

DIY Wellness Plan for Canine Behaviour Modification



CREATE THE LIFE YOU DESERVE
WITH THE DOG YOU LOVE

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Your DIY Wellness Plan for Behaviour Modification



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Introduction

Your dog's behavior isn't only affecting their lifestyle, it's affecting yours.

*Have you stopped having friends and family visit because of how your dog behaves?

*Do you wish you could take your dog with you to social activities?

*Do you just want to live in harmony and enjoy life with your dog?

When our dogs are poorly behaved, it impacts our daily lives in ways we never expected.

And you are not alone!

There are two types of dog handlers who land here with us at The Crate Escape.

Notice how we say dog handler and not dog owner? By definition of the law, you own them, and they are your property, but dogs are sentient beings who deserve to be in a mutually respectful relationship with you, it's not a business transaction. The first part of learning with us begins with language and how we talk to and about our dogs.

The first group consists of people who seek our help are puppy or young-dog handlers who want to prevent bad behaviors from developing and who are interested in creating the ideal canine-human relationship right from the start.

The second group of people have troubled dogs and feel like they have tried everything to help them but keep hitting dead ends. They've tried reward-based (Purely Positive) training methods to motivate and entice good behaviour, they've tried corrections-based training using aversive methods to punish bad behaviour and yet nothing has solved their dog's behavior problems. This group of dogs often has amazing obedience skills but still struggles with behaviors such as leash-reactivity, aggression, separation anxiety, and generally rude and pushy behaviors.

If you are one of those people or somewhere in between, we are beyond excited to have you join us and we are so grateful and appreciative that you are interested in learning more about your dog with us!

Disclaimer: We do not teach obedience-only training programs!

Obedience is a form of control when we are not sure how to communicate, when we are disconnected in some way. Yes, obedience is an important life skill for a dog, but we don't teach it until we have taught communication first. Obedience is the equivalent of academics for people. We don't judge the quality of a person on their academic achievements, we look at what kind of person they are.

Are they kind and compassionate or are they mean and hurtful?

Do they communicate well or are they short and/or abrasive?

Are they patient and understanding or are they rude and pushy?

Do they do things for the benefit of their families and community or are they self-centered?

We judge our dogs on a similar set of principles.

Now that you know that obedience is simply control, let's put that on the back-burner. First we need to reconnect with our dogs, learn more about them, learn about their language, learn what they are trying to tell you, and learn how to communicate back in a way that makes sense to *them*.

Your dog is not giving you a hard time.

Your dog is *having* a hard time.

Many, if not most, dogs living in our culture are suffering from behavioural symptoms from a wide variety of causes. Maybe your dog was sick, abused, or scared. Maybe it came from a puppy mill/shelter/rescue. Maybe it has a genetic predisposal to whatever problems you face. Or maybe some mistakes were made during developmental phases of raising them.

Either way, if your dog falls into any category other than "perfect", then our programs are for you! And the great news is that it doesn't matter why their struggles have developed. We will put those behind us and move forward together.

Don't rely on "training" to solve behavior problems.

Dogs have been working alongside humans for thousands of years symbiotically. Human

and dog each had their role to play and they took care of each other. Originally, dogs were not “trained”, they simply had a relationship with humans and the humans who handled dogs learned how to read dogs body signals and learned how to communicate back to them.

That is the basis of Relationship Based Training; **Communication**.

Fast forward to modern times and somewhere along the way, people became interested in having dogs as pet instead of having dogs for jobs and as the dogs were taken out of their realm and brought into ours, things began to unravel. Dogs who were bred for working purposes and had genetic desires to do things like herd or hunt were forced into confinement. To a dog, our world is very chaotic, unstructured and loud...all of which are unnatural to a dog. Many dogs have adapted gracefully into our culture but if you are here because of a dog with behavioural struggles, you likely have a dog who still has a strong genetic need for a more natural way of things, more specifically, they need your help and your leadership to guide them through our crazy world. And the only way for you to fulfill that is to first understand them.

This is where we come back around to understanding why Relationship Based Training is so important for these troubled dogs. (And all dogs deserve this quality of relationship!) It has nothing to do with positive or negative training methods. It has nothing to do with their ability to complete tasks (obedience). It has everything to do with the relationship dynamic between you and your dog.

1 - Does your dog trust you? Obviously, your dog loves and trusts you.

2 - Does your dog trust your leadership, your ability to navigate and guide them through this chaotic world?

3 - Does your dog trust that you understand *what is even happening around you?*

Before you say yes to questions 2 & 3, ask yourself, do you understand what your dog is seeing through *their* eyes? Do you understand their language enough to be able to interpret what is going on around you? Most people would answer “No”. And it’s not because you aren’t trying. It’s because you are human! You were raised in a fast-paced human world that doesn’t take the time to stop and investigate the little things around you. And it’s because our culture has forgotten about dog relationships and is hyper-focused on dog obedience. But we are here to help shift the focus back to relationships.

