

12 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL RESCUE



PHILLY
Unleashed



TELLTAIL DOG TRAINING WITH PHILLY UNLEASHED



Before You Bring Your Dog Home

1. Consider your lifestyle

Think about your desired dog and if he'll fit into your family. There are a lot of sizes, shapes, and colors of dogs out there, and it's easy to get caught up in love at first sight.

>> **Non-shedding breeds.** Poodles and doodles may sound ideal, but they aren't low maintenance. They require a professional groomer every four to six weeks, along with daily brushing. These costs of both time and money can quickly add up.

>> **Border collies and Australian cattle dogs.** Highly intelligent breeds can make you think of all of the possibilities, like agility or trick training. But they also need a lot of mental stimulation. If you don't find them a job, they will find their own. We promise, you aren't going to appreciate their idea of a hard day's work.

>> **Mastiffs and bulldogs.** Guard dogs can seem like the best of both worlds, a cuddly companion who protects you and your family. But they can also make having friends over a challenge, and they may have reactivity in cars, at the front door, or when they spot any visitors out of the front window.

BY ELIZABETH SILVERSTEIN & NICOLE SKEEHAN

Hello! Elizabeth here - I've been a dog trainer since 2017, when I joined the team of Philly Unleashed in New Jersey. Three years later, I've got my own dog training business here in Arkansas, where I moved to be closer to my sister, Grace. She adopted her dog, Maslow, from CARE for Animals, picking him based on a picture (not gonna lie, those eyes are pretty cool). I helped her with understanding his breed and setting up rules for him when he came home.

Nicole Skeehan, owner of Philly Unleashed, has over 20 years of experience with rescue dogs. She and I collaborated on how to prepare for success when bringing a new dog home.

Telltail Dog Training

Website: telltai dogtraining.com

Email: info@telltai dogtraining.com

Phone: 501-500-4685

Instagram/Facebook/Twitter: Telltail Dog

Podcast: <https://telltai dog.fireside.fm/>

Philly Unleashed

Website: phillyunleashed.com

Email: info@phillyunleashed.com

Phone: 215-850-9745

Instagram/Facebook: Philly Unleashed

Online Classes: phillyunleashed.com/uluru-virtual-classes

>> **Labs, pointers, and huskies.** When you have a dog that requires an immense amount of exercise to stay happy and out of trouble, there are no days off. There's no Netflix and nap all weekend. You'll be like the mailman: rain, snow, sleet, or hail won't keep you from your daily dog walks.

>> **Hound dogs.** If you're looking for a breed that'll stick around while you hit the trails where dogs can run free, then disregard breeds designed to hunt, like beagles. They'll get on a scent and be gone.

Are there exceptions to the norm? Absolutely. You may find a hound dog who would rather nap than run in the forest for hours, or you may find a husky who loves to do what you ask. Breed standards give us an idea of what to expect, but all dogs are individuals.

2. Find your dog

There are lots of ways to find a dog, especially in the south. With a warmer climate and a lack of access to resources, dogs can fend for themselves for longer without the threat of freezing to death in the winter, like in the north. With dogs being regularly bred or dumped, there will always be a need for foster or permanent homes. Just because a dog is listed as free doesn't mean that the dog won't cost money. Often, free puppies have had no health care or vaccinations, making them at risk for serious diseases.

I offered to foster a small dog my friend had found, and because the dog had been dumped, she had two different types of worms and had not been spayed. When all is said and done, the dog, at 7.5 lbs, will be over \$500 in medical expenses. Getting a dog through a shelter or rescue means paying a fraction of the total costs, or as little as \$80-\$200, because they have the resources through volunteers and fundraising to take care of the dog and find a good home.

>> **Shelters.** Little Rock and the surrounding areas have an abundance of shelters: Maumelle, Cabot, Sherwood, La Plata County, and more. Some will waive their adoption fees (but maintain their vetting process of homes) now and then in order to clear the shelters. With COVID-19, more shelters are doing online or social distancing meet and greets.

>> **Nonprofit rescues.** There are also a lot of organizations, like CARE for Animals, that offer foster-based programs. This means that dogs don't have to go through the stress of a shelter while they're waiting for their permanent home. Dogs also tend to be less stressed in general, and potential new owners will have a better idea of their behavior and personality. CARE also offers Paws in Prison, which helps train dogs that might need some help with basic manners. This is a fantastic way to help inmates learn valuable skills and get affordable training. However, PIP does not mean that a dog is perfectly trained -- training should still be maintained after adoption, and training helps build communication between human and dog.

