GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CLUB OF VICTORIA

GEELONG BRANCH

MEMBER INFORMATION

My Shepherd, My Friend, My Responsibility

February 2026

Welcome

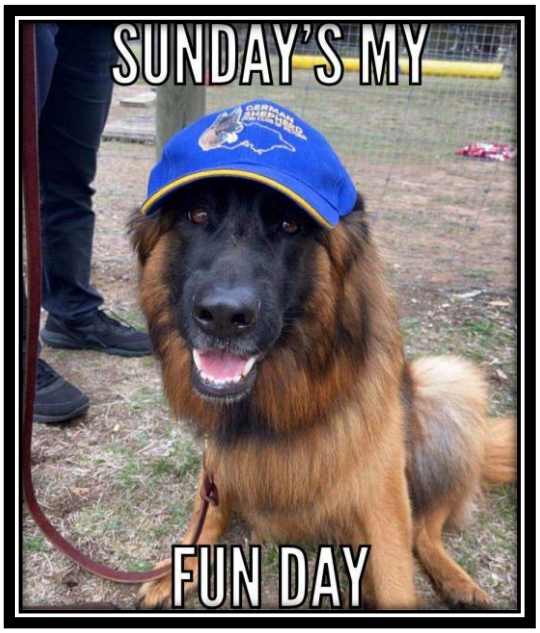
Welcome to the German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria, Geelong Branch. We hope that you will find our club, enjoyable, friendly and helpful.

We wish to make your entry to the Club as smooth as possible and we hope the following information will help you through those steps.

You will find that your instructors are very friendly, and they welcome any questions you may have about your "doggy problems" or about the Club, so please do not hesitate to approach any of them.

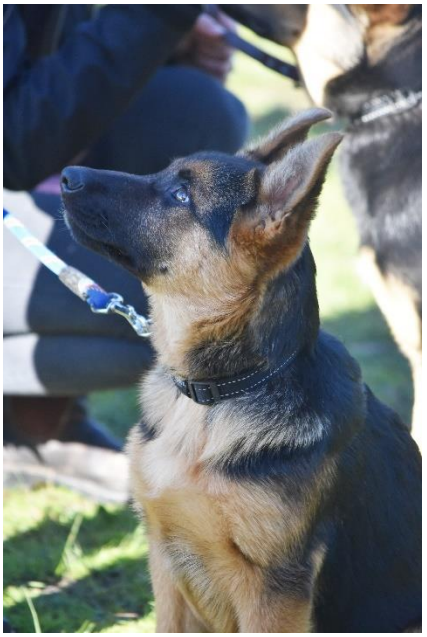
General information

- We train each Sunday at 10am. These times are sometimes subject to change, so please keep an eye on our Branch web page https://geelong.gsdcv.org.au and Facebook site: https://www.facebook.com/GSDCVGeelong. Remember to 'like' our Facebook site so you can stay up to date.
- CLASS TIMES:
    - All obedience classes from Puppy to Class 4 are run from 10.00am to 11.00am.
    - Subject to instructor availability, show classes run from 11.00am to 12.00pm. Check our Facebook for confirmation
- New members are asked to come between 9.10am to 9.50am. This will give you time to ask any questions, have your equipment checked for suitability for training and process your membership. Arriving early allows you and your dog to become familiar with the surroundings and to get your dog settled prior to training.
- Rain, hail or shine, training is always on unless the Branch is closed as advised. This may be due to a temperature forecast of 32^{o} C or above between 10.00am and 11.00am or on days the Club and its branches close for major club events.



Membership

- Once you join the German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria, you will receive a membership badge.
- Please always wear your membership badge so we know who you are and that your membership is current—this is essential for insurance purposes
- Only current and financial members are permitted to train.
- Now you are a member of the GSDCV Club and the Geelong Branch, you are able to train at any of the other eleven branches within Victoria. If you are a member of another Branch, you are required to wear your name tag and present your dog's vaccination certificate before you can join training on the grounds.



