

HAPPY DOG INSTITUTE'S SUMMER SCHOOL

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER



Class Curriculum

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"The social contract between humans and dogs might be the best bit of business we have ever done."

- Paul Howard



Xoloitzcuintli

LIVING WITH DOGS

"It's all how you raise them" (Is it though?)

You've probably heard it before. "It's all how you raise them." It's often meant as reassurance - a way of saying, "Do the right things, and you'll get the right dog."

There's some truth in it. What we do matters a lot. But it's also not the full picture.

Dogs, like us, are shaped by many things. Genetics, early experiences, learning history, environment, health, stress levels, or simply the day they're having. Two dogs can grow up in the same home, with the same routines, and still turn out completely differently.

If you've ever wondered why your dog struggles with something that "should" be easy, or why training doesn't always stick the way you expected, this is often why. Behavior isn't a straight line from effort to outcome. It's a web of influences, some within our control, and some not.

One of the downsides of the "It's all how you raise them" idea is that it can place a lot of pressure on dog guardians. Your role isn't to create a "perfect" dog. It's to understand and enjoy the dog in front of you. That might look like:

Paying attention to what your dog finds hard, not just what they "should" cope with

- Adjusting expectations based on who your dog is, not who you hoped they'd be
- Looking at the whole picture, including sleep, health, and daily stress, not just training
- Celebrating small wins, especially in areas that don't come naturally to your dog

When we move away from the idea that everything comes down to how a dog is raised, there's less pressure to get it "right," and more space to meet your dog where they are. Progress becomes more realistic, and a lot more sustainable. And you get to love your dog as they are, quirks and all...questionable life choices included.

HAPPY DOG INSTITUTE

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Did You Know?

Terrier Facts

- “Terrier” refers to a group of breeds, not a single breed
- They are defined by their original purpose: hunting and controlling small animals
- The word “terrier” comes from the Latin terra, meaning earth
- Many were bred to work underground in burrows
- Most terrier breeds originated in the United Kingdom and Ireland
- Franklin D. Roosevelt had a Scottish Terrier named Fala who became a public favorite
- The Airedale Terrier was used as a messenger and guard dog during World War I
- Terriers are now recognized worldwide, with breeds developed or adapted in countries beyond the UK



A WORLD OF DOGS

Do dogs understand our intentions?

You ask your dog to sit, but your voice is distracted. Or you reach for a treat, then hesitate. Sometimes your dog responds instantly. Other times...nothing. It can feel inconsistent, even a bit puzzling. But what if your dog isn't just listening to what you say, but paying attention to your intentions?

Research suggests they might be. In a study by Juliane Bräuer and colleagues, dogs were able to distinguish between a person who was unwilling to give them food and one who was unable to. When the human deliberately withheld the food, dogs showed more frustration. When the human tried but failed, dogs were more patient. Same outcome, different intention, and the dogs responded differently.

This points to something more complex than simple cue-following. Dogs aren't just reacting to movements or words. They're taking in the whole picture. Your tone, your body language, your timing, even your hesitation. Over time, they build a sense of what your actions usually lead to, and when something feels off, they notice.

It also helps explain why training doesn't always go to plan. You might be technically following a training protocol, but if your delivery is rushed, unclear, or inconsistent, your dog may read that, too. From their perspective, the signal won't look as clean as it looks from yours.

Trainers often talk about being clear and consistent, and this is partly why. The more predictable you are, the easier it is for your dog to understand not just what you're asking, but what you intend.

Of course, dogs aren't mind readers. They're working with patterns and probabilities, not perfect insight. But they're paying closer attention than we sometimes give them credit for.

DOGS IN ACTION

A Fast-paced Sport for Dogs who Love to Run

Have you heard of skijoring or bikejoring? These sports pair a running dog with a human on skis or a bike, connected by a harness and bungee line. Originally developed in snowy regions as a form of transport, skijoring has evolved into a modern dog sport. Bikejoring follows the same idea, on wheels instead of snow.

