



When considering training your pet, it's important to understand that there are different types of training available, and selecting the right one is key to achieving your goals. In this guide, we will outline training formats and offer tips to help you choose the most suitable for you and your pet.

Things to Remember

- 🐾 Training Takes Time:** Remember that training is an ongoing process, and it may take some time before you begin to see progress. There's no one-size-fits-all format or trainer that can guarantee the elimination of undesirable behaviour in your pet or completely "fix" or "cure" any issue. Be patient and consistent and remember that you play a significant role in your pet's training.
- 🐾 Humane Training is Key:** It's important to use trainers who use reward-based methods because positive reinforcement rewards the desired behaviour, increasing the likelihood your pet will repeat the desired behaviour. Avoid trainers who use tools or methods that cause your pet pain, fear, avoidance or stress. Some tools to avoid include choke chains, prong collars, spray collars, invisible fence systems and electronic collars.

When selecting a trainer, avoid the following phrases and practices:

Phrases to watch out for		
Dominant	Alpha	Pack leader
Discipline	Make your pet respect you	Calm submission
Balanced	Corrections	Referring to rewards as bribes or unnecessary

Practices to watch out for
Leash/collar pops/jerks, which are called "leash corrections"
Forcing animals to "face their fears" or "submit"
Provoking animals to do something so they can be "corrected" for it
Physical force such as pushing, kneeling, hitting, pinning, holding their mouth closed or pressing their nose into something
Intimidation such as yelling, confrontational body language, prolonged staring and purposefully startling an animal

Different Types of Training

Classes can be offered in a variety of formats or settings. Some trainers offer multiple formats, while others may only offer one kind.

- **Group Classes:** These are classes where multiple animals and their guardians learn together from a trainer at a specific location.





- **Private Sessions:** A trainer works one-on-one with you and your pet, either at your home or another location.
- **Virtual Live Training:** You and the trainer meet over a video call for remote training and guidance.
- **Board-and-Train or Day Training*:** You drop off your pet at a facility where a trainer works with them. Your pet may stay there for a period of time or spend the day and return home in the evenings.

****Caution:** Since you won't be present during the training sessions, it's vital to ensure that your pet will undergo training using humane methods and equipment. Also, make certain that their basic needs, such as food, water and adequate rest, will be provided throughout the day. You should receive lessons either throughout or after your pet's boarding, so you understand what your pet has learned and how to continue their training on your own.*

Red Flag: If a Board-and-Train or day training package says "training collar included", this may mean an electronic or prong collar will be used.



Read the Fine Print

Different trainers will have different terms and conditions. For example, private training sessions may require an initial consultation to ensure you're a good match for each other. Please be aware that purchasing a package of training sessions may come with certain requirements, such as using all sessions within a specific timeframe. It's important to note that there may be no option for a refund or extending the sessions beyond the specified timeframe. Always make sure you understand these conditions and confirm your availability to comply with them when looking for training options.

How to Choose the Right Type of Training

- 🐾 **Identify Your Goals:** Determine what you want to achieve with your pet's training. Different goals may require specific formats or trainers with particular skills.
- 🐾 **Research Trainers:** Trainers have different experience levels, educational backgrounds and services available. Take the time to research and find a qualified trainer that aligns with your goals.
- 🐾 **Understand the Difference:** Training for specific cues (like "sit" or "come") is different from addressing things like fear or aggression.
 - Training for things like fear, aggression or separation anxiety helps your pet change their emotional response to things, which is different than teaching them to perform an action, such as sitting on cue or coming when called.
 - Training to change emotional response is commonly called behaviour modification and requires someone with the right knowledge and skills to help you create a behaviour modification plan that includes training exercises and environmental and/or lifestyle modifications to make.



-  **Consider Your Pet's Needs:** Choose a format that is kind to your pet and best promotes learning. If your pet is fearful or reactive, a private or virtual session might be less stressful for them; however, a group class can be beneficial for teaching your pet to focus around distractions.
-  **Commitment:** Understand that you'll play a significant role in your pet's training. Choose a training format that you're willing to commit to and become skilled in.

Use this table to help you consider your training options:

Compare Training Options	
Group Training Classes	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Commonly available ✓ Typically, more cost effective ✓ Follow a regular schedule* ✓ Varying group sizes – ideal for reactive or fearful dogs ✓ Opportunity to use equipment not available at home ✓ Helpful for specific purposes such as puppy socialization or working around distractions
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Ratio of instructors to class participants may vary ✗ Requires travelling to the facility ✗ Can be distracting for some animals (and people) ✗ Exposure to other animals may pose health or conflict risks ✗ Limited time for individual questions in class
Private Sessions	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individual attention ✓ Personalized training ✓ Less distracting environment than group classes ✓ Can take place in various settings such as your home, a park or a setting where a concern commonly occurs
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Typically, more expensive than group training ✗ Trainers may not service an area ✗ May require travelling to a location ✗ Scheduling may vary*
Virtual Live Training	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individual attention ✓ Personalized training ✓ Convenient and may let you work with trainers outside your area ✓ Suitable for pets uncomfortable outside the home
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Requires technology and stable internet connection ✗ Requires correct webcam positioning ✗ There may be an adjustment period if you are used to in-person demonstrations ✗ Scheduling may vary*



Board-and-Train or Day Training

Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Convenient for people who may not have the time or skills to train ✓ Trainers teach the pet for you
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Typically, more expensive than other formats ✗ Program and schedule variations between providers ✗ Requires careful review and trust of trainers as you won't be present for training ✗ Additional research required to understand boarding/facility details and programs/methods used.

**Denotes something that can be a pro or a con depending on your preferences*

By considering these factors and choosing the right training format, you'll set yourself and your pet up for a successful and enjoyable learning experience. Always prioritize your pet's well-being and choose trainers who use humane methods to ensure a happy and healthy relationship with your companion.

If you have questions or need further assistance with pet training, you can also ask us behavioural questions by emailing: askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com

Additional Resources:

For more resources, guidance and supports for pet guardians, please visit our website at <https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/>

Did You Know?

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It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 70% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. Please Donate.

