

OBEDIENCE TRAINING

by Sandra Luchterhand

There is nothing more pleasant and enjoyable than a well trained Labrador Retriever. A puppy or older dog can be trained to do the simplest of disciplines. And it's never too late to start!

Training should be achieved by the use of consistent commands and positive reinforcement. Owners should avoid the use of reprimands or punishment although they may be required in some situations.

The first step in achieving your obedient Labrador is to enrol in an Obedience Club and these are located throughout Queensland. Details on their locations are available by contacting the Dogs QLD office on (07)3252 2661 or by visiting www.dogsqueensland.org.au

Training your Labrador should begin early. Puppy classes which commence at the age of 12 weeks focus on socialisation, not training. Older dogs are trained in classes under the guidance of an instructor. In just a few weeks your ever-enthusiastic Lab can be taught to walk on a loose lead, sit, stay, stand, drop and come when called.

But I cannot over emphasise the point that whatever is taught at the obedience classes **must** also be practised at home. This need only be for five to ten minutes daily. While some people aspire to attain the highest standard of obedience with their Labrador, others choose to train their dogs to a standard suitable for a well-adjusted, controllable pet.

If you "catch the bug" and wish to compete in obedience trials it is a rewarding experience as your Labrador attains and excels through the various levels.

C.C.D. – Community Companion Dog

To qualify for this title your dog must obtain 3 qualifying scores of 75 points or more. To achieve this title your Labrador must complete 5 exercises, which have a total score of 100 points. The exercises consist of heeling on lead, stand for examination, recall, and both sit and down stays.

C.D. – Companion Dog (Novice)

To qualify for this title your dog must obtain 3 qualifying scores of 170 points or more. To achieve this title your Labrador must complete 6 exercises, which have a total score of 200 points. The exercises consist of heeling off lead, stand for examination, recall, retrieve a dumbbell, or change of position, and both sit and down stays.

C.D.X. – Companion Dog Excellent (Open)

To obtain this title your dog must obtain 3 qualifying scores of 170 points or more. To achieve this title your Labrador must compete in 8 exercises which have a total score of 200 points. The exercises consist of heeling off lead, stand for examination, recall with a drop on command, retrieve a dumbbell on flat ground, retrieve a dumbbell over a solid jump, broad jump or distance control, and both sit and down stays with the handler out of sight.

U.D. – Utility Dog

To obtain this title your dog must obtain 3 qualifying scores of 170 points or more. To achieve this title, your Labrador must complete 7 exercises, which have a total score of 200 points. The exercises consist of seek back, directed jumping, scent discrimination, signal exercises, a choice of food refusal, speak on command or directed retrieve, group examination and down-stay with the handler out of sight.

U.D.X. – Utility Dog Excellent

To obtain this title your dog must obtain 3 qualifying scores of 170 points or more. To achieve this title your Labrador must complete 7 exercises, which have a total score of 200 points. The exercises consist of seek back with decoy article, positions in motion, scent discrimination – Judge’s scent, directed send away and recall, distance control, multiple retrieve, and temperament test.

O.C. – Obedience Champion

To obtain this title your Labrador, having gained its Utility Dog (U.D.) title, thereafter gains a further five scores in the Utility ring of 185 points or better.

Obedience Trials are held throughout the year and once you have qualified in the C.C.D. or novice classes you may then wish to continue up the ladder and maybe your dog could eventually become an Obedience Champion.

But whatever road you take it is all about the enjoyment that our dogs bring to us. The willingness, the intelligence and loyalty of the Labrador Retriever make it all so easy to have a well trained companion which is the envy of all who meet and greet you and your companion.