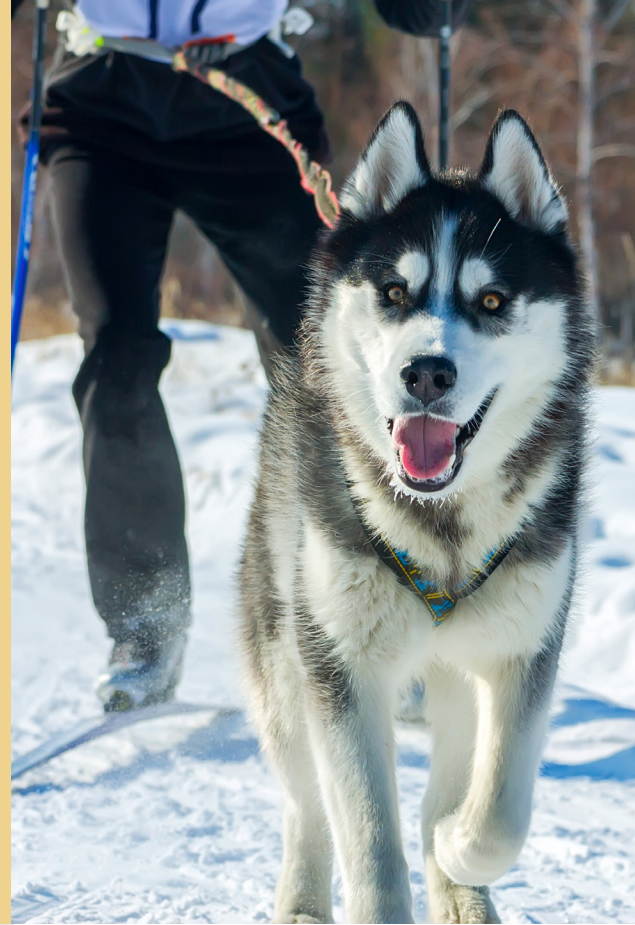
Power with purpose: These sports tap into a dog's natural desire to move forward with intent. Dogs are trained to run ahead, respond to directional cues, and maintain a steady pace. It's not just about speed. It's about communication, rhythm, and shared focus.

Built for movement: You don't need a sled team. Many people participate with one or two dogs, especially breeds who enjoy running and pulling. Proper equipment matters, including a well-fitted harness and shock-absorbing line, to keep both dog and human comfortable.

Safety first: Start gradually and build fitness over time. Surfaces should be appropriate for running, and dogs should be physically mature and healthy before participating. Clear cues and good control are essential, especially in open or shared spaces.

A team sport: Success relies on partnership. Your dog leads, but you guide. Over time, many teams develop a strong sense of connection, moving together with surprising ease.

For dogs who love to run and humans who don't mind keeping up, it's a sport that turns forward motion into something fun and shared.



DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Xoloitzcuintli

Ancient, striking, and quietly devoted, the Xoloitzcuintli (often called the Xolo) is one of the oldest dog breeds in the world. Originating in Mexico and named after the Aztec god Xolotl, these dogs were historically believed to guide souls to the afterlife. Today, they're known for their calm nature and distinctive hairless appearance.

Xolos tend to be thoughtful, observant dogs who form strong bonds with their people. They're often described as "velcro dogs," happiest when close by your side. While not as outwardly busy as some breeds, they still need regular exercise and mental engagement to stay healthy and happy.

Their most recognizable feature is their lack of coat, though coated varieties do exist. Hairless Xolos require specific care, including sun protection and skin maintenance, but they don't shed in the traditional sense.

For those drawn to a deeply connected companion with a rich history, the Xolo offers something truly unique. To meet a Xolo in need of a home, find a breed specific rescue near you.



HEALTHY DOG

Toxic Plants & Your Dog

Many common plants can be harmful to dogs, both indoors and out. The tricky part is that some are everyday garden or house plants you might not think twice about.

Know the risks: Plants like lilies, sago palm, oleander, and azalea are all toxic to dogs. Even small amounts can cause vomiting, lethargy, or more serious symptoms depending on the plant.

Watch what grows: Check your garden and home for plants your dog can access. Puppies and curious dogs are more likely to chew or ingest leaves, flowers, or bulbs.

Learn the signs: Drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, or unusual behavior can all be signs of poisoning. Symptoms don't always appear immediately.

