worse and may endanger you and your family or other pets. I found that most cases I have seen are caused by the dog having to compete for his food as a pup. The dog then learns to eat very quickly and gobble it all up before anyone comes close. Some may start off being protective of their food from other dogs, and then they start to do the same when a person gets close. Back in my day, when a dog was eating, you left him alone, and if a kid was growled at or bitten, the response was, 'Well, you shouldn't have gone near the dog when he's eating.'

My dog-training clients expect that they can stick their hand in the bowl, poke the dog in the ear and take food from him, and he is to have no reaction. So, to condition your dog from the beginning, start putting the food down and pat the dog while he's eating, and then command him to *sit* and take the food away. Also, have the dog *sit and stay* while the bowl goes in front of him, and he only eats on command. You can also start off the training with the dog on a lead.

Another exercise is hand-feeding the dog to only take food from an open hand on command, so conditioning like this will work great. If you have two dogs and one gulps down his food and raids the second dog's bowl, then this behaviour may cause the second dog to become territorial over his food. This is when I will make both dogs *sit and stay* for their meal, place the bowls down, and give them their *eat* command. If one tries to get to the other dog's bowl, I will give him a firm *no!* command and direct him back to his own. I may also prepare by placing him on-lead and popping him a correction the moment he starts to go to the second bowl.

If you have an adult dog that is food-aggressive and now you have to fix the problem, then here are a few tips. The first is to make the food bowl not such high value for the dog. You can get around five bowls and put a bit of food in each, and while he is eating out of one, you can pick up another and place a treat in it and put it back down. Doing this will condition the dog that the bowls are going up and down all the time. Put a choker chain on the dog and have him sit and stay while you hold the bowl, and then go for a short walk

with the bowl and dog on the lead. Make the dog **sit/stay** while you place the bowl down, then pick the bowl back up. Do this several times so you can eliminate this trigger from the dog. Next, with a lead on, place the dog in a **sit/stay** and put the bowl in front of him and then give him the **eat** command. After thirty seconds, from behind, call the dog to you. You can even pop the dog a small correction, so you are not asking him—you are going to make him leave the food and come to you. When he gets to you, pat him, make him sit, and then give the **eat** command for him to go back and eat. Repeat this one more time, and then let him finish his food.

If the food aggression is towards another dog, then place him on a lead and get him to eat while an assistant walks the other dog close by. If the dog starts to growl, curl his lips, and stare, pop him a correction and say **no!**

The electric collar also works best for this as the dog is pulsed the moment he growls, so it fixes him very quickly. I have also fitted dogs with electric bark collars, and they correct themselves, and within days the dog can eat around other dogs with no problems.

Also, use common sense with this; don't put yourself in danger if the dog is a psycho. This is when you may need professional assistance or to put the second dog on a lead or behind a fence or screen door. I have had in-kennel dogs that have extremely high aggression over food and have not been able to fix them even with a week of full-time work.

You can also just do what we all did back in the day: leave the dog alone when he eats, and if you have two separate them when they eat, problem solved.

## **Dog Aggression**

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Dog aggression is a book in itself as there are so many types of aggression and reasons for the causes. If you have a dog-aggressive dog, then the cause may be a lack of socialisation with other dogs at a young age. Your dog may have been attacked by another dog, and now he's paranoid and aggresses first. Your dog may be great with other dogs but wants to kill any dog that comes close to his home. The dog may be overprotective of the owner and sees all other dogs that come close to their master as a threat. The dog may be great at home and good with other dogs until the master is away, and then he aggresses other dogs. The dog may respond with aggression due to the other dog's body language or maybe excitement.

The triggers for the dog's aggression may occur only when you walk the dog on a lead or only in your yard or from the car window. One of the most common reasons I see animal-aggressive dogs on a lead is when the dog is completely and totally pure-positive-trained. Now let me explain why. I have seen many pet owners who have never disciplined their dog or acted as a leader. Everything that dog has done in its entire life has been a food bribe. When the owner takes the dog for a walk, the dog is pulling and sniffing and yanking everywhere and then comes and get a food treat and basically does what it wants when it wants.

The dog doesn't see you as the leader but thinks he must protect you, so when he sees another dog, he shapes up and aggresses it. Then you freak and pull the lead tight, which becomes the second trigger for the dog to react. Then you panic and release fear pheromones from your skin cells that the dog picks up on. After a few times, the dog is excited and anxious and now flipping out at any dog, big, small, male or female. The master then tries to distract the dog with a treat, which has no effect, and drags the dog back home. Sound familiar?

