

**Five Steps To A Better Behaved Dog**  
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Here are five steps that we think will make any dog better behaved and more enjoyable to have around.

**Step 1: Catch Your Dog Doing Something Right**

In many pet-owning families, the dog receives the most attention when he is misbehaving. As soon as he starts chewing on the table leg rather than his toy, all attention is focused on him. Take advantage of all those times your dog is behaving appropriately – lying quietly chewing on his toy, for example – to praise, pet and pay attention to him.

**Step 2: Ignore Annoying Pestering Behaviors**

Dogs who bark at their owners, jump on people and pester for attention do so because it works – it results in some sort of attention from the owner – even if it’s a scolding. When you ignore a dog who is being annoying, his behavior will worsen before it gets better. This step fits right in with Step 1 - if you ignore the pestering and pay attention to the dog when he’s quiet, he’ll soon figure out the new rules.

**Step 3: “Nothing (or at least many things) In Life Is Free**

Have your dog obey a simple command such as sit or lie down before receiving anything he wants such as being petted, played with, fed, let outside, given a treat, etc. This easily puts owners in the driver’s seat, and trains the dog that he must give up some control before getting what he wants. Everybody wins – the owner has a dog who listens, and the dog gets the good things in life.

**Step 4: Manage The Dog’s Environment**

Dogs, especially young ones and those new to the family, require a lot of supervision. Parents wouldn’t dream of allowing a toddler free run of the house while unsupervised. Structure the dog’s environment so he doesn’t have the opportunity to spend all day barking in the yard or go off in the formal dining room and leave a “mess”. Not allowing undesirable behaviors to become habits is important.

**Step 5: Make Acquiescing to You An Enjoyable Experience**

So-called ‘dominance exercises’ in which the dog is pinned on his back in a rough manner can serve to intimidate him, but certainly don’t help him to enjoy the experience. This approach can result in fear and aggression. Instead, if a dog receives a tiny bit of cheese when placed on his back, he’ll be excited to repeat the experience. In general, it helps to think about “How can I get my dog to do what I want so I can reward him”, rather than thinking “How can I get him to stop doing those behaviors I don’t like”.