



## Deaf Dogs

Dogs may be born deaf or become deaf. A white dog with blue eyes is more likely to be born deaf than a dog with other eye color and coat color. If a dog is not born deaf, they may become deaf after an injury, chronic ear infections, aging or other reasons. Training a deaf dog can be just as easy if not easier than training a dog who is not hearing impaired. Many dogs who are not hearing impaired learn that when being trained, owners tend to repeat themselves or speak commands that the dog does not truly understand. Dogs learn very quickly from hand lures and signals. By leaving out the extra background noise, training can be easy and less frustrating. That is why deaf dogs seem to catch on just as quickly!



Many deaf dogs respond well to using a laser pointer as a visual marker to let the dog know that they did something right, almost like clicker training but by using visual information vs. auditory. Here is an example of how it works

- Click the laser pointer (make sure dog sees it and reward).
- Repeat ten times
- Use a treat and lure dog into sit. Before giving the treat, click the laser pointer to the ground (never in the dog's eyes) and THEN reward
- The laser then becomes an easy way to mark good behaviors.
- If you don't want to use a laser pointer, you can always use an easy item like a small colored scarf. You show the scarf then reward, following the example above. Any visual marker that is small, consistent and portable can work. Some people just use a "thumbs up" sign

Be aware of things that could startle your dog: touching them without them seeing you first. Having short daily sessions of "surprise" touching the dog and immediately rewarding with high value treats can help make your dog think of these instances as positive experiences.

Recall can be challenging but using long leads can ensure that your dog comes back every time!

Because we can't give verbal markers, using time outs for mouthy pups can teach them what is appropriate or not. If the dog is mouthing you to play, simply give the dog a 10 second time out. This can be in a small room where or a crate. The punishment isn't the location, the punishment is the lack of human attention. Be consistent with this message and never forget to reward often for calm behaviors.

The presence of social media can be very helpful. There are Facebook groups dedicated to deaf dogs. Here are some useful deaf dog websites:

[www.deafdogsrock.com](http://www.deafdogsrock.com)

[www.deafdogs.org](http://www.deafdogs.org)

[www.deafdogs.com](http://www.deafdogs.com)

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