You can have obedience such as *stay* or *heel* that overrides bad behaviour and even fear and aggression. So what you do is teach the dog an alternative behaviour to the same situation. Your dog, when he makes eye contact with another dog, may automatically explode with aggression as he has done this so many times before, and he knows no other way to deal with it, so now it's an imprinted habit.

So here is a guide to assist with stopping animal aggression on a lead. If you have the dog too close to other dogs, then the aggression level will peak, and you can yell and give hard corrections, and it may make no difference as the dog is in frenzied aggression mode.

The first step is to ensure the dog can heel and also sit and stay. During the stay training, have the dog stay on a lead while using balls and food and noises to distract him and ensure that the stay overrides this. If the dog breaks the stay, then on a lead, you can correct the dog with a lead and choker chain and yell *ah!* You will soon be able to have people calling your dog and doing everything to get your dog to break, but he won't, as he will stay put until he is told to go.

The next step is to find a dog you're familiar with on your walk that's behind a fence, and your dog normally goes nuts over and aggresses. Through habit, your dog will become agitated well before you get there, pulling on the

lead to get to him. When this starts, stop and place the dog in a sit/stay and pop him a correction if he breaks the stay command. Make him stay there until he becomes relaxed, then praise him and heel off again.

Don't walk the dog right up to the fence, as he will just go into frenzied aggression. Stand away from the house, around thirty metres or more, or when you can just start to see the dog getting stimulated. Place the dog in a **sit/stay** facing the opposite direction to the dog behind the fence or at a 45-degree angle. Stand directly in front of the dog holding the lead short, praising the dog and patting him on the head.

When the dog turns his head and makes eye contact with the second dog, then pop the dog an instant correction with the lead and choker chain straight up and at the same time a firm **no!** or **aht!** Then give the dog a pat, and you may want to be praising the dog continually with pats and voice. When he turns his head again to make eye contact, repeat the correction. When the dog stops looking around and starts to become relaxed for a couple of minutes, heel off another five or ten metres closer and repeat the process. If you find that you are doing several corrections in the first stage, then you are too close, so back off and do it again from a greater distance.

This process can be completed in two to five steps so the **sit/stay** will override the dog's animal aggression. You may be able to then sit the dog on the fence line with another dog barking at your dog. You can sit the dog side-on to the fence or with his back to it and, finally, facing the other dog. You may be able to then not use a correction but just the vocal correction.

When your dog knows the new rules, you have not only re-established yourself as the leader but have also shown your dog what is expected. If you can, have your dog **sit/stay** in front of several dogs behind a fence. The next step is to have the dog walk at heel past the other dogs. You may only need on the approach to say **heel!** or **aht!** if the dog looks at the other. If the dog starts to pull forward, then turn around and pop the dog a correction and when he's back at heel again, turn back.

This will not work on all dogs, especially dogs with very high aggression, but it does work on a majority. You can always go back a few steps and do this over a longer period, such as sitting your dog thirty metres away from the fenced dog park every day for a week before you get closer.

I highly recommend an electric bark collar as this may reduce or stop the animal aggression completely just by having the dog wear it in the yard when

other dogs and owners walk by. You can then walk the dog on a collar while still wearing the bark collar, and he will correct himself.

## **Dog-Bite Prevention**

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I have been teaching dog-bite prevention since the early 90s to many different organisations but mainly to animal control officers for different councils around Australia, New Zealand, and India. I have also provided my expertise to police, delivery drivers, WorkCover<sup>®</sup>, Australia Post<sup>®</sup>, Origin Energy<sup>®</sup>, and many other service providers. Whenever I do the dog-training tours, I always provide free seminars to community groups to assist them in raising money. I have done dozens of free seminars for dog rescue groups and foster carers to help those who help the community. I have a special interest in the Bali street dogs and the organisations over there working so hard to stop the dog-meat trade.

I had an upcoming seminar to do in Auckland, New Zealand, on 27 August 2020 for the NZIAM conference, and I wanted to use this opportunity as the official release date of this book, *The Dog Trainer: Death, karma and the battle of wills*.

I would then embark on a national book-signing tour before returning to Australia and then overseas again for book promotions which would be a roller-coaster ride in itself. Unfortunately, COVID-19 put a stop to this.

