

## DOG LIFE



## Secret to successful indoor training

The benefit of housing a dog inside is the great number of chances to train, says Lez Graham

**B**efore you collect your new puppy, have you decided where he is going to live? You'll be so much more relaxed bringing him home if you know where he'll sleep – do you keep him in the kennel or the kitchen, or allow access to the rest of the home, too?

### HOMES OR KENNELS?

All I wanted when I got my first Labrador was a well-trained, well-mannered dog that I could take anywhere and it was when I saw his dam take on a runner that I was hooked.

Many first-time gundog owners think that they need to keep the dog outside rather than allow it to live indoors. I've read so many books that say ridiculous things such as "you'll never have a good working relationship with your dog if you allow it to live indoors", or, "your dog will ignore you once you let it inside".

My dogs have always lived indoors and they're fabulous, not only around the home but also on the shooting field.

That doesn't mean I'm against dogs being in kennels, rather, I believe that it is up to the person who owns the dog to decide where the dog is going to live – your dog, your choice.

As a behaviourist I do see dogs with issues caused by privileges being given around the home, but that's nothing to do with the dog being indoors. Kennelled dogs can also display unwanted and unacceptable behaviour. In both instances it really is down to management and leadership rather than whether the dog is living indoors or out.



### BASIC GROUND RULES

When it comes to training, an indoor dog can certainly be more challenging. There are many distractions for your dog to deal with, including noise from the TV or radio, people moving around or coming and going, and so on. Then there's all the smells it has to contend with, bearing in mind that a dog has almost 220 million scent receptors in his nose (compared with our measly five million).

Household dynamics can also work against you when you have your gundog indoors.

This is not so bad if you live on your own as you can ensure that your dog is treated and managed the way that you want. But when your household is bigger you have to ensure that everyone is using the same commands and following the same rules. If you don't, when your great auntie Mabel with her "darling" pug comes to say and begins bellowing "sit" and "stay" and "get down" and "come here" and "leave that" and throws toys left right and centre, your gundog won't know if it's coming or going.

To get around the training challenges you must set some ground rules and then get everyone else to train your gundog for you.

### LEZ GRAHAM



Lez Graham has a Master's degree in canine behaviour and psychology, works full-time as a gundog trainer and behaviour practitioner and is the author of the *Pet Gundog* series of books. She is an executive specialist dog handler with the Dog Safety Education Executive (DogSEE) and tutors with the Cambridge Institute of Dog Behaviour and Training.

### LEZ'S "HOUSE RULES"

- » Anyone can use "sit" but no-one except me uses "stay".
- » Anyone can throw a toy with a "go get it" but no-one except me uses "get on", "get out", "go back".
- » Anyone can use a recall whistle but no-one except me uses a hunting whistle.
- » If you're going to throw a toy for my dog, he puts it in your hand and you tell him to "sit" before you throw it again.
- » If you're going to use a tennis ball flinger then the dog MUST wait until you send him and not dance and bounce about like a goon.
- » No-one except me plays tug of war with my dog and...
- » If I catch my dog jumping up on anyone there WILL be trouble.

### USE THE ADVERT BREAK

One of the best things about having a gundog indoors is the bond that you can create. Remember that every time you interact with your gundog you are training him on some level. Little things, as they say, really do go a long way. For example, you can teach him that unless he is sitting he won't get attention simply by not stroking him until he is sitting and you can teach him self-control by making him wait for his dinner, but of course you can do that with kennelled dogs too.

Every time you put the kettle on use it as an opportunity to train your dog to sit, stand, heel, hold, come and so on. You can also use this time to train focus by sitting your dog in front of you and talking to him, then every time he looks away say "ah ah" and when he looks back start talking again and praise him.

When you're watching TV, use the ad breaks to do a little retrieve. When he's a puppy just sit on the floor with him between your legs (facing away from you to protect his little joints) and toss the toy a couple of feet in front with a "get on". For the older dog you can work on steadiness by sitting him up and throwing his toys around the room and then making him retrieve them in the order that you want him to bring them back.



There are plenty of opportunities for training your gundog in the home



### MORE INDOOR EXERCISES

» When you're doing household chores, train a sit stay by sitting your dog at the back door while you're washing up or emptying the dishwasher.

» Work on walking nicely to heel on and off lead while you go outdoors to hang out washing or collect it back in again.

» Get your dog to sit nicely while you're putting your coat and boots on and picking up your lead. To start with, tie him up to the banister if it's too much, until he realises you mean business and unless he is calm, he's not going anywhere.

» Take your dog with you on the lead when you answer the door and make him sit while you deal with your visitor. This teaches him how he's supposed to behave when meeting new people – very important for meeting the gamekeeper and Gunds.

**NEXT MONTH:** Lez looks at preparing your home – and yourself – for the arrival of your puppy.

### MAKING THE MOST OF IT

When your dog greets you in the morning with a toy in his mouth, you can easily train a gentle delivery to hand. Simply make a fuss then gently take the toy, tell him to "sit" and give it back to him. By giving it back, he'll always want to give to you, and, if you ever have retrieving issues, just drop in your "good morning" routine.

Train hunting around the house by putting your dog in a sit stay, hiding a toy (just in sight initially) and sending him to find it. This can quickly build up to a sit stay in one room while you hide the toy in another, thereby teaching your dog blind retrieves.

And remember, regardless of how quietly you give a command, you must mean it and so each and every command should only be given once. If the command is ignored ask yourself if you trained it and, if you haven't trained it enough, then make sure your dog knows what it is you want him to do. To repeat the same command, or even change it slightly before repeating it, simply tells your dog he can ignore the first, however many commands you give, which may play havoc long-term with your recall. **SG**



### GUNDOG GEAR



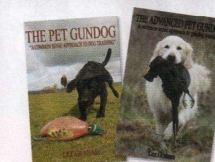
#### THE QUEST "SNIPE" DUMMY

Quest's new dummy, the "snipe" is small but weighty. It is easily lost from view in rough grass so requires hard work to locate. It is very good for getting a dog to hold an area as it has to rely on its nose. Price £3.95. For details, visit [www.questgundogs.co.uk](http://www.questgundogs.co.uk)



#### GUNDOG LANYARDS

If you are looking for a unique lanyard for your gundog whistle then look no further. These are handmade in Britain using tough paracord and high quality lobster clasps. You can choose from a huge variety of colours and designs and the length can be adjusted to suit. Price £12 to £18. For details, visit [www.gundoglanyards.co.uk](http://www.gundoglanyards.co.uk)



#### THE PET GUNDOG DVDS

Following the success of *The Pet Gundog* books, Lez Graham is launching two accompanying DVDs, covering from early training to more complicated exercises. The DVDs are not for sale separately unless you have already purchased the books. Price £19.99 for both DVD and books or £14.99 without the DVDs. For details visit [www.thepetgundog.co.uk](http://www.thepetgundog.co.uk)