



The WoofGang Wag Rag



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Free

Getting Your Dog Café-Ready

I share my life with a German Shepherd Dog named Trista. From the very start of our life together, I trained her to hold a good down-stay. For those first weeks and months, we actively practiced everywhere: at home, on park benches, in sidewalk cafés. The first stages required frequent food reinforcement, or reward, to keep her attentive and working. As she became more consistent, I spaced out the food rewards, relying more on verbal encouragement. And with more time, she accomplished fairly long stretches with no attention from me at all.

Developing this behavior in your dog just takes careful, thorough practice with gradual progression. Here's a step-by-step tutorial that will help you get your dog café-ready:

Teaching your Dog To Hold the Down (an Implied Down-Stay)

Some dogs tend to pop up out of the down once they've collected their treat. The way to work on this is to give little morsels, one after the other, in quick succession as long as your dog remains in the down. If your dog gets up, mark with an "uh-uh" and the treats stop. Ask for a down again and start treat after treat again. Little by little, increase the time between



Koko workin' it!

treats, using soft verbal encouragement to bridge the gap between treats. Periodically allow your dog to break the down with the release word "OK!" and encourage him to get up, but don't give him a food treat. This way he's learning that being in the down is rewarding, getting up is not. Gradually work on you being able to stand between treats without your dog getting up. Also do the exercise while you're in a seated position.

A Tip: When working on sedentary exercises like these, it's best if your dog has already had a bit of exercise and is ready for some quiet time. When he's fresh first thing in the morning, he's going to be raring to go and in no mood for holding a down-stay.

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About the Trainer

Dog trainer **Laura Garber**, CPDT, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



\$25 Intro Training Offer

Get a 30-minute introductory basic training session for \$25 or apply it towards a 4-session package and get the 30-minute session FREE! (Offer details based on location.) Call

WoofGang at 646.345.5116 to make an appointment.

Separation Anxiety

Even when you're at home, it's important that your dog spends some time away from you. Otherwise she can develop separation anxiety when she's left alone. The crate is a great place for her to get some quality alone-time. **WoofGang** can guide you in helping your dog get more comfortable when she's without you.

Territorial Behavior

Allowing your dog to peer out the window at passers-by can develop into a more dangerous behavior called territorial aggression. Your dog will start to think that it's his barking that's keeping the passing people and dogs away and, over time, this can potentially put your guests at risk.

Talkin' Trash on the Street

Dogs who lunge and bark at passing dogs on the street are usually doing so due to fear or anxiety. Giving your dog a correction for her behavior tends to make it worse. A more effective approach is to change her feelings about other dogs from one of fear to one of happy anticipation!

Call **WoofGang** at 646.345.5116 for help with your trash-talkin' pooch.

Main Article (cont.)

Next Steps: Proofing

Duration: Remember to build on duration gradually... don't expect him to hold the *down* for a half an hour right from the start. Start with 5 or 10 seconds, gradually increasing it. If you notice that he's frequently breaking from the *down* before you've released him, you may be expecting too much of him; cut back on duration. Set him up for success.

Distance: Start incorporating some movement into the exercise. These are really exercises in proofing a *stay* without the use of the word: With your dog in a *down*, back away a step, then come back to treat. Turn a quarter turn, then a half turn so that he sees your backside, then turn back and come back to treat. Step to the side; do a little hop; walk part way around him – but *build gradually*. Again, set him up for success!

Distraction: At this point, you should be able to stand or sit with your dog beside you, giving occasional treats and bridging with some verbal encouragement. Change venues: practice in different rooms of the house, or in the hallway of your apartment building. *A Tip:* With each jump in difficulty, you need to reward your dog more frequently.

Taking It On the Road

With your dog's meal in your pocket, take a walk together. Periodically find a place to stop, ask your dog for a *down*, and start feeding him his kibble. After a short time, say "OK, let's go!" and resume your walk. For a hungry dog, the stops along the way will be a very welcome snack. Sit on a park bench, a neighbor's stoop, anywhere you can find a spot. Start with quieter byways and build gradually to streets more active with people, dogs, and traffic.

A Tip: Remember that the outside world is way more distracting than your nice quiet home, so reward *very frequently*. If necessary, mix something really yummy in with his kibble, or use something altogether better.



Captain & Jolly Roger people-watch

Travels with Trista

These days I take Trista everywhere, on trips across the country involving boat ferries, horse-drawn carriages, motels and shops that allow dogs and, of course, sidewalk cafés. She can go so many places with me precisely because she is a pleasure to be with and around: she lies quietly beside me, bothers no one by soliciting attention or making noise, tolerates the unexpected with grace, and seems happy just to be included. And our relationship is deepened precisely because of the mutual respect we have for each other and because we can share so much together.

With patient, thorough work, this is the life you can share with your dog, too. He is a café companion in the ruff!

For this article and others on dogs, and dog behavior, log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



Ask Woofie...

Woofie, my puppy Brady had stopped chewing everything and shoes, stuffed animals, etc were safe but now he is back at it and it's much worse. Anything in sight is fair game for his teeth including the wall molding, his bed and anything else he feels the need to check out. He was never this bad before other than shoes but now it's anything and everything including the wall and the bed he has had since he was tiny. We aren't sure what to do as we aren't always there to catch it. We come home to his bed in tatters and he has ripped out the stuffing. I have caught him trying to eat the molding and yelled and he seems to have stopped although I did catch him trying it again yesterday in a new spot. What do I do?! Nicole

Hiya, Nicole! There are a couple of things I'd suggest. Firstly, he might need more exercise. If he's not getting a bit pooped out on his walks and then he comes home and has to entertain himself for the day, then he might go about these bad habits. So try to tire him out more. Also, I don't know if you've been employing puzzle toys (like the Kong) but I would suggest you do a lot of this, even for meals if possible. He clearly is an oral dog who likes to entertain himself by chewing so, if you give him appropriate alternatives, he'll exercise his habits on them rather than other things. Try to puppy proof wherever he's being kept during the day, when you're not around, as much as possible. If this means his going back into the crate during the day, then so be it. Better that you break him of this bad habit early and quickly so that he can regain his freedom eventually than that he continues to practice the chewing and destructiveness and the habit becomes harder to break. When you DO see him chewing on a bad thing, tell him "no", take him away from it but, most importantly, direct him to an alternative, like a Kong or squeakie, etc. You have to show him the correct alternative. Make sense? Good luck!