Well that was a bit gloomy, but here is the good news!

To improve the “trust-in-leadership” component of your relationship with your dog, you will need to learn their language and that’s the easy part. It’s entirely based on body language and you already know body language! We just speak a different dialect so learning theirs is simpler than you might think, and we are here to help you decipher and navigate this new language.

Behavior vs. Obedience

Naughty behaviour	Well-behaved	Well-trained
A dog who greets guests at the door, jumps, barks and gets excited, exuberant or aggressive	A dog who calmly greets guests	A dog who holds a down command while guests arrive
A dog who begs in the kitchen and at the dinner table	A dog who minds their own business, might choose to lay on their bed	A dog who holds a Down or Place command during meal-prep and dinner
A dog who pushes through or bolts through thresholds (open doors, gates and out of vehicles)	A dog who calmly waits for invitations to go through thresholds	A dog who will attempt to go through unless given a command such as sit and waits for a release word
When off-leash, a dog who runs away, plays keep away and/or only comes back when they are ready	A dog who chooses to walk with you or check in with you	A dog with a strong “Come” command

A well-trained dog knows how to follow instructions very well.

A well-behaved dog doesn’t need many instructions because they make good choices all on their own.

A naughty dog usually who knows *how* to follow instructions but chooses not to because they don’t understand *why*! Just like a 3-year-old who asks why to every instruction

they are given, dogs also question our choices, especially the dogs who don't adapt to our chaotic world. They need to understand the *why*.

Learning the language of dogs will help you to communicate with your dog instead of *at* your dog. All relationships improve when both parties felt understood which leads to improved willingness to listen to you later, even when they don't know *why* you are telling them something.

Here's an example. You can teach your dog an "Off" (the couch or your bed) command using treats. Say "Off" and reward them when they get down and repeat until your dog knows the command. If they continue to get up, despite being rewarded for being Off, you can correct or punish when they go up.

But nowhere in those training methods was it explained to the dog *WHY* they can't go up on the furniture and we can't reason with words because they don't speak our language.

This answer to how to tell them *WHY* is in the Relationship Based Training that we teach in our ***Behavior Basics*** course.

Before you can consider your dog trained, he has to be managed.

The "training" process won't be complete overnight. It takes time for new behaviors to be developed and for the dog to *ACCEPT* these changes.

**Choices cannot be forced.
Your dog will begin to choose to follow your instructions
when he trust in your leadership.**

During our Adventure Hikes, we hike dogs off-leash because they choose to stay with us, not because they are forced to stay with us. They choose to stay with us because they accept our leadership role, a role we have earned through communication, not "dog training methods".

Until your dog accepts your new role in your relationship dynamic (it will take a while to earn it), you will want to address some other aspects of your dog's life.

Your DIY Wellness Plan for Canine Behaviour Modification ensures your dog is set up for success before the training begins. Just like a healthy home environment and a healthy diet contribute to a child's success in school, your dog needs the same.

The recipe for success: 10 key elements of a Wellness Plan

- 1. Nutrition**
- 2. Home environment**
- 3. Exercise**
- 4. Management Strategies**
- 5. Restrictions & Safety**
- 6. Therapeutic Tools for Stress Relief**
- 7. Veterinary Care & Husbandry**
- 8. Biological Fulfillment**
- 9. Communication Skills and Understanding**
- 10. Training Plan**

Each key area can be looked at as “influencers” of your dog's problem behaviour (or prevention of problems), which is why there is never a quick and simple solution to behaviour. We need to look at the bigger picture and break it down into manageable categories so that we can successfully address them.

As you go through this information, please keep in mind that it is a guide and outline to follow. Some of the things mentioned may not be applicable to your situation – and that's okay. Some dogs need each aspect of the wellness plan to address their behaviors. Some dogs may only need a few aspects. Different dogs need different combinations but everything you need to get started is here.

Nutrition

If you haven't fallen down the rabbit hole of dog food, don't. It is easily one of the top controversial topics of the pet industry. You'll be hard pressed to find unbiased opinions



anywhere so I will do my best to help give you my best unbiased opinion and some guidance.

- Grain-free doesn't mean much. It is a fad just like it is in the human world. Most grain-free food is loaded with sugar. Not all grains are terrible, it's the QUALITY of the grains that is important.
- Allergies! If your dog has medical issues or obsessive behaviors, allergies is on the short list of potential causes. A large percentage of dogs are allergic to chicken, especially bully-breeds so check the protein of your dog's food and transition to a different protein like lamb or beef. You can also have allergy testing done by your vet.
- Whether you choose to feed kibble or raw, it is the QUALITY that is most important.

What brand of kibble are you feeding? Is it baked vs cooked by "extrusion"? (cooked under high temperature and pressure)

What are the fillers? Carrots are common in raw food but are high in sugar and have no nutritional value.

If you are already feeling overwhelmed by the thought of having to research and sift through the endless opinions online, I feel you!

