



# Paws For Thought

You can't teach an old dog new tricks...or can we?

“You can't teach an old dog new tricks” is a saying that is usually used for people, implying that we get more set in our ways with each passing year. But, taken literally, is it true? Teaching an old dog, or any dog for that matter, new tricks is not only quite possible but your dog may actually thank you for it. Your dog may be brilliantly trained. He can sit and stay a football field away, he will run towards you fast as a speeding bullet and he will march beside you, quite comfortable on a slack leash. Still, it might be time to expand his repertoire. Teaching your dog a few tricks is simply a great idea. After all, every word he knows is like a trick. Sit, down, come and heel are forms of

tricks. They are words that your dog knows how to do when asked to do it. Teaching him a few tricks such as roll over, spin, give a paw, or to jump up into your arms will expand his vocabulary.



There is another school of thought when it comes to teaching your dog a few tricks. The way people perceive tricks can be quite different to how they perceive what is considered obedience. By teaching your dogs tricks, dog owners themselves will automatically teach them with a bit more fun involved, and a lot less stress will be placed on the dog to be successful. While words such as stay are very important in a dog's life, learning how to teach tricks to their dog will help loosen up most dog owners and put a smile on their face.

Tricks are fun to teach. And positive, motivational techniques win the day. Dogs will have a greater chance of repeating a behavior if they are rewarded for it.

Start with a simple trick, such as give a paw. Take a treat and show it to your dog then close it into your fist. Hold it just slightly over your dog's head. Most dogs will lift their nose to reach it, and if it is just a bit too high, they will lift their paw to keep their balance. As soon as your dog lifts his paw up, away from the floor, take it into your opposite hand as you say the word paw. Give him his treat. It won't take many repetitions for your pup to realize that as soon as he lifts his paw, he gets a tasty morsel! The rest is up to your imagination. Have some fun...teach your dog some tricks, no matter how old he is.