Act quickly: If you suspect your dog has eaten a toxic plant, contact your vet straight away. Early treatment makes a big difference.



To meet an Australian Kelpie, search online for a rescue group near you.

TIPS + TRICKS

Getting Your Dog to Take a Pill

Some dogs will happily eat anything you offer. Others can detect a hidden tablet from across the room. Giving medication doesn't have to turn into a daily battle, though.

Hide it well: Soft foods like cheese, peanut butter (xylitol-free), or pill pockets can disguise tablets. Make a few "decoy" treats first, then slip the pill into one mid-sequence.

Keep it moving: Offer treats in quick succession so your dog swallows without overthinking. The goal is less inspection, more gulp.

Stay calm: If things get tense, dogs often become more suspicious. Keep your tone light.

Ask for help: If your dog consistently refuses, your vet may have alternative options or techniques to make taking medication easier.

Meet the Team at Happy Dog Institute

Ashley Alden (She/Her) | CCS, PSDT-A | Instructor

Ashley Alden is a distinguished graduate and team member of the Northwest School of Canine Studies, a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, and a supporting member of the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants. She recently completed her associate certification at the Peninsula School for Dog Trainers (PSDT-A).

Paul Grosart (They/Them) | BS, CPDT-KA, IAABC-ADT, AKC CGC | Evaluator Instructor

Paul is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer through the Certification Counsel for Professional Dog Trainers, and an Accredited Dog Trainer of the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC). They have spent the last 4 years of their professional development focusing on service dogs, and learning best training practices to ensure the highest working success rate.

Jodi Halvorson (She/Her) | CDW, SAMP | Instructor, Adventure Guide

Jodi, a longtime client and Agility student at HDI, is our newest addition to the team. She's a dog-savvy, dog-loving outdoor enthusiast (which is putting it mildly). Jodi goes adventuring almost every weekend, and has gone fast packing with her own dog on the Pacific Coast Trail into Canada. She is currently training for a 100 and 250 mile trail race, is Canine and Wilderness First Aid certified and is a Certified Dog Walker (CDW).

Emma Holly (She/Her) | MS, CPDT-KA, CSAT, IAABC-ADT | Co-Owner, Behavior Consultant

When she was a kid, Emma was the one at family parties off in a corner with the dog. Not much has changed, though now she's in the corner with her dogs and a computer, running the Happy Dog show. When you contact us, Emma is likely the first person you'll be talking with.

Heather Ringwood (She/Her) | BA, FDM, CPDT-KA, AKC CGC Evaluator | Co-Owner, Director of Training

Specializing in Agility and Advanced Manners training, Heather's heart, love, and training focus is in showing others how to have fun with her dogs. She studied Dog Behavior and Canine History, and has a degree in Dog Training & Business. After college, Heather trained assistance dogs for the hearing impaired.

To learn more about our team, visit happydoginstitute.com/about/

Basic Weekly Overview

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<u>Evening Classes</u>	<u>Classes All Day</u>	<u>Classes All Day</u>	<u>Evening Classes</u>	<u>Evening Classes</u>	<u>Classes All Day</u>	<u>Daytime Classes</u>
Puppy Primer 8-16 weeks old Open enrollment	Focus & Control for Teens 6-12 months old	Masters Nose Work		Sports Prep for all Ages Runs quarterly	Puppy Primer 8-16 weeks old Open enrollment	Stranger Danger Starts every 6 weeks
Puppy Life Skills 16-24 weeks old starts every 6 weeks	Foundation Skills for Adults 12+ months old	Advanced Nose Work		Beginning Rally Runs quarterly	Puppy Life Skills 16-24 weeks old starts every 6 weeks	Introduction to Cooperative Care Runs quarterly
Private Sessions Available	Sports Prep for all Ages Runs quarterly	Intermediate Nose Work	Chaotic Canine 9+ months old Runs every 7 weeks	Continuing Rally classes for ongoing students	Focus & Control for Teens 6-12 months old	Private Sessions Available
	Private Sessions Available	Intro to K9 Nose Work	Private Sessions Available		Foundation Skills for Adults 12+ months old	
	  	 		 	 	 