>> **Breed-specific rescue.** When looking for a certain breed, it's only a matter of time until that breed can be found in a shelter. Plus, there are breed-specific rescues across the country that have dogs of all ages available. Some rescues can be challenging to adopt from, depending on their requirements. Don't let breed stop you from rescuing.

>> **Online.** There is no limit of Facebook groups, posts, and friends that have puppies available. People are constantly looking to rehome dogs or get rid of puppies. Be wary of free dogs, as most responsible people will require a rehoming fee to find a family that will take care of the dog financially. Also, if you go this route, be sure to get the dog seen by a vet as soon as possible. A lot of dogs in the south have heartworms and may have other issues, like worms or parvo. Backyard breeders or puppy mills may also use this route to sell puppies, which sustains a neglectful cycle.

3. Request help

Often, rescues have volunteers or staff that can match you to a good fit if you know what you're looking for. You can also hire a certified professional dog trainer, who can offer options to help with everything from scoping out available dogs, going with you to meet and temperament test candidates, assisting with integrating the dog into your home, and answering any questions that may arise over the following weeks and months.

4. Ask questions

When looking at a dog, come up with specific questions regarding the behavior listed on the kennel card or website. If the bio says something like, "very protective of family," does that mean the dog is aggressive towards strangers? Or if it says "shy in new situations," does that mean debilitating anxiety?

Sometimes rescues utilize a "used car salesman" mentality that can gloss over very real issues. Perhaps the issues aren't deal breakers, like the person who works from home and who can handle separation anxiety. But do the work to figure out what you can accommodate and what you can't, or what you can learn to handle with the help of a trainer or what might be too much.

You'll want to know as much as possible before that dog arrives at your home.

Plus, ask how long the dog has been in the shelter and why. Does he have any interest from other people? Does he need a certain type of home? Has he performed poorly at meet and greets? Has he been returned? How many times and why?

Ask about the details.

Does the dog have a bite history? How serious or frequent was it? What are the triggers? Triggers can be manageable things, like not putting your face in the dog's face, or not giving the dog high-value food items or not cornering the dog. These things might not work for a family with small children, but might be fine for a couple or a single person who can manage the behavior.

Avoid emotion-based decisions and ask for the facts. Don't believe opinions or stories without facts to substantiate. Avoid conjecture that relies on guessing what a dog was feeling or thinking and consider what directly led to a behavior or reaction instead. Adoption counselors, volunteers, or staff are typically there to advocate for the animals in their care. This is important and helpful for the animals, but if the individual begins opining on why a dog has been returned, ask for the facts and just the facts. Try to wade through opinions gracefully.

Knowing as much as possible helps potential owners make informed decisions.

5. Think about the dog's needs

Dogs are not low-maintenance pets, no matter how you slice it.

Whether you obtain a puppy from a breeder or an adult from a rescue, you're going to need to do some work. There are a few select dogs who will walk into your home and fit seamlessly, but more often than not, some legwork will be needed.

This can include house training, heartworm medication, separation anxiety, or reactivity on walks.

Consider if you can physically, financially, and emotionally support the dog that you are bringing into your life with the resources that you have. If you are worried that the amount of work, time, or money it will take to bring the dog to a place that you can live with him is overwhelming, save yourself (and the dog) the heartache and move on to the next candidate without becoming attached.

6. Cast a wide net

There are a lot of dogs out there. Over 3 million dogs enter shelters every year, which means there's a good chance of finding one that's the perfect fit for you.

Sometimes you have to meet several different dogs to know which one would be a good fit. Not everyone marries the first person they date. What may be a dealbreaker for you, isn't necessarily a dealbreaker for someone else. So don't impulse buy! Move on until you find your perfect match.



After You Bring Your Dog Home

7. Provide time to decompress

There's a higher rate of success with gradual work when it comes to dogs, especially if there's a lot of changes or other disruptions happening in their life. Dogs often need time with gradual transitions to get used to a new situation, schedule, and rules.

Keep your new dog confined to one area of the house for the first day or so, or on a leash if your dog is a protective breed. This rule was a big deal for Maslow, my sister's dog, who was known to charge and react. He'd been returned twice already for troubling behaviors. He'd met me and been fine, but when I left for an hour and came back, he charged. Because he was on a leash, she was able to manage behavior that could have been frightening without that safety net.

