

Electric Training Collars

Much of my correspondence now days is related to proper use of the electric training collar. Here is some very important information every dog owner should know regarding electric collar training. Before implementing any stimulation with the electric collar, your dog must know some very basic obedience commands. A dog learns by first being shown a command, followed by lots of repetition over an extended period. As the dog becomes proficient at these commands, the trainer can introduce distractions and different locations to strengthen them.

Obedience Training On The Leash

Your dog must fully understand the obedience commands (sit, stay, here, heel and kennel) before using the e-collar for reinforcement of these commands. A metal training collar also known as the choke chain or pinch collar is used to implement the negative reinforcement on the leash. A sharp jerk with the chain and leash reinforces the command such as SIT, STAY, HERE, HEEL OR KENNEL. When the dog complies with the command use praise, which we call positive reinforcement. (Note it will take most dogs a few weeks to become proficient at the obedience training).

Beginning Electric Collar Training

When you feel your dog understands the obedience commands on the leash we can now start reinforcing them with the electric collar training. With the dog on the leash wearing the electric collar continue with your obedience drills. Light stimulation (nick or continuous) is going to be applied as a command is given, the stimulation is removed as the dog complies. Through repetition, a dog learns to turn off the stimulation by performing the command. Electric collar training is another form of negative reinforcement, similar to the leash and metal collar training. When the dog complies with the command, we use praise/positive reinforcement. The final step is the avoidance phase in which the dog learns that he can avoid the stimulation altogether by performing your commands. When these training procedures are complete, the electric collar is used as a reminder when the dog does not comply with your commands at home or in the field.

How Much Stimulation To Use

Always start with low levels of stimulation and work your way up depending on the personality of your dog and any given situation. By using only enough stimulation to get your point across, you will have a more controllable training environment and a dog that is under less stress.

Getting Help

If you run into problems don't be afraid to seek professional help from a reputable trainer. A handful of private lessons will be money well spent.

Pete Fischer is a professional Retriever trainer from Albany Minnesota - He can be reached at Fischers Kennels & Hunt Club (320) 597-2729 or www.fischerskennels.com