I am also uninterested in sifting through google searches, spending hours of my life filling my brain with mostly useless information. That is why I consult with Deanna of K9 Acres, a certified & clinical Canine Nutritionist who has the knowledge to help me

choose the best dietary options for my dogs.

PS... There is a 9 hour online course that many pet stores have their employees take to become certified as a Canine Nutritionist and while I highly appreciate their expectation of their staff to have additional training, a 9-hr online course doesn't compare to a 2 year program and vet clinic experience. Make sure the people you get your information from are the real deal! I encourage you to use her as your nutrition resource.

If you are already enrolled in our Behaviour Basics or Rover Rehab programs, you will receive K9 Acres voucher for a consultation with Deanna to talk about how your dog's diet could be affecting their behaviour and potential medical conditions.

Feeding Schedule

Now that your dog is getting good quality food to nourish his brain, let's focus on HOW and WHEN to feed your dog. This is another step that is often overlooked. If your feeding schedule is off, you could be setting yourself up for yet another roadblock. Here are some things to consider:

- Dogs should be fed two times per day
- Free feeding is a bad idea all the way around. Free feeding is when you leave your dog's food out – all the time. Negative impacts include:
 - Physical: Their body is almost always digesting food which can be taxing on their mind and body over the long haul. Free-feeders often become picky about food, it is difficult to accurately measure the quantity they eat per day, it is easy to miss medical symptoms like change in appetite and it can be difficult to administer medications appropriately.
 - Mental: They can have depression-like symptoms from their body being bogged down.
 - Behavioral: They can develop a sense of entitlement, getting upset and demanding when food isn't available, choosing not to perform tasks in exchange for food because they know they can have it for free if they hold out.



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- Flexible feeding can actually be an advantage to you. Flexible feeding means your feeding time does not need to be exact from day to day. It helps your dog develop coping skills and will help to eliminate unwanted begging or demanding of food. There's nothing worse than a dog who smacks around his dog dish demanding that dinner be served.
 - When you offer food, it is available for about 10 minutes. If the dog chooses not to eat during the time it is available, he has forfeited his meal. You are not depriving your dog of food. He has decided that he is not hungry and that is okay, if he doesn't skip meals for more than a day. These missed meals do not get added to the next. It is one portion and only one portion should be fed at a time unless otherwise instructed by your veterinarian for medical reasons.
 - If your dog is regularly skipping meals, especially if they are consistently skipping the same meal (for example not eating breakfast but usually gobbling up dinner), then your portions are likely too big. Your dog isn't yet hungry enough for the next meal, but by the time the next meal rolls around, they are starving. You are essentially feeding once a day. Cut back the portion and they will start eating when it's offered.
 - If your dog is too thin, feed a smaller portion in the morning and a larger portion at night. If your dog is too heavy, feed a smaller portion at night.
 - Dogs naturally hunt at dawn & dusk. While it is unrealistic to ask you to wake up at the crack of dawn to feed your dog, morning and night are best feeding times, not mid-day.
 - Dogs have a natural feeding time pattern that you can use to your advantage if you have a hard time leaving your dog alone. They hunt, eat and rest; take your dog for a walk (simulated hunt), feed them their meal. They will feel satiated and in a "food-coma" nap while you're busy doing human things.

Ditch the Dish

Provide interactive mealtimes.

This is such a great addition to your daily routine with your dog. In the wild, no one is offering dogs a warm meal on a silver platter, yet we figuratively and literally do that every day. The downfall is that we are actually taking away a very important activity that is biologically fulfilling to our dogs, **the hunt!**

- Feeding the Chickens: Just like it sounds, scatter their food on the ground and let them search for it. Start off easy by scattering a small amount of food in a small area on an even surface like the kitchen floor or concrete patio. As the dog realizes what the game is, you can make it harder by spreading it further and in more difficult areas like the grass.
- Snuffle mats are great! It consists of fleece or fabric strips tied on to a rubber mat with holes in it. The ends of the fabric are on top and provide the hiding spot for treats and/or toys. You can order them on Amazon or make your own.
- Interactive toys such as Kong Wobblers, Puzzle dishes, muffin tins, cardboard boxes and just about anything you can think of can be used to engage your dog's brain for mealtime.



- “Ditch the Dish: An Evolutionary Guide to Feeding your Dog by Gina Maccuilla” is available on Amazon for just a few dollars. It’s a quick read and more than worth it!

Home Environment

Before we can assess our home environment and how it affects our dogs, it's important to have a basic understanding of how a natural pack environment functions.

There is a lot of misunderstandings and misinformation that tell us that packs function as a hierarchy, a pecking order and that there must be dominance and submissiveness.... But let me ask you, do you feel that your family unit is based on a pecking order of dominance? Probably not.

There is leadership within a family unit and that is crucial for healthy social structure, but it doesn't need to be based on dominance. **It is based on trust and respect.**

Another example of healthy social structure is a classroom; the teacher is ultimately the leader but everyone in the class has an important role and has fair opportunities to communicate and participate in decision making.

