

Why All Dogs Should Learn New Tricks

By Jenn Ericson

Whoever said “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” was terribly misinformed. In fact, teaching your adult or senior dog new tricks has mental and health benefits for both of you. Even little tricks can have big benefits.

When humans learn new things, additional synaptic pathways are created in the brain, increasing brain power. The same thing happens with dogs such that learning one new trick makes learning the next even easier.

Teaching a new trick is a fun way to engage with your dog and keep them from becoming bored and sedentary. Learning a trick together strengthens your bond because throughout the entire process you’re focused on each other and building trust. Mastering tricks also boosts a dog’s confidence.

January is Train Your Dog Month. As KPETS volunteers, we’re on an extended visitation break due to COVID-19. This break is the perfect time to learn some tricks. When visitations finally do resume, there will likely be restrictions on how closely we can interact with others. Being able to perform tricks will enable us to entertain those we visit safely.

If you want to learn how to teach your dog new tricks, getting started is easy.

- There are many **excellent tutorials online**, like this one from [McCann Professional Dog Trainers](#).
- If you prefer to take a trick class, you can choose **in-person classes with proper social distancing** at
 - [Godfrey’s Dogdom](#) offers a **virtual trick class** or
 - [Click here](#) for a list of training facilities that offer trick training.
- You can also get great instruction from any number of **training books**, like *101 Dog Tricks* by Kyra Sundance.

If you do learn a new trick, we’d love to see it. Send a video to KPETS at info@kpets.org.