

# Principles of conditioning

Psychology, Motivation



Needs and drives, what exactly are they and what do they have to do with dogs/dog training? A need or drive is a type of motivation that describes the behaviors dogs show during training. Needs can be something as obvious as water or food, all the way to behaviors that serve no clear physical need at all (ex play behavior). Dog training is all about arranging matters so the dog's yearnings are met when they perform the desired action. Before any of this can take place you must ensure all of the dog's primary needs are met.

The dog needs to be in a healthy state, be happy, and have a good emotional connection to the trainer, also known as rapport. There are two types of drives, primary and secondary. Primary drives are the drives that are a necessity for ensuring your dog stays alive and healthy (i. e. thirst and hunger). If these drives are not met it can lead to injury or death. Secondary drives include all of the motivations that make a dog behave the way it does. They are not as necessary for the life and health of a dog, but are still very important.

Quite simply, the dog needs oxygen to survive. Many things your dog does increase the oxygen that they consume, which results in panting. Panting is also a way that your dog expels excess heat. Heavy panting can interfere with the sense of smell (olfactory). It's important to maintain your dog's hydration level so it does not interfere with training. Also water cannot be used as a reward for the dog. Just like oxygen and water, food is also a very important part in keeping your dog happy and healthy.

Though, unlike water food can be used as a reward, normally in the form of a treat. The dog should not eat if it has recently been doing intense physical

activity, particularly in hot conditions. Drive to avoid pain and discomfort. Dogs are a very intelligent species and learn very quickly, especially when there is a pain factor involved. They will avoid performing actions that they have learned cause them pain. Thus why handlers will inflict a type of discomfort when the dog disobeys or performs an action incorrectly. I. e. f you command the dog to sit but they ignore, or perform an incorrect action the handler will give a physical correction (command avoidance) that inflict pain upon the dog. In this process the dog is learning that if it does not sit like it has been taught it will be corrected (punished). Before you can use this type of training you must ensure that the dog knows the desired response. This is basically the same as the dogs pack drive. One of the dog's strongest drives is to have a social relationship with other dogs or humans. It needs to be a stable relationship in which the dog trusts or has affection for it's companion. Though this is not an instantly created bond, it is extremely important for the handler to build rapport with the dog. Walking, feeding, grooming, or just playing with the dog for a period of time can build this relationship. Building rapport is very important to the successfulness of the team. Socialization is made up of two sub-types, alpha and beta. Alpha is what the dog initially wants to be. It's instinct for dogs to want to have supremacy or dominance in a relationship. 2) Beta is when the dog is submissive, and allows others to be in control and dominant. This is what you want your dog to be as a handler. This is because the dog will show willingness or motivation to please the handler by completing actions that the handler commands. Play socialization does not clearly serve any important needs, but it is important to incorporate fun play into the

relationship between handler and dog. This is the dog's natural instinct to attack, bite, and carry anything the dog sees as prey.

This can be another animal or object. What a dog would do to a rabbit, can be initiated by throwing a ball in most circumstances. This predatory instinct is very important in dog training, especially in controlled aggression. This includes any behaviors such as biting, growling, and fighting when used to compete with others for resources (food/water) or to protect them selves when felt threatened. Dominant, defensive, and pain-elicited aggression are all a vital role in motivating dogs in patrol training or rewarding them with a bite.