Imagine walking into an elementary school and you open door #1. Behind that door is a class full of kids running wild, screaming, climbing on their desks, throwing things around the class, the teacher is scrambling to try to stop the madness and the kids continue to escalate because it's funny to watch the teacher's inability to control the situation. The harder the teacher tries, more out of control things become. I can't help but picture Arnold Schwarzenegger in Kindergarten Cop!



Close that door... just thinking of that scenario stressed me out.

Now open door #2. Behind that door is a class full of kids calmly enjoying some free time. The teacher is calm, maybe there is some calming music, there's a group of kids reading books in a corner, another group of kids coloring, another building a tower from Lego blocks. There is structure, there is leadership and there is calmness. Everyone is enjoying themselves, doing their own thing and doing it peacefully.



Now think about your home... which scenario feels most like your home. Surely everyone has some peaceful time at home, but do you feel the chaos creeping in? How often do you feel the chaos? How long does the chaos last? And what do you think that is doing to your dog's behaviour?

Ideally, we want classroom #2 as our own home environment. The first 3 weeks of Behaviour Basics focuses on creating a healthy home environment for your dog to thrive in.



Is your dog calm happy or exuberant happy?

Exercise

Oh Boy...Yet another topic where many people are trapped by old misconceptions. “A tired dog is a happy dog”, right?

Not always! The right kind of exercise can make a world of difference, whereas the wrong kind can have devastating effects on your dog’s behaviour. Here are some common problems and how to alleviate them.

- **Evaluate the state of mind** your dog is in when you get ready for walk, and yours too! Are they calm and casually following you, waiting for the invitation to go? Or are they bouncing around like a maniac, prancing at the front door, drooling, whining, begging to be taken for a walk? Are you calm or are you building up anxiety and anticipation of your dog’s next big blow up? Or simply dreading the agonizing leash pulling you’re about to endure?

How you begin is how the rest of the walk will go.

Do not allow chaos. If you get up to get your dogs’ leash and they go bezerk, simply put the leash back to where you got it from and go sit back down on the couch. You both need to feel calm.

1 – If you continue, you are encouraging and rewarding the over the top exuberance which is often a masked form of anxiety.

2 – If you don’t, you are teaching your dog that only good behaviour will be rewarded.

- **Make time;** about an hour for a walk. If you allow your dog to lead the way (different than control you), they would bring you back home in approximately an hour. You can learn more about this in *Behaviour Basics*.
- **Add environmental agility.** Simply walking/running doesn’t constitute exercise in the mind of the dog. Naturally, their pace is approximately 2.5 times faster than ours and they would have obstacles to overcome throughout each walk so when we compare that to our daily routine around the block, we can see how it might not satisfy the biological needs of driven dogs.
- **Avoid triggers.** Try to take walks that help to ease your dog’s mind, not over stimulate it. While you are in the Wellness Plan phase and the early stages of the training phases, try to eliminate potential triggers from your routine. If you know

that the house at the end of the street has a dog who likes to bark at the fence, go the other direction. Don't ask your dog to ignore that dog, he is not ready for that yet. Don't ask your dog to do things that you know he will fail at. Instead, set him up for success by taking him on walks that will likely be calming with few distractions and no interactions with his regular triggers. That might mean becoming a late night/early morning walker or walking in secluded areas until you have both had enough one on one time with a trainer to tackle those tough issues.

- **Be present.** Leave your phone at home. If you need to bring it with you, put it on Do Not Disturb and leave it in your pocket. Your dog needs you and chances are you need your dog. Your dog needs you to reconnect with him and his world and you need the same. You got him for companionship and here is a great opportunity to build that bond you hoped for when you got him. There is no time like the present to be with him.



- **Advocate for your dog.** If you happen to come across a stranger while out on a walk, do not allow them or their dog to approach your dog. You are in a crucial rebuilding phase right now. You are rebuilding your bond, your relationship with your dog and you do not need any additional distractions. By standing between your dog and another (safely), you are sending a clear message to your dog that you will handle this situation and future situations and that they can trust you. Be your dog's greatest advocate. I promise it will be hugely rewarding.
- Finally, get a calendar and **schedule dates with your dog.** In the dating world, people who want to build a relationship usually schedule the next date before ending the one they are on. Do the same with your dog. It will help keep you on track and the calendar will help to keep you accountable to the dates you've set with your dog. Try to set a minimum of 3 "dates" per week with your dog, keeping in mind that they do need some form of exercise and/or mental stimulation per day.

Management Strategies

There is a saying out in the training world; Reward what you like and ignore what you don't. There are plenty of situations in which I think this dog training mantra is great! And there are also situations where I couldn't disagree more. For example, do you think you should ignore your dog chewing on your shoe, digging a hole in the yard or barking at the sweet old lady walking past your house?