Duty of care

Members shall at all times strictly observe the rules, regulations, codes of ethics and codes of practice of the GSDCV which can be read on the GSDCV website: https://gsdcv.org.au/about/constitution/

Members:

- owe each other a duty of care.
- have a duty to not cause foreseeable danger,
- in charge of children owe a duty to protect them from foreseeable dangers, and,
- need to note that if another member has a special condition, this does not necessarily diminish the duty of care owed.

Vaccination certificates

- Vaccination certificates will be required to be shown at your first training session.
- These must then be sighted annually by the Membership Officer. You will be notified when checks are due. Please bring your up-to-date certificate with you to your next training day.
- Dogs without current vaccination certificates will not be permitted to train
- GSDCV Vaccination Guidelines – All members are required to provide proof of current C3 (annual or tri annual) plus annual Canine Cough vaccination or C4 plus annual Canine Cough or C5 which already includes canine Cough before being able to train on any GSDCV training ground. The GSDCV will not accept titre testing as proof of current vaccination.

What to bring

- A big handful of soft food treats cut in small pieces that are quickly and easily swallowed by your dog (for example sausage, cooked liver, cheese) Do not bring your dog's regular food. Treats used for training should not be given at other times. Please ensure you pick up any treats you drop as dropped treats are a distraction to other dogs.
- A pouch that you can put the food into and quickly and easily reach it. These can be purchased from our Branch, if required.
- Do not feed your dog prior to training. Dogs will work better on an empty stomach.
- Your dog's favourite toy, preferably in a training bag, especially for those who are not food motivated.
- Collars and leads: Use a lead that feels comfortable in your hands. A flat soft collar is to be used for puppies 6 months or under. A flat collar, slip chain, a martingale collar or head halter (halti) is suitable for older dogs. Harnesses are not used in class. Spiked or prong collars are illegal and are not acceptable for training. Your instructor will advise you regarding appropriate collars for your dog.
- Plastic bags to clean up after your dog. A bin is available for you to dispose of the bag.
- Leads, collars and other quality essential pet products are available at reasonable prices from the equipment store at the clubhouse.
- During your first day in class, the correct fitting of a slip chain will be demonstrated.
- We will provide you with a number of information sheets to support what you learn in class.

What to wear

- Wear closed-in shoes, no thongs or sandals. Something sturdier if it's wet and slippery is advisable.
- Avoid baggy or open zip jackets for training that can get in your dog's face when you train.
- No mobile phones are allowed while in class.
- Remember to always wear your membership badge.

On arrival

- Please arrive by 9:30 am to check in, leaving your dog in your car while you do so.
- Complete any membership paperwork if necessary, and pay your $3.00 training fee or present your training card (prepaid training fees). The money collected contributes to the running costs of the Branch.
- Take your dog away for a walk and sniff around the grounds, giving them time to settle down, greet other dog friends and go to the toilet.

Announcements

- Weekly announcements are made prior to class and provide Branch-specific information comprising items of interest and upcoming events
- Listen carefully to announcements that are made, they will inform you of fun days, fundraisers, lectures or anything that is of interest to our members.
- Pass-up ribbons, certificates and special awards will also be presented at this time.

Introducing your dog

- Members training at the Club are responsible for their own dogs and **it is paramount that they show due consideration to other members and their dogs at all times.**
- This is particularly important regarding puppies.

When first meeting other dogs, please ask the owner's permission - your dog may be friendly, but the other dog may be timid or uneasy around other dogs.

Never assume that all dogs are friendly

Owners of puppies must always be particularly careful to avoid any situation where something may occur that may have a detrimental effect on the puppy.

- Respect other members and their dogs, especially if they do not want your dog approaching their dog.
- You may see some dogs wearing yellow space coats. For a variety of reasons these dogs prefer to keep their distance from other dogs. Please respect the owners and dogs and avoid approaching them.