I wanted to put a heap of tips and tricks for dog-bite prevention, so if any person reads this book and remembers the advice and avoids getting bitten, I will be so happy. I also want other dog-bite prevention providers to feel free to use the information to help educate the people they're teaching.

Dog-bite prevention is becoming an important part of everyone's safety, from government and private organisations to the general public and especially the children.

There has been a massive increase in dog attacks around the world, and due to this, many organisations put their staff through dog-bite prevention programs to keep them safe, from the people that work with animals, such as animal control officers, to the many service providers that are entering several private properties on a daily basis. These people include postal workers, gas and electricity providers, power and water meter readers, salesmen and women, police officers, and maintenance workers.

Aggressive dogs have become a daily threat for many workers, and it is so important that you are armed with the knowledge and the skills to identify the risk and respond to keep you safe from a dog attack. A dog attack on an employee may give them lifelong psychological problems and terrible scars requiring microsurgery.

The employer and the team will also suffer from the employee being off work for injury and maybe long term due to psychological trauma. This will mean the team is one down and has to pick up the slack, or another employee is put on to cover the position. Finally, the court cases or compensation for injury, etc.

Dog-bite prevention training is not only for employees but also your loved ones, including our precious children. In many cases, people get bitten because they cannot identify the emotions of a dog and do not see the warning signs that they are in danger. The other reason is our own body language, which will determine if a dog will bite you or not.

As a full-time dog trainer and law enforcement decoy of over thirty years, I am able to use so many tricks and skills to make a dog aggress or bite me in a body-bite suit. This skill also allows me to calm a dog down to stop a dog from aggressing or biting me. I have tried many methods in dog-bite prevention and demonstrated them to thousands of people at hundreds of seminars around the world to show people what will and what will not work.

Over the years, I have seen many other people teaching dog-bite prevention, and many are totally academic with very little practical experience with aggressive dogs. Most have never been in a bite suit and have a teaching, veterinary, or dog welfare background. Some of the information they teach is also very wrong or very dangerous.

I have tested my dog-bite prevention methods on many aggressive dogs in a bite suit or with concealed arm pads, so I know they work. In this book, I will take you on a journey to show you how to identify the different types of aggression, including canine and human body language. I will show you many reasons that dogs become aggressive and how to pacify and calm a dog down to keep you safe. I will show you a list of procedures for many situations and what to do when you are confronted with or without dog-bite prevention tools.

The first questions that people have are ‘why do dogs bite’ and ‘how did they get that way?’

There are many reasons why, but there is one I see much more than any other. It will create a ripple effect and develop into many problems, including aggressing or biting someone. So now I'm going to sound crazy when I tell you what the cause is, and in all the years at the dog-bite prevention seminars, only two people got it right. Everyone else thought I was crazy, but when you explain the reasons, everyone agrees.

The number one reason for aggressive dogs and dog-bite victims is the **veterinarian**.

Think about this for a moment and try to figure out why.

I touched on it in the last chapter; in all my years of dog training, I have seen many unsocialised dogs that develop heaps of behaviour problems, including dependency, separation anxiety, and overprotectiveness towards the owner, and just these three problems alone caused dozens of other effects, including chewing, barking, animal aggression, jumping, etc.

Now let's just concentrate on the aggression problems caused by this chain of events. The first professional the new dog owner sees is the veterinarian, and just about every time, the dog owner is told to keep the pup away from everything until all the needles have been given and have kicked in at around eighteen weeks of age. The most critical development time in a dog's life is the critical period which is up to around sixteen weeks of age.

When the new owner gets this advice, they will lock the dog up in the house yard, and their new pup will have next to no socialisation. As a result, the pup may have a high suspicion towards everything and be paranoid about everything and then becomes dependent and overprotective of the owner. The dog may start off unsure, but as time progresses and he has a few wins, that submission turns to barking, and then aggression, and develops every day. Next thing you know, you have a crazy dog that flips out behind the fence and wants to bite and chase everything. The dog has aggression based on fear with all his hair on his back standing up.

The dog may have started with submission and fear, but now, as a young adult, he displays hectic defensive aggression. The root cause is a lack of socialisation because of bad advice from the vet. But then you can take your unvaccinated pup to the vet surgery for puppy preschool—the same place the vet treats dogs with parvo and other diseases.

