

*An Owner's Manual for:*

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FIVE TRICKS  
YOU'LL WANT TO SHOW OFF

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*by the*  
AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB



## **ABOUT THIS SERIES**

At the AKC, we know better than anyone that your dog can't be treated like a car or an appliance, but we've named this series "An Owner's Manual" because sometimes you probably wish your lovable companions came with one.

These concise guides give you the tools, tips, and direction to be a responsible and confident dog owner who brings out the best in your dog. Give them a test drive!



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Puppy, adolescent, adult, or senior: No matter his age, almost any dog can learn to do at least a few tricks. Whether or not the tricks become crowd-pleasers to be proud of, the training sessions alone are a great way to bond and have a good time together. But remember to cut the session short before your dog gets tired, and always make it a happy, positive experience! Otherwise, he'll associate trick training with frustration rather than fun.

The five tricks below assume that your dog has already mastered basic commands such as “sit,” “stay,” “down,” and “come.” If he hasn't, check out our [“Five Basic Commands.”](#)



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## BEFORE THE FIVE TRICKS, KNOW THE FIVE RULES

1. First make sure that your dog is in good physical shape and has no issues that would cause him to be injured before attempting to train any new tricks. If you're unsure, consult with your vet.

2. To get the most out of your sessions, make sure your dog hasn't just eaten before training. That way, he'll be more into you and the training treats. For non-food motivated dogs, use a toy that only shows up during training sessions.

3. Be fast! Reward immediately when the dog does what you're looking for. If you're

too slow, you'll miss the opportunity to "mark" the correct behavior.

4. Wait to use a cue word until your dog is doing the exact behavior you want. Otherwise you'll be confusing your dog as to what the command actually means.

Until that point, use a marker word such as "Yes" to mean "You did it right and food is coming."

5. Reps count.

When teaching a dog a new trick, do 5–10 reps before moving to the next progression.



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## Ready, Set, Tricks ...

### SIT UP

Also known as “Beg” or “Sit Pretty,” this trick requires the dog to balance in a sitting position, with his front feet off the ground. Start by sitting in a chair with the dog between your legs, facing away from you (if you have a little dog, sit on the floor). This helps the dog feel comfortable elevating himself without the fear of falling over backwards. Ask him to sit, then hold a treat a few inches above his nose. In order for him to reach the treat, he has to raise his front paws off the ground while maintaining his sitting position.



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Gradually raise your hand higher until his front feet are high enough off the floor without him coming off his sit. As training progresses, ask for a longer duration of this behavior before rewarding, and when it looks the way you want it to, name it “Sit Pretty.” Once he’s confident with the exercise, transfer the behavior from between your legs to a corner, against the wall. Eventually he will be able to do this without any support at all.



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## REACH UP

After your dog is able to “Sit Pretty,” lure him into standing on his back legs for the next trick, “Reach Up.” You can use the same system you used for the original trick, but slowly raise your hand higher so that the dog stands. Once he’s correctly doing the trick, name the command “Reach Up” or another name.



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## SPIN (BOTH WAYS)

Using a food- or toy lure, incrementally teach your dog to do a 360-degree spin. While some dogs may easily follow a (slow) treat or toy lure completely around the first time you attempt this, most will need to be incrementally rewarded in order to complete the trick. For example, if you were training a dog who's reluctant to spin to the

right, the reward points would be:

1. Turns head to look at treat/toy by his right shoulder
2. Turns head to look at treat/toy by his right hip
3. Turns head to look at treat/toy by his left hip (this is the point that he most likely makes the turn)
4. Reward when turn is complete.

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## CRAWL

Also known as “Army Crawl,” this is a fairly simple trick to teach. Lure your dog into a down position with a treat, and once he’s down, slide the treat away from him an inch at a time. Reward every time he crawls forward. If your dog stands up, lure him back down and try again. As always, name it while your dog is doing the behavior.