8. Introduce gradually

Have a gradual process of introducing your new dog to existing dogs in the home. It is always best to start slow and introduce them outside first, watching for body cues. With notes from the shelter, rescue, or foster, this may not be needed for every dog, but use caution if you're not sure.

>> Have the new dog in the house, confined to one area. The other dog may know that they're there, but don't allow them to meet just yet, just get used to each other's scents. See how they react. Are the dogs curious? Are they offering loose and wiggling bodies in reaction to the new smells? Are their hackles up? Is their body tense? Are they vocalizing?

>> Introduce on leash outside of the home. Parallel walking, then invitations to sniff in turns provides more context cues for how the dogs may react.

>> Introduce with dropped leashes outside of the home, in the backyard, if body language is going well. Some dogs are more intense in play but don't intend to attack, so take your time to understand intent.

>> Supervise all interactions. Do not leave the dogs alone together until behavior is reliable.



9. Get on a schedule

Unless you know the dog very well or have good notes from a foster, assume that the dog is not potty trained or won't be able to tell you when they need to eliminate. Try to bring the dog home when you have time to work on a schedule and supervise.

>> Have the dog on leash or supervised. Do they have a "tell" when they have to go potty? Do they go to the door and whine? Do they get distracted? Do they start to circle?

>> Plan on taking the dog out every two hours. Make notes of when they eliminate. Is it 20 minutes after they eat or drink? Is it only on walks? Is it only in the backyard?

>> Adjust schedule once you understand how your dog communicates and what they need. Two walks a day might be perfect, with one potty break midday. Or they may need four. Every dog is different.

10. Start training

Dog training is a low-stress way to build a bond with your dog. Grab some tasty treats and see what they know and if they'd like to learn something new. Some dogs prefer play, some love tricks, and others want to freestyle or learn agility. Figure out what your dog enjoys and have some fun.

11. Create rules

Is the dog allowed on the couch? Can the dog sleep in bed with you or should he be on his own bed? If there are children in the home, what are they allowed to do with the dog? Can they walk the dog? Train with the dog? Children, depending on age especially, should be supervised around the dog. Allowing dogs to have a safe space, like a crate or room, away from loud situations, helps manage behavior as well.

12. Remember your dog can change

It can take up to three months for a dog to get used to a new home. This means there may be accidents in the home or chewed up furniture. Remove things you don't want destroyed and keep them in another area of the house where the dog can't access. Take the time to figure out how much exercise, walks, and training your dog may need. This may reduce over time and you'll get into a good groove.



Potty Training

Full grown dogs have a lot of wonderful aspects. They don't have developmental stages, like puppies. They don't tend to chew as much. They're usually potty trained. But sometimes there are accidents, and there are a lot of reasons why a full grown dog might have accidents in the house.

>> They weren't taught. They could have been outside dogs or they weren't trained.

>> They regressed. Often in shelters, behaviors or training can regress due to stress or lack of staffing. Sometimes dogs don't have a choice but to go to the bathroom in their kennel if they aren't taken out regularly.

>> They are sick. Dogs that are not feeling well have a hard time retaining information.

It's important to set up expectations and a schedule to let them know where they should eliminate and how to let you know.

Keep in mind that there are some accidents that aren't potty training issues.

>> Fear-based or excitement-based peeing. This often happens to puppies but can happen to dogs of all ages.

>> Marking in the house. This is not simple potty needs but may be a symptom of other issues that should be examined.

>> Unable to potty on concrete or grass or anywhere that is not inside the house.

These are not typical issues and you may have to speak with a trainer, a vet, or possibly a behaviorist if you're seeing some of these issues.

Your dog should be healthy before any training, including potty training, is started.