Other dogs are unsocialised because they live on a property and haven't been exposed to anything.



Dogs can also become aggressive due to a bad experience with people; for example, the dog may be raised by a lady but is beaten by her boyfriend. Now the dog hates all men and shows aggression towards men and none towards women. There are also a lot of protection-trained dogs, so this is also a threat when the dog is locked up behind a fence, pacing all day, aggressing anything on the other side of the fence.

There are breed characteristics that, when combined with some of the many environmental problems, may be a recipe for disaster.

You may have a dog that is well socialised but has not seen one particular thing, and it freaks him out, and he aggresses at it. This can be the mailman as he stops at the fence; it's the first time the dog sees a motorbike, and with all the other dogs in the area barking, he quickly sees the mailman as prey. If a schoolchild teases a dog through a fence, the dog may hate children. Or if a junky's house was raided several times by the police, the dog associates this with his junky master freaking out, and now he wants to attack anyone in uniform. If a coloured person walks through an all-white suburb, the dog may want to attack or show aggression to the person. In India, all the street dogs wanted to attack me. I was continuously circled by street dogs barking at me, and I had to threaten them with a thong (flip-flop) to get away. I was the only honky white-legs in the village.

If a security dog is always aggressing drunks, then alcohol may be the trigger. A person in a wheelchair or someone with a physical disability that walks different may be a trigger.

Now that we have covered some of the reasons why a dog may be aggressive, let's look at the dog's body language so you can identify clusters of behaviour and figure out the type of aggression displayed.

Again, there is so much information on dog body language, and in most cases, it's not a singular piece of body language but a cluster combining several behaviours which will determine the type of aggression. Reading this body language in dogs will help you establish if the dog may bite or stand off or run away. It's not only just the dog's body language you have to take account of, but also your own body language and behaviour. It will determine whether you get bitten or not.

Now let's look at some of the dog's body language of aggression, early signs, triggers and some variations. As a decoy of over thirty years, I have agitated thousands of dogs and evaluated countless dogs for aggression. You develop the ability to predict the behaviour before you even start and see the

micro-body language of dogs before anyone else even notices. You develop skills to trigger a dog into aggression with such ease and very discreetly. In other words, you don't need to yell and scream and hit the ground with a stick, darting back and forwards like a crazy man. You can do as little as some eye contact and freeze to have a dog aggress you and, with a quick, sharp movement, can have the dog chase and try to bite you.

The first sign that a dog is going to be aggressive is usually that it will lock onto its target with eye contact and ears pricked forward while they work it out. This may be a sound in the distance, or the dog sees a person. Another body language cue is that their tail becomes stiff and facing up.

If the dog is defensive and feels threatened, which most will, they will raise some hair up on their shoulders, and the dogs with aggression based on fear will also have hair up on their bum to make themselves look bigger. The really fearful defensive one will have all the hair along the spine from their sheriff's badge to their neck standing up.

The dog may freeze up, stare into the distance, raise one leg, or try to make itself look bigger.

During this process, the dog may puff his lips, and you will see the puff and even hear a little snort. The nose will also start going hard, and if you're close enough, you will see it sniffing quickly in and out, trying to gather more information on the threat.

The dog will take a deep breath, and next, the gut will be rumbling, and then breath, and then rumbling again.

The dog will make intense eye contact, but if it is unsure here, its body movements will become rigid, and it will make sharp movements with its head looking away from the threat as a means of planning an escape.

The bark may be a monotone type of low intensity or become hectic and more so when the dog runs the fence line. The dog may be territorial, so the bark is deep and guttural, but if the dog is more scared, then the bark will increase in pitch and become a little bit like a hectic scream.

A fear-based aggressive dog will just peel its lips and show its front teeth, and the more defensive dogs will exhibit raised lips all the way down. If the dog is in prey mode, such as being excited because he is barking at a cat on the other side of the fence, then he will have an excited bark and a neutral look on his face. When the dog is not scared at all and is excited about chasing his prey, then there will be almost no stress-related aggression behaviours.

You can watch a video of excited dogs on leads wanting to chase something, and then the handler releases the dog. The dogs will exhibit just about identical behaviour when you watch them run to bite a decoy or grab a tennis ball.