Handling your dog

- Rough treatment of your dog will not be tolerated at any time.
- If you are having difficulty with your dog within the group, take a break and go for a short walk to calm yourself and your dog. Talk to an instructor or Committee Member. There is always someone who can offer advice and help.

Water

- Water buckets are provided around the ground. If another dog is drinking, please be courteous and wait with your dog until they are finished. Not all dogs like to share. Same rules apply when we have our swimming clam shell pools out.

Dogs tied up

- Dogs are not to be left tied up and left unattended on the grounds at any time
- Crates are available in the clubhouse in which your dog may be placed while you socialise with other members
- No dogs are allowed off lead unless under the direct supervision of an instructor.

Tunnels and agility equipment

- As well as the classes that you attend, there is also the agility equipment that you will be able to make use of. Most dogs love this event, and the handlers get a kick out of it too.
- For the safety of yourself and your dog, please do not be tempted to use this on your own. There will be a qualified instructor available who will be happy to go through this with you.
- Members are encouraged to support our volunteer instructors and committee and help put the equipment away after class. You are welcome to give your dog and their friends a run in the enclosed off-lead rings, providing it is not being used for classes.
- If you wish to join another dog or group of dogs, ask their owners before entering— not all dogs are comfortable playing with strangers.
- If you see someone waiting to use the ring, limit your play to 5 minutes and take turns to use it.

First aid

If you require any medical assistance, please speak to your instructor or a Committee Member who will direct you to our First Aid Officers for assistance.

Heat policy

When the forecasted temperature is 32°C or above between 10am and 11am for Sunday, there will be NO Branch training.

NOTE: If training is cancelled, we will advise via our Facebook page, so please "like" our page https://www.facebook.com/GSDCVGeelong.

Bitches in season

Bitches in season are **NOT** allowed on the grounds during training. They are allowed after training when classes have concluded.

Bitches in season are allowed in Show Class, as this is held after other classes.

Important things to remember

- Always wear your membership badge. If you do not have one yet, or maybe you forgot it this week, don't worry as it happens to us all. Ask your instructor for a temporary card. Make sure that you have a badge on before you go into class.
- Be ready to participate in training by the time your class starts. Give yourself plenty of time for "Hello, how are you" letting "Fido" relieve himself and get ready for class. That way, you get the full benefit of your Sunday morning training.
- Only current financial members are allowed to train, so make sure you keep your membership up to date
- Although your class goes for 1 hour, try to keep Sunday mornings free to spend with your dog; they need socialisation with their friends, and you will make friends of your own. Have a cold or hot drink from the canteen or order something to eat. See what is available at our "Dog Shop", or just compare notes on each other's dogs. Our dogs are great ice breakers, there is always someone to chat to, and always someone more than willing to listen.
- Your instructor will probably set some homework, e.g., practice your heelwork, perhaps a drop. If you try to do this homework, you will be rewarded. Your dog will progress much quicker, and you will find that your classes are more interesting if you are not constantly repeating what you did last week.
- You should train your dog during the week to reinforce what you have learned on Sundays. You will achieve better results. Short training sessions - no more that 10-15 minutes at a time is best. Always finish training on a positive note.
- Always have fresh water available and don't leave your dog in your car during warm or hot days (except when checking in).

Communication

There are a range of ways we communicate with our Branch members.

- The Geelong Branch website's address is: www.geelong.gsdcv.org.au. It lists all upcoming events, committee members and more.
- Our Facebook page is another place to find information @GSDCV Geelong.
- Your email address is used occasionally if we need to contact you. Please advise us of change of email address via our Branch email: geelong@gsdcv.org.au.
- For information about the breed, see the GSDCV website: www.gsdcv.org.au.
- For any questions, please speak to any of the Instructors or a Committee Member who are always happy to help.
- Please feel free to raise any questions with your instructor during training. If you need to talk to someone about your dog during the week, either call your breeder or contact the Branch Manager or Chief Instructor.
- We hope you and your dog enjoy your time at the Geelong Branch.

