

Ever wondered how to choose a trainer?

There are two basic methods of training. One uses positive reinforcement, such as praise and treats. The other is negative, and uses fear and dominance.

Never let a trainer dominate you or your dog. Trainers should never force your dog into a submissive position on the ground. They should not grab your dog by the muzzle, ear, leg, fur or any part of his body. They should never pinch, hit, kick or in any way cause your dog pain. Your dog could get seriously injured from this process and may try to bite.

If the trainer tries to reassure you that his methods are safe, or that his way is the only way, look for another trainer.

A dog who is not normally fearful should not be cowering or whimpering around a trainer. If you or your dog are not comfortable, you should stop the session immediately.

Never allow a trainer to lift a dog off the ground by his collar. The trainer should never yank your dog around on the leash. A Gentle Leader or Easy Walk harness works best. The leash attaches in the front, not on the back, of the dog.

Rubbing your dog's nose in an "accident" only confuses your dog. This method is unnecessary, unsanitary, and teaches your dog to hide behind the couch when he has to go potty. Your dog wants to please you. Giving him lots of opportunities to go potty in the right place, and praising him for doing so, teaches him much faster. A low toned, confident voice is helpful. Treats work much better than yelling. If you are ever concerned or uncomfortable with anything the trainer is doing to your dog, end the session immediately.