When a dog shows aggression, it is a cluster of behaviours, not just one. So if you have a fearful dog, he may drop his body posture and become very sleek, with his tail between his legs and head down, looking up and showing his front teeth with a high-pitched bark. When the stress gets too much, the bark pitch goes up, and his back legs start shaking until most of the body is vibrating. The breathing becomes fast and short, with eyes bulging. Then he may put a paw up in submission. Finally, he may roll over in full submission or surrender to authority and piss himself.

A dominant hard territorial dog may strut across the yard, grumbling and staring at you, walking straight to you and then taking a big sniff as he is growling with his tail erect and ears defensively pinned back.

There are far too many variations of aggression in dogs, and it is difficult to try to explain them and hope that you can visualise the behaviour I'm trying to explain.

The dog's aggression is triggered by suspicion, whatever this may be. The dog can be territorial or super dependent on the owner, so now he's overprotective. The dog may have no socialisation, so he is paranoid about everything. The dog may have been flogged by another dog, so now he wants to kill any other dog. In all of these cases, however, the aggression is triggered by suspicion.

When the dog is suspicious, then this triggers a chain of events that includes the aggression type such as fearful, defensive, etc.

Then you have other influences on top of that; for example, the dog may have low aggression behind a fence but high aggression on a lead because he is stressed being away from his environment or thinks he has to protect the master.

Over time, the dog may develop more aggression as he always wins against that pesky mailman. Or the neighbour scared him with a hose, and now the dog just has to hear him, and he barks from fear.

### **Temperament + Environment = Behaviour**

You will have the dog's genetic base, whether it is a soft or hard character dog, breed characteristics such as hunting or fighting dogs, etc. Then combine this

with how the dog has been raised, such as socialisation, treatment, etc. These two components will give you the behaviour.

A genetically soft dog with no socialisation may be submissive to everything; however, a genetically hard dog with no socialisation may have aggression based on fear. Two genetic bases with the same environmental problem and two different outcomes.

Now let's look at some tips to avoid being bitten by a dog. Dog-bite prevention does not start with one being confronted by a nasty dog. In many cases, it can begin with a phone call or a decision that I am not walking in with the dog. Why? Because I can identify aggressive behaviour and I think that dog will bite me.

### **Dog-Bite Prevention**

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Let's look at the procedures for entering a yard that may have an aggressive dog. If you are a service provider, you may be in a position to call first and ask if they have a dog and can they lock it away if it's aggressive and make a time to see them.

If you are in animal control, then check the file for the history of the place and the owner for more information. If you are a meter reader, then check your handheld computer to see if they have registered a dangerous dog and, if so, make an appointment.

When you show up at the address, make some noise such as slamming the car door or whistling, etc. This is so that any sleeping dog will wake up and come to the front yard so you can evaluate the dog and work out if it is safe to enter. If no dog comes out, then there is still one last thing to do, and that is to open the gate a little and then slam it, as every dog knows the sound of the front gate. Many dog bites have happened due to a person shutting the front gate and walking across the yard and being confronted by a dog that thought it was his master.

If the dog runs to the front yard, then you have just succeeded in dog-bite prevention. This will allow you to evaluate the dog from the other side of the fence in safety.

If the dog is showing aggression, then use praise to see if this chills the dog out. If safe, you can put the back of your hand against the fence and let the dog sniff, or use your hat and show it to the dog. Some dogs

will go from aggression to a big sniff, and then they will change to a happy tail-wagging dog.

By using food and a ball and praise, you will have a good chance to see if the dog is going to be safe to walk in. If the dog is still showing aggression, then give it a miss unless the dog is mostly fearful and running away. These dogs may still bite if you turn your back, but in most cases, they will only bark at you from a distance.

If you decide that you're going to walk in, then you also should have other items to assist you. Food is a great item to turn aggression around and distract the dog. A hat can be used for the dog to sniff or bite, and a ball can change the dog's focus and attitude.

After you are clear that you believe the dog may be okay or only a small risk, you decide to walk in. Consider other items you may need just in case you are wrong, such as an umbrella, folder, hat, etc.

While praising the dog from behind the gate, you may offer a treat. Open the gate just enough that you can squeeze your leg through. Put your kneecap through the gate while praising the dog and let him sniff, at the same time saying 'good boy'. Next is to have your hand clenched in a fist and a stiff arm facing down beside your body. Allow the dog to sniff your hand, but don't pat the dog on the head as he may see this as dominance or, if he's been hit before, may feel threatened. The other option is to take your hat off and hold it for the dog to sniff; this is safer, and a mouthful of hat is better than your hand, and it gives you something to let go of and escape.