Most importantly, have fun as you and your dog learn together

Contact us

- You can contact us, or any committee member or instructor at

  geelong@gsdcv.org.au or by message to our Facebook page
- Branch Manager, Paul Stynes: 0439 505 202
- Chief Instructor, Deb Wynd: geelongci@gsdcv.org.au

Recommended training equipment for puppies

Having the correct equipment will make it much easier for you to train your puppy and achieve quicker results.

- **Soft flat collar**

  For puppies under 6 months, you will need a soft, flat, webbed or leather collar which is lightweight. It should fit comfortably tight on the puppy's neck so that the collar won't come off, but not tight enough to choke the puppy. You should be able to get 2 fingers underneath the collar.

  NOTE: Correction chains, head halters and harnesses are not allowed for puppies under 6 months.

- **Leads**

  The right choice of lead is critical when training a puppy or dog. For puppies, the lead should be light weight and not too thick. A lead will help puppies learn how to remain by their owners' side. The lead is constantly sending messages to the puppy – both positive and negative – i.e. loose lead = good, tight lead = not good, some consequences will result.

  More than one lead is needed for training:

- Training Lead – a lead of leather or webbed nylon material, 75cm to 1.2m maximum for close work, with a loop at one end and a heavy duty, stainless steel swivel type snap catch at the other end.
- Walking Lead – recreational walking lead of leather or webbed nylon with a loop at one end and a heavy duty, metal swivel type snap catch at the other end. Maximum length 1.8m.

- **Training food**

  Food used for training should be soft and something easily cut into small bite size pieces. It should be large enough for you to grab hold of and small enough so that the puppy doesn't need to stop and chew. For this reason, dry foods are not preferred. It should be of *'high value'* for your puppy and used only for training as a reward. It should not be your pup's normal food.

  Cooked sausage, cooked chicken or other meats including cooked liver and cheese is ideal in tiny pieces about the size of a fingernail.

- **Treat bag**

  You will need a treat bag to carry your training food. It should be placed on your right side, to allow you to quickly reach for the treats with your right hand as your left hand is holding the lead.

  Rewards for correct behavior need to be given quickly – if you are fumbling around in your pockets trying to get the treats out, by the time your puppy has been rewarded it has forgotten why = lesson not learnt.

- **Toys**

  Toys are an important motivational training tool and the puppy's favourite toy is the one that should be used in class. Not all toys are suitable for training. Balls on a string or tug toys are suitable.
  The toy you bring to class as a reward, should be a favourite toy that is used for training alone, and not available outside of training. This is called a *'high value reward'* and is the toy your puppy decides is of the highest value. This should become the major training motivator.

Skills taught in Puppy Class & Class 1

PUPPY CLASS	**Skills required to graduate to Class 1 (at 6 months of age)**
Praise Play Socialisation Sit Drop (from sit position) Stand Stay – short time Recall – come when called Walking on a loose lead Heeling, including left and right turns Watch/focus on owner Retrieve a favourite article Voice correction	Complete a sit and a drop (from the sit position) Come when called Be able to walk or heel in position for 8-10 steps with a turn Understand the stay command Be calm around other pups and dogs Be able to watch/focus on owner for very short periods Understand socialisation and appropriate interactions with other pups and dogs To have experienced and be comfortable with a variety of equipment and sounds Experienced a variety of interactions with a number of people

