

TRAINING AND HANDLING

Equipment for you and your dog

No two dogs, or two human handlers, are alike. At Animal Farm Foundation, we treat every dog and every handler as an individual. We use a variety of training tools to help each dog and each handler have a positive, successful training experience that will promote the human-canine bond.



BAIT BAG

This is used to carry all of the “good stuff” like treats, toys or whatever else might motivate the dog to want to learn. There are bags made specifically to hold training treats, or you can improvise a treat bag. The style of bag can be as individual as the handler. A pocket can also be used if the lingering smell of treats is not a problem!



TREATS

Treats can range from kibble to real meat, depending on the level of distraction the dog and handler are experiencing during a training session. Using kibble for training at home is usually good enough but out in the “real world,” with real life distractions, the reinforcement will need to be bumped up with treats that the dog thinks are worth his attention.



LEASHES

There are many leash options. Use a leash that is soft on the hands and about six feet in length for non-reactive dogs. A leash of four feet in length is best for a dog who reacts to people or animals when out in public. The shortened leash will allow the handler to help the dog avoid bad experiences. Exercise caution with extendable/retractable leashes, as they often give the handler much less control of the dog, and can cause injury if the cable is grabbed in an emergency. If dropped on the ground, the plastic extendable/retractable leash handle will bang behind the dogs and could frighten even the bravest dog, which could result in the dog running away.





CLICKER

The clicker is used to mark the exact moment that a dog does the “right” behavior and is followed by a treat. In place of the clicker, the word “Yes” can be used, giving the handler one less thing to hold during a training session.



FLAT BUCKLE COLLAR

Collars that display the dog’s name, phone number, rabies tag and any required licensing are a must to ensure a dog’s safe return home. If using a flat buckle collar for walking a large dog, it is safest to have a metal buckle. Plastic closures can snap open if the dog pulls, leading to an off-leash pooch. For large dogs or strong pullers, consider a sensation harness or head halter for walking.



SENSATION HARNESS

The sensation harness is designed to clip in the front of the dog, at the chest. It is meant to be comfortable for the dog to wear, as it takes pressure off the dog’s neck. It also makes it easier for the dog to use appropriate body language when he meets other dogs and people. The sensation harness also gives the handler more control of the dog’s body as the dog is steered from the shoulders.



HEAD HALTER

The head halter fits around the dog’s nose and back of the head. It is a good piece of equipment for reactive dogs. It will give the handler better control of the dog’s head, which translates to more control of the dog’s entire body. A note of caution for this piece of equipment: For the comfort, safety and success of the dog, the handler will need to fully understand the proper use of the halter.

Training is a team effort and is most successful when the handler and dog are enjoying each others company while working together. Use training equipment that will promote a positive and pleasant experience for the dog and a sense of accomplishment for the handler.