No, those are not situations that should be ignored because your lack of acknowledgement can also be interpreted as passive agreement. We learn more about that in *Behaviour Basics* but at this point we haven't yet gone over appropriate interrupters and corrections to deal with those scenarios, so your best course of action is to prevent them from happening in the first place.

- **Crates:** your dog's Zen Den. If your dog isn't currently crate-trained, start now! Having a crate trained dog is an invaluable tool. Giving a dog a crate early on in life gives them a safe place to escape from human chaos (company, kids, other pets). Your dog can safely hang out and have a nap while you have a shower, go to the grocery store or go to work. While they are in their crate, they cannot practice naughty behaviors.



If you have a puppy, having them in a crate while unattended prevents them from being destructive in the house and prevents them from using the house as their bathroom. Then when you come home, you can take them outside and reward them for holding their bladder and doing their business outside. Here's the important part...when you come home, *you are happy to see them!* Versus the alternative...if you come home to a wrecked house, poo and pee on the floor and a messy puppy to clean up, you're not going to feel so enthusiastic about seeing them and that will affect their self-esteem and their behaviour.

If you have an adult dog who is struggling with leash reactivity, barking at other people and dogs while you're out walking them, consider that they might be practicing those same behaviors from home while you are away.

Using a crate while they can't be supervised eliminates their time to practice bad behaviour. It also helps to reinforce house rules such as "no furniture", because we all know a dog who sneaks up onto the couch when no one is around and when they hear you pull into the driveway, they hope off and act all innocent. While it is kind of comical and we tend to focus on the humor of it, it's still a naughty behaviour and depending on how serious your other behaviour problems are, this really should be addressed.

- **Leashes:** Yes, really! A leash is so much more useful than just for walking through the neighborhood, and you aren't restricted to just using a 6 ft leash. You can get any length you'd like! If your dog doesn't have a strong recall, use a long leash when you want them to have freedom. Don't let them off leash, at all, ever! (Until new training has been implemented and your dog has earned the off-leash privilege) Use a long leash to give them up to 30 feet of freedom while at your favorite park. If your dog does naughty things around the house and then runs away from you to avoid confrontation, keep a short leash on your dog while you are home and they are loose. Then if your dog attempts to bolt through an open doorway, jump on a guest, beg at the dinner table, you can pick up the leash (or step on it) to catch your dog and guide them to the appropriate activity or place they should be.
- **Tethering:** This is a seriously undervalued and overlooked part of management. If you've ever seen a dog tethered to a pole outside of a store, waiting for his person, how often do you see it pulling and fighting with the pole to try to get it to move forward? It doesn't! The dog will pull this way and that way a couple of times before it realizes that the pole will not be manipulated by his pulling, and just like that, the dog sits and patiently waits. Did you know that to halter break a cow, the cow is tethered to a sturdy post and is left there until he finally stops? Then the cow realizes that the post isn't going to give up simply because the cow disagreed.



Well, the trouble with humans and dogs is that we give in to the dog ALL THE TIME! When on leash, dogs pull and yank and they get their way because most of the time, we give in. Even if we don't completely give in and allow them to take over the walk, we still budge just a little and the dog is rewarded when we move just a hair closer to whatever it was that they wanted to smell or see.

Under no circumstances do I support tethering a dog in a yard unattended and leaving them for long periods of time as seen in hoarding situations and neglect situations.

But I am saying that there are some valuable lessons for dogs to learn from being tethered and acknowledging that no matter how difficult they become, the outcome will not change. They cannot influence the post to do what they want, and that lesson is important.

When is it appropriate to tether a dog?

Anytime you are wanting to have your dog around but don't want them interfering with whatever you are doing, for example have your dog tethered in the living room while you prepare and eat dinner. You don't want to have your dog crated; you want them to learn to stay on their bed during mealtimes, but you don't want to repeatedly be getting up from the table to remind them of where they are supposed to be. Tether them.



Another great time to practice tethering is while you do gardening or yard work. You are busy, you have tools with you, and you don't want to constantly micromanage your dog. You also don't want to crate them in the house because you'd like for them to learn how to behave WITH you.

Rule #1 – You must be present! Do not tether your dog in the yard and leave your home. There is risk of getting tangled and hurt.

Rule #2 – Appropriate restraint tools include a flat collar, martingale or harness. No choke chains or prong collars.

Rule #3 – Ignore the dog. If the dog is tugging or whining, ignore it. They are simply trying to get a response from you and if you give them one, they will learn that this is how they get your attention.

Rule #4 – Address naughty or dangerous behaviors. You can interrupt and address leash chewing (use a chain if necessary), digging and excessive barking.

- **No Dog Parks:** Contrary to popular belief, dog parks are a very dangerous place for socializing dogs. Because most humans do not speak dog, the people who bring their dogs to the park are unable to interpret the conversations happening between dogs and sadly, most dog park conversations are quite rude. There is a lot of bullying that happens between dogs and your dog will either be the victim of bullying or will become a bully himself. Please avoid dog parks until you have learned the language that dogs speak, and your dog knows that they can rely on you to understand them and be their advocate.