CLASS 1	**Skills required to graduate to Class 2** (Handler and dog will graduate when these skills can be reliably demonstrated to the instructor)
Sit Sit – stay (30 seconds) Drop Drop and stay (30 seconds) Stand Stand –stay (30 seconds) Recall – stage 1 (on lead) Retrieve stage 1 (introduction only) Walking on a loose lead Heeling (including all turns – left, right, right about and left about turn) Focus/watch Comfortable in the presence of other dogs, people and in a variety of environments	Walk on a loose lead at a normal pace with little correction Do all turns on a loose collar without being overly corrected or dragged around Complete the sit, drop, stand with either voice, hand signals and/or treats with little or no correction Complete the Stand, Sit/Stay and Down/Stay for 30 seconds each Come when called during the recall exercise and sit near the handler Complete the Stand, Sit/Stay and Down/ Stay for 30 seconds each Come when called during the recall exercise and sit near the handle

Skills taught in Class 2 & Class 3

CLASS 2	**Skills required to graduate to Class 3** (Handler and dog will graduate when these skills can be reliably demonstrated to the instructor)
Sit automatically Sit, Down and Stand-stay (each 1 minute) Drop on the move Stand for examination Stays including handler returning around dog Recall – stage 2 (on lead) with "finish" – dog returns behind handler via right side Retrieve stage 2 Walking on a loose lead Heeling (including all turns and change of pace – fast, normal, slow Focus/watch – when sitting and on the move	Able to heel in all 3 paces and do all turns on a loose lead with minimal or no correction. Dog heels close to left knee. During heeling dog sits automatically at the halt Stand and drop on the move with voice/ hand signal with little or no correction Complete the sit, drop and stand for 1 minute with handler at lead's length and returning around the dog Recall: Come when called and sit in front of the handler (on lead). Dog returns around handler via handler's right side Retrieve – dog will give toy to handler on command
CLASS 3	**Skills required to graduate to Class 4** (Handler and dog will graduate when these skills can be reliably demonstrated to the instructor)
Sit, drop, stand as per class 2 Sit-stay off lead (1 minute) Down-stay off lead (3 minutes) Stand for examination on lead (dog steady) Stand-stay off lead (1 minute) Heel on loose lead, all paces and turns Intro. to heel off lead (limited conditions) Recall – stage 3 off lead (handler working up to 10m) Finish off lead (without guiding) Left side finish Intro. to figure of 8 on lead Retrieve – stage 3 (introduction to holding and retrieving a dumbbell	All heeling skills, turns and pace changes as per class 2 Able to heel off lead under limited conditions Complete a figure of 8 on a loose lead Complete the sit & stand stay for 1 minute, and down stay for 3 minutes off lead. Handler at a distance of 7m. Dog holds stay while instructor moves around dog and handler. Handler returns around the dog. Recall: Handler at distance of 10m. Come when called and sit in front of the handler. Dog is able to return to heel position by completing either a left or right finish without guiding. Retrieve – dog will hold and give dumbbell (or toy if not intending to trial) to handler on command