If the dog sniffs and seems okay, then continue by now placing your hand over your crown jewels, as most dogs go straight for the crotch for a sniff, or they will have their nose pressed against your sheriff's badge. Continue the praise and always try to be sideways to the dog.

If things are looking good, then enter the yard but don't turn around with your back to the dog and don't stand front on. Dirty pants also help, and I don't mean after you shit yourself. Pants that have been worn around many other dogs are like a smorgasbord for the dog. I have seen several dogs that have strong aggression get totally distracted by the smell of other dogs on a person's pants.

When you walk in towards the front door, in most cases, the dog follows you, but some may sniff the ground where you have walked. You can throw some pieces of beef jerky behind you, and this will keep the dog distracted as well.

## Warning

Like the gate noise is a trigger to the dog that his master may be home, so is the knocking of the front door or ringing of the bell.

Vocally praise the dog while you knock to minimise the chance of a trigger. When the owner comes out, this also may be a trigger. When I did a series of seminars for a parcel delivery company, most bites were at the front door when they got the customer to sign.

So, after you knock, step away from the door if possible. If the customer answers and you're still worried about the dog, ask if they can lock the dog away. If the dog runs up to the owner and sits or stands leaning against them, then this may also be dangerous. Most dogs will get a little bit more confidence next to the owner, and their overprotective instincts may kick in.

If you are there to get something signed, then I recommend that you ask the owner to put the dog away or at least step into the front yard away from the door.

When you leave, I always walk sideways, looking back, as this may be the only thing that will make a dog stand off away from you. Other dogs may line you up and bolt after you, nip you in the legs and run away. Fear-based dogs won't do this at the start, as they are checking you out, but they may get a confidence boost from the owner, and as they build up the courage, they will run out and bite you with your back turned.

Let's say you did all your dog-bite prevention checklist items and you arrive at the property, click the front gate, and no dog comes out. You will then do a quick look to see if there are any dog-related items on the property, as well as signs on the gate or the house. The last thing is to check for any escape route if you are confronted, such as wheelie bins, kids' toys, trees, garden chairs, etc.

If you know there is an aggressive dog on the property, then don't go in, or at least bring a partner. You will also have to load up with dog-bite prevention items as well such as food, ball, hat, umbrella, folder, etc.

So now you have done the total checklist, and you walk into the yard, and then suddenly a large dog runs around the corner straight at you.

Here is the procedure to try to avoid a dog bite with options. When police are practising with their self-defence equipment, it is done over and over until it becomes an automatic response and muscle memory. If you are in animal

control, then you must practise your response over and over. You will also have to practise different responses depending on whether you have your full kit or have nothing but your wits.

If the dog is at a big distance and you can easily get to the gate, then just get out. If this is not possible, then *do not run*.

Stand your ground and, with your hand extended, yell very loudly, **Aht!** or **No!** or **Sit!** or **Get back!**

This may confuse the dog and at least buy you some more time. In your pants pocket, you have beef jerky diced up, so throw a handful at the dog.

The next step is to take big sideways steps back towards the gate but continue to give the dog commands and praise.

A tennis ball is another option that can change the focus from you to the game and also change the association of threat to play.

If, while this is happening, the dog is not now doing a stand-off but is wanting to bite, then you now need some type of shield to protect you.

A large, brimmed hat works well and will also provide a bite surface for the dog.

Folders or tablets can also provide similar protection by holding them up as a shield.

By far the best is the small pop-up umbrella, as when a dog cannot see the target to bite, he will hit the skirts trying to get around it. I have tested many dogs, and it works on nearly 100% of them. Only the odd one will dive into the umbrella, and even when that happened, I still had the umbrella stick as a form of protection.

Any form of shield to take away the sight of the target will help or stop the attack, so hats, folders, tablets, and umbrellas will not only do this but give the dog something else to bite apart from your arse. This, combined with yelling commands, praise, and walking back towards the gate, may save your life.

It is also important you understand dog body language as well as what is a real threat and what is not. The media, in the past, has covered stories of police officers that shot a dog and a council worker that smashed a dog over the head with a tool because they believed the dog was going to bite them and they may have been just excited and coming up for a pat.