Restrictions

This section should be individualized to your dog and his/her behaviour. Your restrictions will be based on the behaviors that you don't enjoy.

For example, your puppy continually gets underfoot while you are cooking, and you could hurt them or hurt yourself.

The restriction is to set clear boundaries so that the kitchen is completely off limits. You can do that by having them wear a short leash in the house and every time they head for the kitchen, you redirect and guide them elsewhere.

Here are a few more

- If your dog has bitten people in your home, do not allow them to have access to visitors, even while on leash. Guests should also respect that your dog needs space and never interact with your dog. No talk, no touch, no look.
- If your dog repeatedly runs away while off-leash or plays the keep away game, DO NOT allow them off leash. Use a long line as suggested in the management section.
- If your dog goes on the couch while you aren't looking, make sure they aren't practicing that behaviour while you are away. Use a crate to manage them while you aren't supervising them.
- If your dog has a habit of jumping over the fence, they should not be unsupervised while outside.
- If your dog has been in dog park altercations, whether you think they instigated or not, DO NOT go to the dog park.



Basic restrictions should apply to all dogs whether they have behaviour problems or not, until they earn more freedom.

It can be easy to come up with your own list of restrictions. Think of what you don't like and then get ahead of the behaviour. If you can anticipate the behaviour, you can also avoid it.

Avoidance is not training but it is the perfect way to manage the situation until you can get the necessary training to overcome the obstacles that are inhibiting you from having the life you dreamed of with your dog.

Therapeutic & Stress Relieving Strategies

While supplements and medications have become very prevalent in the pet world, use caution when choosing what to use for therapeutic and stress relieving purposes. Know that most behaviour trainers will not work with dogs on anti-anxiety medications. Medications mask the problem. It is our job to understand your dog and to help resolve the root issue. We can't do that if we can't find the root issue because the dog is medicated. And with all medication come risk of side effects. For most dogs, medication that is meant to calm them can have the opposite effect because it is mood altering and the dog doesn't understand why they feel so funny which leads to feeling vulnerable and the cycle they are in spirals deeper.

But there are some great natural therapeutic strategies available to you.

- **Tellington Touch** (www.ttouch.com) is an incredible massage like technique designed to calm the nervous system, reduce anxiety and can do wonders in strengthening the bond between human and dog.
- **Conditioned Relaxation** videos can be found on YouTube and work similarly to TTouch. Just type "conditioned relaxation dog training" into the search bar and many well-respected trainers have posted videos.
- **Rescue Remedy** is a wonderful natural anti-anxiety that is safe for people and pets! Just a couple of drops in their water can help relax your dog without the effects of sedation or heavy medications. It can be purchased directly from Amazon and delivered to your door! Or support a local business, many pet stores and natural foods stores carry it as well.
- **Reconnect with nature.** It's amazing how therapeutic nature is. Take a drive into the forest and go for a quiet and calm walk in the forest. You don't need to go far and remember to keep your dog on a long leash if they are a flight risk.
- **CBD oil** (No THC) has been proven to have incredible calming and healing effects but is still not regulated, therefore even if your veterinarian approves, they are legally not allowed to prescribe it to your pet. If you are interested in using CBD for your dog, please seek out a holistic veterinarian or a medical cannabis professional who can help guide you through the process.

Husbandry & Veterinary Care

**If your dog is uncomfortable around others,
could it be because your dog is uncomfortable in their own skin?**

We've spent all this time talking about healthy environments, healthy mind-sets and healthy behaviors but what about a healthy body? Despite it being brought up towards the end of your Wellness Plan, it is one of the first aspects that should be addressed when your dog is having behavior problems because no one is at their best when they don't feel good.

Husbandry is the care and maintenance that is required to keep our pets happy and healthy; proper nail care, dental care, brushing and grooming, cleaning of eyes and ears, and more.

Some breeds are more high maintenance than others, for example a boxer has very few grooming needs. They don't need brushing and their erect ears prevent infections from moisture.

A labradoodle requires regular brushing at home, grooming every 6-8 weeks and their floppy ears are prone to infection so cleaning and keeping them dry is important. Knowing your dog's breed and husbandry care can go a long way in the overall health of your dog and the prevention of expensive veterinary care.

Developing a routine like Toenail Tuesdays is a great way to make sure mundane aspects of health aren't overlooked.

Veterinary care is often thought of in terms of emergency care or basic once a year check-ups & immunizations (or titer testing) but other components include preventative care, medications, geriatric support, etc. These are all things that we should keep in the back of our minds as we raise our dogs and as their needs change.

Many dog handlers elect to have a baseline blood panel done when their dog is young

and healthy. What some people consider to be an unnecessary expense for a healthy pet can be a lifesaving resource as your pet ages or contracts a disease.

Serious medical conditions or illnesses such as poisoning, kidney failure, and cancer are easier for your veterinarian to diagnose early if they have a baseline to compare to.