>> Try to schedule it where you will have a few days to be home with the dog

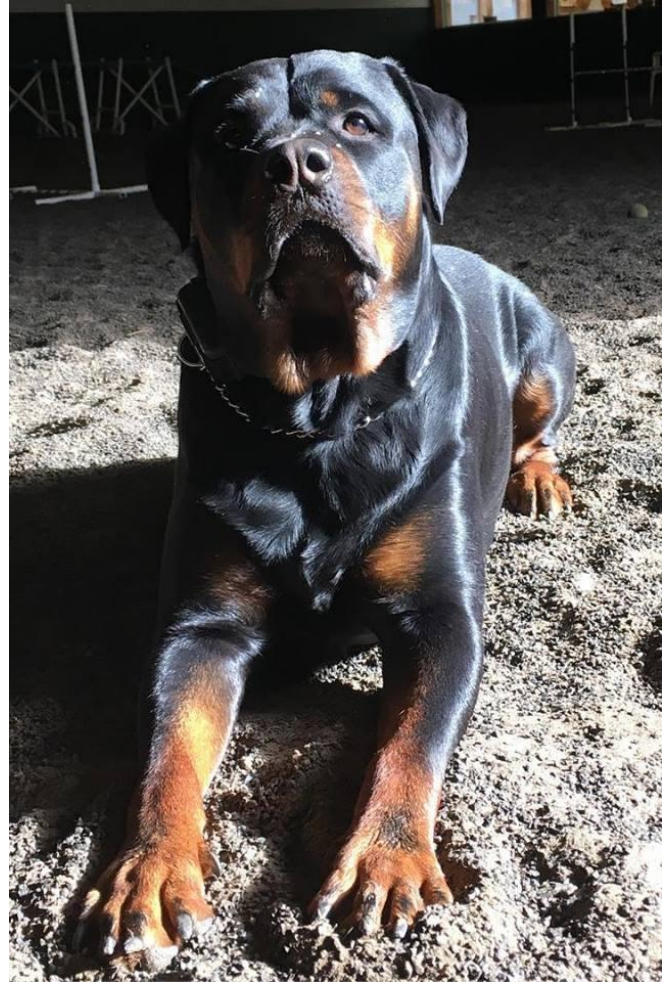
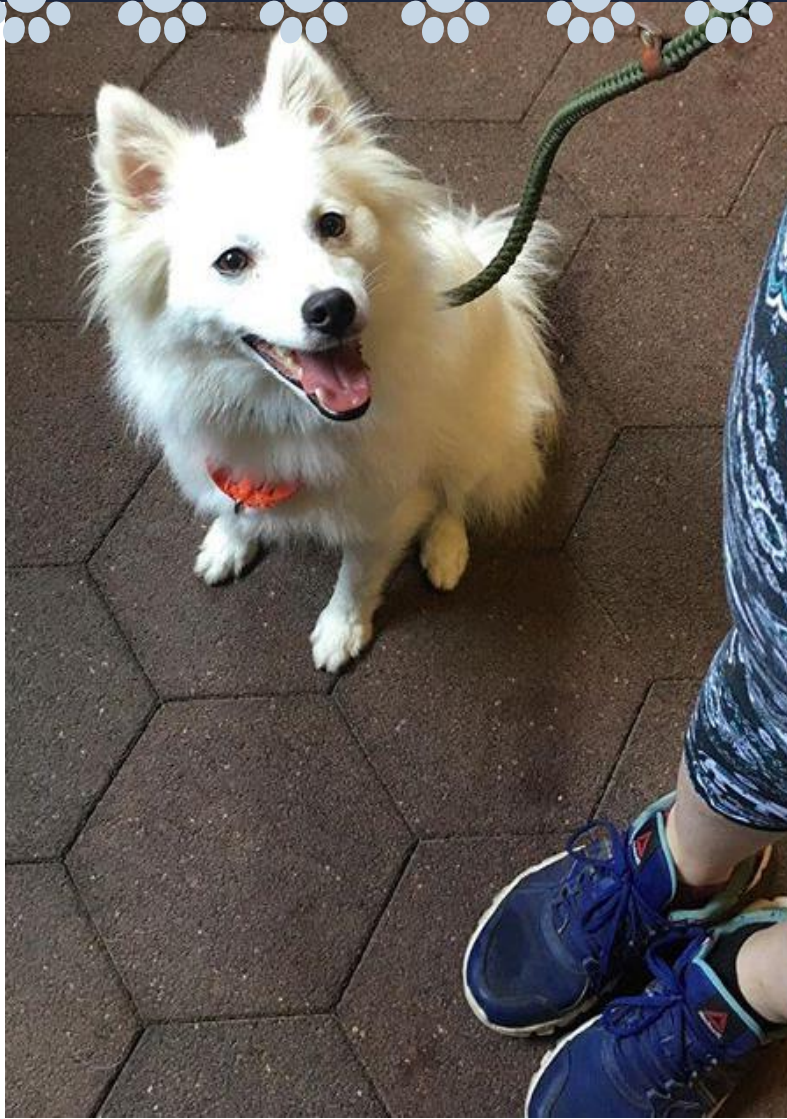
>> Keep the dog on leash or keep the dog confined to one area of the house to start.