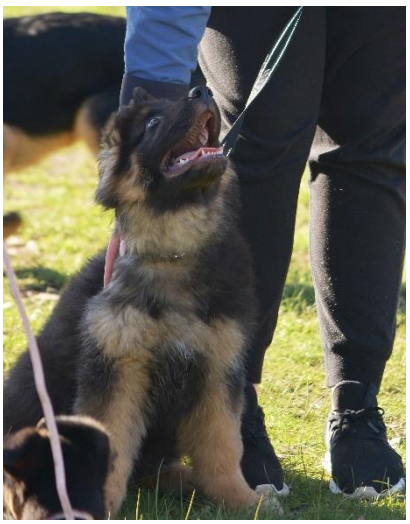
Skills taught in Class 4 & Class 5

CLASS 4 (Approx. trial level: CCD – Novice)	Skills required to graduate to trialling (if desired)
Sit-stay off lead (1 min.) – handler distance 5-10m Down-stay off lead (3min.) – handler distance 5-10m Stand for examination off lead (dog steady) – handler at 2m Stand-stay off lead (1 min.) – handler at short distance Heel on/off lead, all paces and turns, including figure of 8 Recall with left or right-side finish – off lead (handler at 12m) Retrieve dumbbell (or toy if not trialling) from several metres away, and give on command Change of position – handler at short distance	This class provides more advanced challenges and prepares handlers and dogs for trialling if desired All heeling skills, turns, figure of 8 and pace changes (off lead where required) Complete all sit, down & stand stays for required time off lead. Handler at specified distance. Time and distance will vary according to trialling aims. Dog holds stay under distractions. Handler returns around the dog. Recall: Handler at distance of 12m. Come when called and sit in front of the handler. Dog is able to return to heel position by completing either a left or right finish without guiding. Retrieve – dog will retrieve, hold and give dumbbell (or toy) to handler on command

CLASS 5 (Trial class)	Skills required for trialling
Down-stay off lead (3min.) – handler out of sight Stand for examination off lead –handler at 5m distance Heel off lead, all paces and turns, including figure of 8 Drop on recall with finish - handler at 20m Retrieve dumbbell (6m) on flat, with finish (a) Retrieve dumbbell (4m) over solid jump, with finish OR (b) Directed Retrieve (specified glove) with finish (a) Broad Jump (return to handler, with finish) OR (b) Distance Control (drop, sit, call, and finish)Retrieve – stage 3 (introduction to holding and retrieving a dumbbell)	Prepares handlers and dogs for Trialling at CCD level and above, if desired. All skills performed on/off lead (as required) and at a higher standard than required for Class 4 For full descriptions of each skill, refer to “ANKC Rules for the Conduct of Obedience Trials”. Effective from January 2021

Things you can do for your dog between classes

To help your new puppy or dog learn and become a loving, obedient family member there are a few things you can do.



- Get your dog used to be touched. Run your hands over your dog's body including its tail so it gets used to being handled.
- Check your dog's ears and clean them regularly.
- Get your dog used to his nails being clipped. Start off by picking your dog's feet up and touch his toe nails and if you can, clip them regularly.
- Check your dog's teeth regularly by gently lifting its gums up and check their condition.
- Little things like these tasks can also make visiting the vet more enjoyable for both you, your dog and the vet. You can also get other members of the family to do these tasks and also friends to help you as well.
- Visiting your vet between appointments, with treats for staff to give them, will help associate the vet's clinic with positive vibes and make visits more pleasurable for your dog and the vet during appointments.
- Groom your dog regularly. Try placing your dog on a sturdy table and get it used to being combed and brushed, even clipped or scissored. Of course, this depends on your dog's coat but even short coated dogs should be groomed weekly.
- Always check your dog's feet for grass seeds.
- Get your dog used to travelling in the car. Start off with very short trips and then increase the duration. Also ensure your dog is secure in your car whilst driving either being crated or tethered or in a car harness. Do not let your dog put its head out of the window—they can suffer serious eye damage if a foreign object gets in their eye.
- If you let your dog inside set boundaries on where it can go and what it can sit or sleep on and be consistent. If any dog is left outdoors and most are during the day, please ensure you keep our dog occupied by supplying a kennel, water, toys, like Kongs, buster cubes etc. to keep them occupied whilst you are not home. Exercising your dog daily is essential too.
- Make your backyard safe for your dog do not leave potentially chewable items on the ground. Fence off areas of your yard if you do not want plants chewed or holes dug in particular areas.
- Teach your dog the most important basic obedience commands—Sit, Drop, Stand, Stay and Come.
- Socialise your dog with lots of other dogs and people. Always ask first if it is OK to do so when meeting new people and dogs.
- Expose them to a variety of animals, locations, walking surfaces and noises to help them grow in confidence when experiencing new things.
- Remember, dogs are not well-behaved from the start. It is your job to teach your dog good canine manners. Work with your dog on a regular basis, set the rules, and stick to them and before long your dog will know what is and what is not acceptable and will become that loving, obedient family pet you always wanted.