Having a good relationship with your veterinarian is key! We strongly recommend using a clinic where they allow you to see the same doctor at each visit so he/she has a better overall picture of your dog's health than could be interpreted by glancing at your chart.

Allergies, joint pain and physical disabilities are major contributors to behavior issues because they cause the dog to feel vulnerable and weak.

Consider taking a Pet First Aid class. These classes go far beyond just bandaging. It will increase your knowledge of signs and symptoms of common pet illnesses, teach you lifesaving techniques for emergencies when veterinary care is not accessible it will give you the confidence to know you are prepared for anything life throws at you.

Pet/Vet Insurance can be the ultimate life-saver! Veterinary care can be expensive.

Surgery for any major joint (knee, hip or elbow) averages at about \$5000 per surgery.

Average cost for minor wound requiring stitches = \$250+

Average cost for bladder stone removal = \$2000

Average cost for ear infection = \$200

Insurance can give you peace of mind; knowing that you can give your dog the best care possible, regardless of the cost!

Biological Fulfillment

To understand the dog, you need to understand what they do.

Let's look at the fact that the average dog in a wild environment would travel at a speed of approximately 6-8km/hr within a 100ft bubble. Humans travel 3-5km/hr in a 6ft bubble. That explains why dogs often struggle to understand the concept of sticking close to us when off-leash. It's not that they actually struggle with the concept or that they are being defiant. The reality is that they likely *think* they are close enough because they are in a dog's acceptable range.

What was your dog bred for?

Huskies are for pulling.

Hounds are for sniffing.

Border Collies are for herding.

Jack Russel Terriers are for hunting.

This doesn't mean that your husky gets to drag you on leash because he was made to pull, or that your hound is allow to run away and ignore your calls because he smelled something in the distance. As we have brought dogs into our human world, they have to learn to abide by human rules.

But we also need to respect them for what they are; predators, hunters, pullers, runners, herders, and lastly companions.



There are many different activities created to help satisfy their biological needs.

Take your husky to a Weight Pull class, take your hound to a Nose Work class, get a spring pole for your Malinois.

Regardless of your dog's breed or combination of breeds, all dogs were made for a reason and satisfying their natural desires is a huge piece of the puzzle to managing and

helping a dog with behavioral problems. It can also be the key to preventing problems in the first place.

Talk to us if you need help finding biologically fulfilling activities for your dog.

Communication Skills & Understanding

Think of your dog as a foreign exchange student; they come from a different culture and speak a different language.

Do you attempt to communicate in English by speaking louder and slower? Well sometimes... but it's rarely effective.

Then we try sign language and it works pretty well, even when it's our own made-up version.

Are you hungry? We point to the fridge and make gestures like rubbing our belly or imitate putting food in our mouth.

Do you need to use the washroom? We actually lead them to the washroom and gesture them in.

When we try to communicate feelings, we exaggerate our facial expressions by smiling excessively, frowning harshly, crossing our arms, etc. We do this because body language is pretty universal.

So here is some good news.

You speak body language.

Your dog speaks body language.

You already have common ground for a means of communication! The reason it seems to be ineffective is that you are speaking different dialects. And that is why we teach canine communication as the base to our programs. Once you learn how to read and interpret your dog's language, plus learn how to respond using body language that makes sense to them, your relationship and training efforts will flourish.

Training Plan

Notice how the training comes last?

Training can really seal the deal in the relationship between you and your dog. And partnerships really flourish through experience, trust and clarity.

Now that you are ready to create a Training Plan, let's look at what the next steps are.

First we need to determine what level your dog is. Below is a chart to help you understand how we assess dogs.

We can assess your dog through a Behaviour Evaluation, a 24-hour period that they spend with us doing activities to get to know them, including an Adventure Hike if they get along well enough with others and a night of boarding.

Or you can self-assess your own dog – be honest.

When self-assessing it can be difficult to remove the emotion of love from the evaluation. It is important to think of how your dog behaves at difficult times because those times are true indicators of how they are doing. We trust that every dog is capable of sweet loving affectionate time. But to help them with their struggles, we need to know how they are when things are difficult.

Just because your dog is a 4 today doesn't mean he can't be a 2 in the future!

It's also helpful to know what true confidence is in a dog. Let's think of it in human terms. We asked Google for the top 10 traits of a confident person and this is what we got. (We left out a couple that weren't very relevant to dogs) Confident dogs exhibit the same traits as people so use this to help guide you through your reflections of your dog.