>> Have a schedule. Take the dog outside to potty every two hours to start. Track when you brought them out, when they pottied, and how often they seemed to need to go outside.

Some dogs do best on a schedule that starts at 7 am, but some don't want to get out of bed until 10 am.

This is a good time to see what sort of dog you've got, start establishing communication, and build a schedule that works for everybody.





Telltail Dog Training

Telltail Dog Training is based in Little Rock, Arkansas, offering in-home training, group classes, and training walks. Elizabeth Silverstein first trained with Philly Unleashed before moving to Arkansas in 2018. She also produces a weekly blog and podcast highlighting education, health, and training and featuring other pet industry professionals.

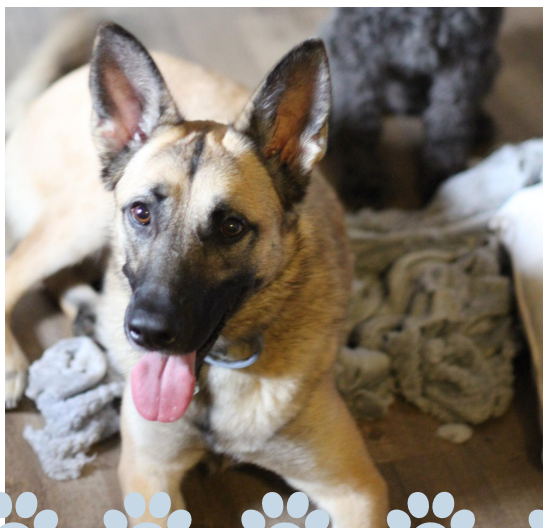
Website: telltaildogtraining.com

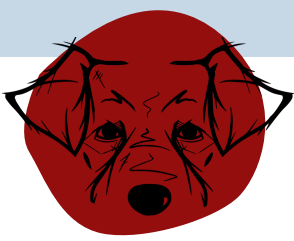
Email: info@telltaildogtraining.com

Phone: 501-500-4685

Instagram/Facebook/Twitter: Telltail Dog

Podcast: <https://telltaildog.fireside.fm/>





DOG TRAINING

The videos are pretty cool -- dogs training for search and rescue careers, performing a complicated dance routine, running a massive agility course, or showing off some cute tricks. What those videos don't tend to show is how much work goes into getting to that point. Working dogs, like seeing eye or mobility assistance, are trained intensively over two years to perform the tasks they'll be doing until retirement. And the ones that are handled by working professionals, like for search and rescue, have a level of skill that requires specialty training on the person's part. There's a lot to training, and some trainers describe the process as simple but not easy. Dogs also have to practice their skills, much like human athletes. Athletes who win super bowls and championships still get on the field to practice their skills.



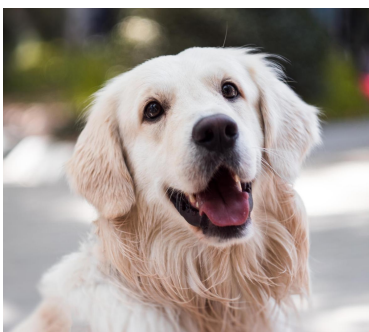
WHAT IS DOG TRAINING?

Dog training is using methods like luring, marking, and rewarding to communicate with a dog to establish and reinforce cues and skills. Skills are built despite distractions, duration, distance, and difficulty. Since dogs can't generalize (they don't always understand that going potty inside is bad, but outside is good, or that they need to sit when asked on a walk even though they sit perfectly in the kitchen), we need to work with them across a variety of situations to help them proof their behaviors. This is how we redirect jumping into a more appropriate task.

WHY IS TRAINING IMPORTANT?

Training is just another word for communication. To communicate effectively with our dogs, we need to understand how their brains work and what makes sense to them. If they want attention, and to get it, they jump up, then we are rewarding them with positive reinforcement by pushing them down. They're getting what they want -- attention. Training helps us let them know that we will give them attention when they sit, instead. Training also helps us be more aware of our words. Instead of asking our dogs to sit three different ways ("can you sit? sit please? sit now"), we learn to say "sit" once, and then we can train our dogs to listen the first time, instead of the fifth time we say it.