As well as the dog's body language, you also have to watch your own, so the dog sees you as less of a threat or prey. Your body language triggers can be

heavy eye contact with the dog, a sharp and sudden movement, a quick freeze and stare, turn and run, and hundreds more.

Triggers of aggression:

- All people, because the dog has had no socialisation.
- Men, because the dog was beaten by one.
- Coloured person, because the dog grew up in a completely white community.
- Alcohol smell, because the dog was abused by a drunk.
- Motorbikes, as he's been chasing the mailman all his life.
- People with Down syndrome, because they walk and talk differently.
- Crutches, because the dog is threatened by sticks as he has been whacked before.
- Children, because he has been teased behind a fence by school kids.
- Bicycles, because he loves to chase, and now he's trying to catch one.
- Uniforms, because his master was raided by police several times.
- Doorbell, front gate, or knock on the door.
- Running away.
- Threatening to hit the dog.
- Fence line.
- Dependency upon the owner, which turns into overprotectiveness.
- Separation anxiety, which raises stress levels and leads to release through aggression.
- Pound vehicle, as the dog has been picked up before.

There are heaps more, but it gives you an idea that many dogs have aggression problems due to past experiences or lack of experience, so when you meet new dogs, you have to sell yourself. If a dog sees you as a threat, then use your skills to turn it around so he sees you as a friend. This skill is important in dog-bite prevention as I have known service providers in the past that were dog-bite magnets.

I have tested many methods with dogs, and some are absolutely useless or have little effect. One of those items is the Dazer, which emits a high-frequency sound. It either has no effect or stimulates an already stressful dog to bite harder. Citronella spray is 1% citronella and 99% water. It is a distraction only, like water in a water pistol. It's nearly useless but will have a small effect on some dogs.



## Equipment and Methods

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Here is a bit of a summary that may save you one day, and there are heaps more. Some go to work fully kitted-up, and others will only have their wits.

- Ball
- Beef jerky, cut up
- Folder
- Tablet
- Large wide-brimmed hat
- Umbrella
- Bite stick
- Tactical gloves
- Concealed arm
- Capsicum spray
- CO<sub>2</sub> fire extinguisher
- Wheelie bins
- Voice
- Hand signal
- Eyes
- Dog smell on clothes
- Food smell on clothes
- Fence
- Hose
- Trees
- Whistle
- Phone call
- Research into property
- Car door slamming
- Front gate slamming
- Torch.

There are so many ways to get around a dog and avoid a dog bite, and the best way, by far, is common sense and planning so you're not in that situation to start with. If you do all the planning and then find yourself confronted by an aggressive dog, at least you have your tools and body language to avoid a bad situation, as long as you have practised so it has become an automatic response.

I train service providers around the world in dog-bite prevention, not only through stage presentations but also through practical dog aggression and evaluations. I even get the students to participate by putting them into a body-bite suit and getting them nailed by aggressive dogs. It's a lot of fun and could save your life.

### **Law Enforcement Dog Evaluations**

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I have tested thousands of dogs over the years so I can train up in security. Even though I have covered some of this already, I want to give you a quick explanation of my evaluations.

Most dog evaluations will give you some details on the stability of the dog, but they do not put the dog under stress to see how the dog reacts. This is such an important part of the evaluation, as the dog may be rehomed with a family. If the dog has heaps of aggression and a hair-trigger, then all the other stuff you do may not expose this, and the dog will pass. All it takes then is for a child to step on the dog's foot, and the dog spins and bites the child.

The evaluation will put the dog under stress in a controlled environment so we can see how the dog reacts to it and what the triggers are. The categories are complex and expansive but will give the trainer all the info we need to start a protection-dog training program. So, instead of listing the entire evaluation, I will just list the process to categorise the dog.

Recently, in Papua New Guinea, the team and I worked with around 200 personal protection dogs, and we were able to categorise every dog by ability, bite, safety, etc. The evaluation was taught to all the personnel, and now the office can speak directly to the trainers and talk the same language. It also allows them to work out which dogs are best suited for each job and which ones need more training. It also ensures the trainers can't slack off, as they are graded three months later and compared to their old grading, and all of this is uploaded to the national database. The trainers can then select several dogs from the same category for training or even ensure that site dogs are all of the highest category.

We can conduct several tests and observations on a dog and know then if the dog is even suitable or a reject. When we start the evaluation, we take away all influences from the dog so it's not on its own property or handled by its master. In many cases, dogs will show great aggression at home and fall to pieces in a strange place.

