

Welcome to Golden Paws Dog Training! We are very excited that you have chosen us to meet your dog training needs.

Golden Paws was started in 2008 and now is in its third (and final!) location – a brand new facility built just for training dogs! I (Nicole) started training dogs in 1995 and have been competing in obedience, rally, agility, and other dogs sport since that time. I started working with pet and competition dogs in 2001, so I've been in the world a long time!



I am a certified professional dog trainer (CPDT-KA) which means I went through an extensive testing process proving that I know how to apply scientific training methods in a dog training setting. I've taken hundreds of classes and seminars about dog training and enjoy furthering my education. I've also earned dozens of titles on my personal dogs.

When I started training in the 1990's, we used methods which were popular at the time, but that included physical corrections that were designed to punish behavior. Applying aversive punishment to behavior appears to work, but only because it shuts down behavior. The dog stops doing things because he's afraid he's going to get corrected. Corrections do nothing to teach the correct behavior, and eventually the fear of being corrected will wear off and the behavior will continue.

Throughout my journey in dog training, I've learned that both pet and sport dogs can be taught using dog-friendly training methods. Commonly called positive reinforcement dog training, this method involves rewarding the dog for correct behavior and teaching the dog (using rewards, typically food rewards) alternative behaviors for those behaviors we wish to extinguish. I have used exclusively positive reinforcement dog training methods since the early 2000's.

During your time at Golden Paws, you will learn how to apply positive reinforcement training methods to further your dog's education. Dogs don't need an "alpha" or to be "dominated." They need a calm consistent teacher who treats them kindly and establishes boundaries. My dogs lay on the couch. They sleep in our beds. They get people scraps occasionally. Yet, they are well-trained and respectful. They get off if requested. They spend meal times in their places or out of the kitchen. You can have this two-way relationship of respect and trust with your dog.

Here are a few guidelines of how we train at Golden Paws.

- Our training is reward based. We start with food rewards, and throughout class explore other options that we call life rewards as the dog learns behaviors.
- We do not use physical corrections that are designed to scare or hurt the dog.

- We try to avoid aversive-based management tools (choke chains, prong/pinch collars, shock collars, etc.) and if currently using, will explore other dog-friendlier tools that may be as effective (such as no-pull harnesses) but without the consequences of using aversive.
- We do our best to set dogs up for success. This involves limiting class size to 8 dogs, controlling the environment, breaking down behaviors, using appropriate value rewards, managing arousal or excitement, and whatever else we can do to ensure the dog chooses the correct behavior.

Because our training is based on rewarding the dogs when they are right, we must have a good communication system in place so our dogs know why they are getting a treat. If the dog understands why they got rewarded, they will be more likely to repeat the behavior.

We use what's called a reinforcement cue or reward marker to tell the dog when they are right. I use the word "yes"! The dogs learn that when they hear the word yes, they will get a reward. Each time you say your reward marker, you need to follow it with a treat. The timing of the yes is important. If you are early or late you might accidentally be rewarding something that you don't intend to.

For example, say you cue your dog to sit. He sits for about 2 seconds but bounces back up. If your marker is late, the dog will think you are rewarding him for getting up. The marker must happen exactly when your dog's rear end touches the ground.

While you are training here at Golden Paws, you are welcome to contact me via email if you have any questions outside of class. My entire program is designed so that you will walk out of here with a well-behaved dog that you enjoy living with. I encourage you to attend as much training as you are able. For example, my manners curriculum is designed to be a 12 week program, but that's too long for a dog training session, so these classes are split into Basic and Advanced. Done together, you will have a dog with a great foundation, and therefore I encourage everyone to take both classes.

I offer lots of additional educational opportunities! I teach online for Fenzi Dog Sports Academy and have several virtual workshops designed for pet dog owners. I also have a very active blog in which I post a variety of articles about puppies, pet dogs, and sports dogs. Please feel free to check out these resources on my website at goldenpawdogtraining.com.

If you need a little more help than what I can offer in classes, or if your dog isn't appropriate for a group class because of reactivity, barking, over-arousal, or any other reason, please check out my private training packages. That information can also be found on my website.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about what we do here at Golden Paws Dog Training! I look forward to working with you and your dog.

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