1. Composure; emotional control
2. Not easily offended; simply because they know their worth
3. Speak with authority; not doubtful of oneself
4. Celebrate others; not jealous
5. Decisive; do not hesitate
6. Interest to learn; curiosity
7. Open body posture; not fearful of harm therefore they are welcoming

Level 1	<p>Soft & Easy</p> <p>Common traits: Relaxed, easy-going, lazy, quiet, calm, gentle</p> <p>Interactions with others: Gets along well with others, avoids conflict.</p> <p>Resource guarding/aggression: None</p> <p>Energy level: Usually low to moderate.</p>
Level 2	<p>Moderate & Adaptable</p> <p>Common traits: Gentle & sweet but hyper, enthusiastic, excitable</p> <p>Interactions with others: Generally easy-going dog, gets along with others. Might not enjoy the company of other excitable dogs, especially if it creates competition for attention. Usually avoids conflict but will engage if he feels he has no way out.</p> <p>Resource guarding/aggression: None or low-level. Might growl over objects of value but has not taken it any further.</p> <p>Energy level: Moderate energy levels, can go from low to high but maintains control of oneself.</p>
Level 3	<p>Challenging – will challenge for leadership</p> <p>Common traits: Unsure of new social situations. Will hide from or bark excessively at new visitors. Enjoy high energy activities like fetch, dog sports. Often leash-reactive. Independent problem-solvers who will try to out-think their humans. Will test boundaries given the opportunity.</p> <p>Interactions with others: They are assertive and pushy during introductions but can often settle in and make friends with dogs and people.</p> <p>Resource guarding/aggression: Moderate level resource guarding. Will growl, nip or snap to protect objects of value.</p> <p>Energy level: Moderate to high energy, often struggle to control their energy levels, easy overwhelmed and over stimulated.</p>
Level 4	<p>Competitive & Intense</p> <p>Common traits: Extremely intelligent, very confident, very pushy, extremely competitive, enjoys and/or seeks out conflict. Has high drive, often ball or toy obsessed. When they want something, they want it NOW! Excels at dog sports.</p> <p>Interactions with others: Can make limited friends given the right situations.</p> <p>Resource guarding/aggression: High level resource guarding. Will usually skip growling and go straight to biting or attacking to guard objects, people and space. Intent to do harm.</p> <p>Energy level: High energy, always in high gear</p>
Level 5	<p>Tough & Serious – Level 4 +</p> <p>Interactions with others: May only have 1 or 2 friends in their lifetime.</p> <p>Resource guarding/aggression: Will go out of their way to attack and intends to do serious harm.</p>

Puppies >6 months are automatically a Level 1 or 2 unless they are exhibiting resource guarding and/or aggression towards others. Please talk to us right away if your puppy is developing those behaviors as they are much easier to change now than after years of practice.

Now that you have determined what level your dog is at, view the chart below to see what program would be best for them.

 THE CRATE ESCAPE	Puppy Preschool	Puppy Boarding School	In-person Wellness Plan	Behaviour Basics	Rover Rehab
Puppy > 6 months	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Puppy 6-12 months	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Level 1 & 2	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Level 3 & up	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

Below are limited descriptions of our programs. We encourage you to visit our website at www.vernoncrateescape.com for more information.

Puppy Preschool: For puppies 8 weeks to 6 months, we offer this special program to help dog handlers get their puppies started on the right track, developing healthy social skills, developing confidence and developing a healthy mind-set. Included are 6 group sessions and 6 months access to our online puppy course.

Puppy Boarding School: Ideally for puppies 4-6months but beneficial at any puppy age, Puppy Boarding School offers 7-14 days of full immersion training. The primary focus of Boarding School is healthy dog to dog socialization sprinkled with daily outings, Adventure Hikes and basic obedience training. Your puppy will live in our home with a balanced pack of adult dogs who can help your puppy learn appropriate social interactions, because nobody teaches dog play better than another dog.

In-Person Wellness Plan: You've completed your DIY Canine Wellness Plan but you have more questions about a few basics, or maybe you're interested in our other programs but don't feel ready to dive right in. Our In-Person Wellness Plan brings the trainer right to your home! Yes, I will come to you* to see first-hand where you need help, to share some tips and tricks and to guide you in the right direction.

*Within the Vernon area. Driving fees apply to further locations.

⚠ Behaviour Basics: This program is highlighted because we believe that this is the program that every dog handler should take! I learned the contents of this course after 6 years of being an obedience trainer and I was mind-blown! I couldn't believe that this isn't Training 101 for everyone. This is the key to success with any dog! People often say that they wish dogs could tell us what they are thinking. I'm here to show you that they are talking to us all the time! It's just a matter of learning to understand them. Included is an online course, 3 in-person workshops and a 1-Year Membership to The Crate Escape Dog Adventures exclusive services.

Rover Rehab: We use the term for many conditions, from the rehab of injuries to the rehab of addictions. Rehabilitation means to restore to an original state. Dogs aren't born bad so let's help them get back to being well-behaved. Most bad behaviors are learned and developed over a long period of time. So whether your dog has turned from a sweet puppy to a household master-manipulator or if your dog is struggling with aggression (aggression is a neurological addiction), this year long program will take you deep inside the mind of a dog, learning and understanding the advanced components of their thought processes, behaviors and how you can help them along with 1 on 1 help from your trainer. This program also includes a Board & Train component to help your dog integrate what they learn in a pack structure.