The dog is put on a tie-out on a six-foot lead or handled by an assistant that acts as a post, with no commands, praise, or corrections. The dog is given a few minutes to get his bearings then we start.

I will have a rag and stick with me, and I will be around thirty metres away from the dog behind a tree or car. I will then step out and stalk the dog in a suspicious fashion holding the stick and rag in front of me. As soon as the dog connects eye contact, I will freeze, drop my posture, and intensely stare at the dog.

In the evaluation, there are three zones which are the non-threat zone, threat zone, and the dominating zone. In the non-threat zone, the dog may sniff the ground and generally be happy and see you and wag his tail, etc.

The moment the dog sees you as a threat, you will get a puff of the lips and a growl, and then it may escalate into a higher level of aggression. In the threat zone, we can get aggression level, intensity, defensive or prey aggression, and as we continue to stalk, we can see the stress level increase, which may include the bark becoming more high pitched, teeth showing, etc., which are all the signs of stress on the dog. The dog may exhibit other behaviour, including ears pinned back, panic, shaking, and tail between his legs. Strong dogs may show a high level of aggression and lunge at you to bite.

The bigger the threat zone, the better for training, and I now know the window of opportunity from the trigger to the point of backing down.

As I approach a little bit closer, the dog may start to show more signs of stress with its bark becoming high pitched and then breaking eye contact and trying to escape or hiding behind the handler. In other cases, the dog may go from aggression to full submission and just roll over. This is what we call the dominating zone.

So, now we know exactly what the dog needs to trigger the aggression to take him from the non-threat to threat zone. I now know the level of aggression and intensity in the threat zone and how much stress the dog can take before he shows unsureness and avoidance behaviour and enters the dominating zone.

From here, I will be in front of the dog still with the stick and rag in my hand. I will then raise the stick over my head and swing it towards the dog's face without touching him at all. If a dog has been belted or hit with rolled-up newspaper or hand, the dog will tell you. Some dogs will panic just at the sight of the stick, and others will scream and bolt when the stick is raised. Some may roll over and submit, but the variation of stick shyness is from severe to mild.

The next step is very important as we check the recovery time of the dog. I get down on one knee and drop the stick and rag and praise the dog while whistling and saying 'good boy'.

A sound, properly socialised dog will recover very quickly from fright. Slow recovery can be due to a lack of socialisation as a pup or being mistreated by a person. The dog may not recover and be submissively lying down and won't come anywhere to you. The other type of reaction is the dog remaining aggressive based on fear and refusing to go near you. In these two cases, you may have one genetically hard and one soft dog that both have the same problem of no socialisation but two different behaviours.

When we list all the details on the psychological profile chart, we now have all the information we need to start the training in protection. The first session after the evaluation is agitation, and every time the dog shows any aggression, the decoy will cower and break eye contact. We then see the reaction of the dog after several wins, and we will keep adding a bit more pressure on each agitation. This is so we can see if the dog's aggression is developing with the intensity or if they are showing signs of avoidance.

I will then swing a rag while I'm running past the dog to see if the dog lunges forward to bite and if he does, I check out his possession level.

When you have all these details, you can just check out the chart and know exactly how to work with the dog. You will know the triggers and be able to develop aggression in the threat zone and work on any fears to get the aggression to override them. Once the dog has been through the basic training, you are then grading the dog on bite pressure and parts of the body-bite suit he's biting, etc. Then you're training for specific exercises such as off-lead bite work, drop and stay for pat-down, prisoner escort, building search, etc.

I will stop here as protection training is another book in itself and is very complex in regards to testing, evaluating, and training dogs to bite. It's a combination of the handler's skills and the talents of the decoy, which is an art form, and very few can do it properly.

The overview and explanation of the evaluation are so you know the basics of what a professional dog trainer is looking for in dogs.

The information in the last few chapters will assist you in testing new pups or an adult you want to purchase and how to raise them properly, how to evaluate and start the training, and dog body language to assist you in dog-bite prevention. Also, seek the help of a professional trainer and decoy if needed; don't agitate your own dog.



Parade before guards and dogs are posted to job sites.



Gaz supplied body-bite suits and training to councils. Gaz's first bite suit he sold was to RAAF Amberley in 1991.



Gaz with some of the dog team in Lae, Papua New Guinea.