Online training information for members

There are many online videos and courses that:

- can help expand your general knowledge and skills in dog training
- show you how to develop your dog's skills and
- help with simple problem solving.

These are not a substitute for in person training and advice, especially if you are having specific difficulties with your dog e.g. anxiety or reactivity. Always first ask your instructor for advice.
The GSDCV has a library of information leaflets on a wide variety of topics. Ask your instructor to print these for you.

The GSDCV recommends the following sources/sites for reliable online information:

Source	**Site**
Steve and Vicki Austin –	https://www.austinsdogtrainingeducation.com.au/training-advice
K9Pro: Steve Courtney Dog Training Consultancy	https://k9prodogtraining.com.au
Dr Ian Dunbar/Dunbar Academy – Dog Star Daily	https://www.dogstardaily.com
Karen Pryor Clicker Training – Library	https://karenpryoracademy.com
Dr Sophia Yin	https://cattledogpublishing.com/blog/category/articles-by-dr-sophia-yin

These are some sites our instructors have found contain helpful information. This is purely our own personal advice and in no way is related to any recommendations or opinions of the German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria

Site	**Content**
Absolute Dogs (UK) https://absolute-dogs.com	Free YouTube videos and resources (lots), podcasts, Facebook Game based training Also paid online courses
Canine Services International (Australian) https://www.facebook.com/CanineServicesInternationalAU/#	Facebook page – free content
Leerburg (USA) https://leerburg.com	Heaps of free content dog training videos/courses and articles plus paid content
McCann Dogs https://www.mccanndogs.com/	Free YouTube videos, social media and paid online courses
Method K9 (USA) https://www.facebook.com/methodk9/	Facebook page – free content
Michael Ellis dog trainer (Canadian)	Heaps of YouTube videos in Leerburg channel

Pro Dog Training /Pro Dog TV (Australian – Melbourne based) https://prodogtraining.com.au/training	In person training centre in Footscray – classes, courses, workshops Free content Facebook page plus Facebook page for paid subscription to Pro Dog TV. Paid subscription gives access to an extensive range of courses and videos on many aspects of dog training.
RSPCA South Australia https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkvsL5zUVV5FJhwRnWXfAF96ss2vvltJ1	Free content training videos
RSPCA NSW https://kb.rspca.org.au/article-categories/dog-training/	Articles and free content training videos
SpiritDog Training (USA) https://www.youtube.com/@spiritdogtraining	Some free content, paid online short courses, Facebook page
Susan Garrett (Canadian) https://dogsthat.com https://www.youtube.com/c/DogsThat	Free Videos (lots), podcasts, Facebook page "Free Dog Training Workshop", "DogsThat" Games based training. Also paid online courses.
Suzanne Clothier (USA) https://suzanneclothier.com	Free articles and videos Also paid online courses and webinars Relationship based training

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At a glance:
commands used in obedience training

EXERCISE	INSTRUCTOR	YOU
STARTING TO WORK	**ARE YOU READY?**	**WORKING** *Positive tone*
LOOSE LEAD WALKING	**FORWARD**	**LET'S GO or** **OFF WE GO** *Excited happy tone!*
HEELING	**FORWARD**	**HEEL** *Excited happy tone!*
SIT Stationary/learning to sit	**SIT**	**SIT** *Gentle tone*
SIT Whilst moving	**HALT**	**SIT** *Short and firm tone*
DOWN	**DOWN**	**DROP** *Short & firm tone*
STAND	**STAND**	**STAND** *"Staaaand"*
RECALL	**CALL YOUR DOG**	**COME/HERE** *Excited happy tone!*
END OF EXERCISE	**EXERCISE FINISHED**	**FREE/OFF YOU GO** *Excited happy tone!* Fuss and play with your dog
WATCH	**GET YOUR DOG'S ATTENTION**	**WATCH/LOOK** *Positive tone*

The tone of your voice is crucial in helping your puppy learn quickly

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