Training is also a fantastic way to get our dogs' brains tired. Exercising our dogs is important, but training to our dogs is like reading a good book at bedtime for us. It mentally stimulates, providing what trainers like to call good stress that helps get a rambunctious pup good and tired, especially when learning new cues, advancing established ones, or getting into the more complicated stuff, like stringing cues or learning tricks.

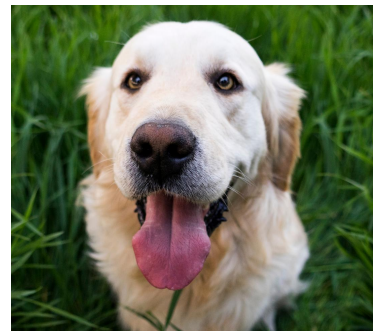


HOW OFTEN FOR TRAINING?

Well, when can you fit it into your schedule? I like to recommend just five minutes once or twice a day. This is good for Paws in Prison graduates, too! Although they may know a lot coming out of the program, they often really enjoy learning and would love to reinforce and advance their cues with you. Training also helps you bond with your dog. You're learning to trust each other. Your PIP journal is a huge glimpse into your dog's personality and how they would like to interact with the world.

WHAT IF HELP IS NEEDED?

Watch some YouTube videos or, if you really need some help learning or advancing cues, find a trainer. Remember, training should be fun and stress-free for everybody, and an experienced trainer can help make it a pleasant experience. Think about your goals for you and your dog, what methods you're interested in, and interview some trainers to see who might be a good fit. Look for experience across a wide range of dogs and ask about certifications. It's important to find a good connection.



WHAT CUES SHOULD YOUR DOG KNOW?



Six common cues that every dog should know include: sit, down, stay, break, come, and leave it.

Sit: Your dogs sits down across a variety of surfaces, including carpet and tile.

Down: Your dog lowers into the sphynx position, with elbows resting on the floor.

Stay: Your dog remains in a sit or down until released.

Break: Your dog is allowed to get up and move around. I like to use a special word for release because it's not typically used in every day conversation like "ok" is. If you're on the phone, or talking to someone, and you say "ok", your dog might pop up before you were ready to release him.

Come: This is a more complicated behavior that includes running to you, sitting in front of you, and letting you grab the collar.

Leave it: Leave it means leave that thing alone and the dog may NEVER have it. This is BEFORE the item gets in your dog's mouth (when it's in the mouth, then a "drop it" cue is necessary). This is important for things like chicken bones, children's toys, or anything else that may be dangerous or off limits for your dog.

BUT!

But my dog struggles with slick surfaces!

This can be particularly true for larger and shaggy dogs. If they are slipping and sliding away, grab a bath or kitchen mat to use in certain areas of the house and while you're training.

But my dog already knows sit! Why should I practice?

Then it's time to do some combos -- every foundational behavior can be used to build into something more complicated. So if that sit is down pat, start practicing that sit-stay, or practice heel or leash manners.

But I don't have the time!

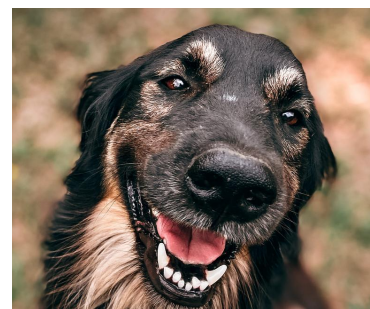
Your dog still needs exercise and mental stimulation. Taking just five minutes a day can do wonders for your dog's mental health. Practice training right before meal times, or before you go on walks.

But my dog doesn't like treats!

Treats are the easiest way to ask for and reinforce behavior, but they're not the only way. Playtime, toys, and praise can all be used to praise your dog. Reinforce with whatever your dog finds valuable. Reinforcing means offering your dog a paycheck for working. We all want to be paid. And that paycheck is how we can ask our dogs for more challenging behaviors, like looking at us instead of that squirrel they really want to chase.

But I don't want to overfeed my dog!

Talk to your vet about low calorie options or how many treats to supplement their meals with. But remember, a treat can be a very small piece, even for a large dog.



Telltail Dog Training

Website:

telltai dogtraining.com

Email:

info@telltai dogtraining.com

Phone:

501-500-4685

Instagram/Facebook/Twitter:

Telltail Dog

Podcast:

<https://telltai dog.fireside.fm/>