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## SPEAK

To teach your dog to teach on command, start by getting the dog super cranked up (for example, running around with him until he's really excited). Then show—don't give—him a high-value reward and wait for him to become vocal. Normally it doesn't take long, because once they offer you lots of behaviors that you keep ignoring (down, spin, sit) they'll usually whine or bark in frustration. The first time you mark ("Yes!") and feed, they look so surprised! Then you'll see the light go on, and the consistent barking behavior usually occurs in no time. Remember to give it a name ("speak," "tell me," or similar) after you like what you're hearing.



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## **LIFE OF THE PARTY**

Our dogs love to please us, and most of all, to be with us. Teaching and showing off the tricks he's learned will be satisfying for both of you.

Adapted from AKC FAMILY DOG'S  
"Training & Behavior" column by  
Kathy Santo.





THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

### WHO AND WHAT WE ARE:

*The AKC is a not-for-profit organization and the largest purebred dog registry in the world. We are the sports-governing body for over 22,000 dog events a year, including conformation (dog shows) and exciting sports like agility, obedience, rally, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog, herding trials, among others.*



## THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

*But the AKC is so much more! Here are just some of the ways we support and enrich the lives of dogs—purebreds and mixed-breeds alike—and their families. We:*

- Created the [AKC Humane Fund](#), which supports breed rescue activities, assists shelters that permit domestic-abuse victims to bring their pets, and educates dog lovers about responsible dog ownership.
- Offer the [Canine Good Citizen®](#) program: A 10-step test that certifies dogs who have good manners at home and in their community. Over 725,000 dogs across the United States have become Canine Good Citizens, and 42 states have passed resolutions recognizing the program's merit and importance.
- Founded [AKC Reunite](#), which has brought more than 400,000 lost pets back together with their owners.
- Created the [AKC Canine Health Foundation](#), which funds research projects and clinical studies. Since 1995 the AKC has donated over \$24 million to the CHF. (The AKC is the only registry that incorporates health-screening results into its permanent dog records.)
- Conduct thousands of kennel inspections annually to monitor care and conditions at kennels across the country and ensure the integrity of the AKC registry.
- Offer the largest, most comprehensive set of DNA programs for parentage verification and genetic identity to ensure reliable registration records.
- Support one of the world's largest collections of dog-related fine art and artifacts at the [AKC Museum of the Dog](#), and we have the world's largest [dog library](#) at AKC headquarters in New York, both of which are open to the public.



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## THANK YOU FOR READING!

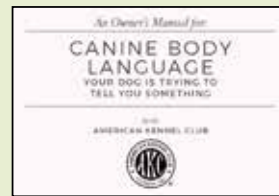
*We hope this information was valuable to you in helping your puppy live a long, healthy, happy life. Below, find additional books in our Owner's Manual series designed to strengthen the bond between you and your furry family member.*



5 TRICKS TO SHOW OFF



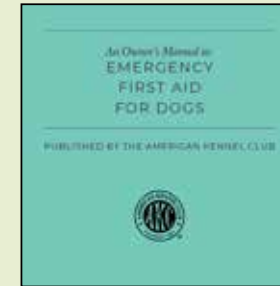
AGILITY FOR BEGINNERS



CANINE BODY LANGUAGE



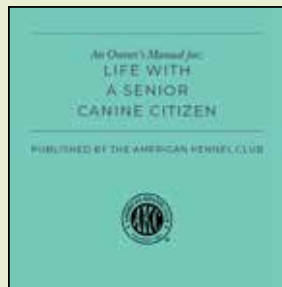
CANINE GOOD CITIZEN



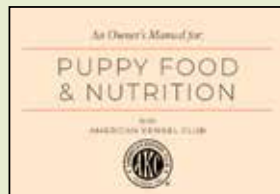
FIRST AID FOR DOGS



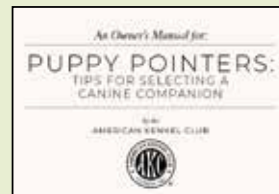
HOW TO CRATE TRAIN YOUR DOG



LIFE WITH A SENIOR DOG



PUPPY NUTRITION



SELECTING A PUPPY



5 BASIC COMMANDS



RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER TIPS



WHY DOES MY DOG DO THAT?



WHAT'S HE THINKING?



PUPPY SOCIALIZATION