

Everyone Wants The Best For Their Pets.



With a whirlwind of resources available, it's tougher than ever to pinpoint the absolute best ways to care for, treat and train the animals that you consider part of your family.

In the past, you only had books and TV programs to help you learn about your pets. Now, there's websites, blogs, podcasts, courses and videos, all with contradicting advice. Talk about an information overload!

Our mission at iLovePets.co is to not only source the best quality pet products to make it easy for you to shop, but to help you understand your pets' needs so you can make great choices.

We do this by breaking down scientific resources and extended research into quick, actionable tips.

Through this guide and our blog posts, we hope you can find everything you need to know about your pets so you can spend even more time playing, snuggling and going on adventures.

Questions? Comments? Feedback? Contact us at info@ilovepets.co

Table Of Contents

Introduction	1
How To Use Animal Behavior Psychology To Train Your Pet	3
Being Your Pet's Leader	3
The Four Quadrants	4
How To Begin Training Your Pet	5
Advanced Pet Training And Behavior	6
Conventional Or Holistic Vet Care? What To Choose For Your Pet	7
Diagnose First, Then Seek Alternatives	7
Are All Vaccines Necessary?	8
Parasite Preventatives - Toxic Or Necessary?	8
Preventing Pet Health Epidemics	9
All Pets Need Routine Vet Care	10
Super-Smart Ways To Save Money On Pet Necessities - And What You Should Never Skimp On	11
You Should Save Money On:	11
You Should Never Skimp On:	12
Learn More About Super-Smart Pet Ownership	13
Explore The iLovePets.co Archives:	13
13	

How To Use Animal Behavior Psychology To Train Your Pet



Animal behavior psychology works with *all* animals - including humans!

Once you understand the basics, you can easily discourage unwanted behaviors, enforce good manners, and teach impressive tricks. While dogs are especially responsive to training, you can train *any* animal using these concepts. People have used these techniques to teach sharks, fish, alligators, birds, rabbits... anything!

Being Your Pet's Leader

You provide food, water and shelter for your pet, plus love and affection. With your more evolved brain and advanced intelligence, you naturally become their leader just by caring for your pet and training them.

A healthy human-pet relationship is based on mutual understanding and respect. When your pet disobeys, it is not because you have failed to be a strong leader. It may be because they are fearful, or because they do not yet understand what you want. Though lapses in training are frustrating, do not feel as though your pet intends to disobey, or that they do not respect you.

The more you understand about your pet's innate skills, their personality and what motivates them, the more easily you'll be able to use creative, tailored solutions to solve any training issue.

If you are having trouble ceasing an unwanted behavior or teaching new skills, seek a private trainer or training class.

The Four Quadrants

Animal trainers use the *quadrants of operant conditioning* originally created by scientist B.F. Skinner to explain why people and animals cease and increase behaviors.

Most techniques used to modify behavior fall into four quadrants: positive reinforcement, positive punishment, negative reinforcement and negative punishment.

The words *positive* and *negative*, in this context, do not mean “good” or “bad.” Here, positive means to add something, while negative means to take something away.

The word *punishment* simply means to discourage a behavior, and the word *reinforcement* means to cause a behavior to increase.

<p>Positive Reinforcement (R+) The addition of a reward to encourage your pet to continue do something, or to do it more frequently.</p> <p>We recommend using this quadrant as often as possible. It's the easiest way to get your pet to do what you want while creating a fun experience for them.</p> <p>Example: you want your dog to come when called, so you give him a treat when he does.</p>	<p>Positive Punishment (P+) The addition of an aversive to discourage your pet from doing something again.</p> <p>We recommend avoiding this quadrant because it has the highest risk of fallout. Punishments can lead to fear-based behaviors by engaging the animal's fight or flight response.</p> <p>Example: you want your cat to stop jumping on the counter, so you punish him with a spray bottle. This may inadvertently cause your cat to avoid being near you.</p>
<p>Negative Reinforcement (R-) The removal of an aversive to encourage your pet to continue to do something, or to do it more frequently.</p> <p>Any time you use aversives, you risk fallout and unwanted side effects.</p> <p>Example: your dog pulls at the leash, and as a result, he experiences painful pressure around his neck from his collar. To make the pain stop, he must give in to the pressure and stop pulling.</p>	<p>Negative Punishment (P-) The removal of a reward to encourage a behavior to stop.</p> <p>We recommend using this quadrant when positive reinforcement is not possible before moving on to other quadrants.</p> <p>Example: you want your dog to sit politely before you let him outside. If he tries to rush out the door, you'll hold his leash and close the door, and only let him out once he sits calmly and waits for your signal to go out.</p>

How To Begin Training Your Pet

It's never too early to start training your pet. From the first day you bring them home, you can work on teaching them their name. Aquatic animals, like fish, frogs and turtles, may not be able to learn their name, but they can respond to the sound of your voice.

Food is known as a *primary reinforcer*. All animals need it, and will do whatever it takes to get it. You don't have to teach a cat or dog to love their treats.

Most animals pick up on *secondary reinforcers*. For most pet owners, this would be “yes!” or “good boy!” or the sound of a clicker. Only use the secondary reinforcer if you’re able to offer a reward immediately after.

Even fish understand secondary reinforcers. At first, your fish won’t be excited to see you, but once they associate the sight and sound of you with food, they’ll race to the top of the tank to greet you. You can flash a light or a laser pointer to communicate with your fish, too. Try flashing a light one time before you drop in a piece of food. Once your fish responds to it, you can use the light as a signal for teaching tricks.

Once your pet understands a secondary reinforcer, you can teach them anything. Use the same reinforcer every time your pet does something right - or stops doing something wrong. For example, if you catch your puppy chewing on furniture, redirect them to a toy and say, “yes!” and give them a treat for chewing on the appropriate object.

Advanced Pet Training And Behavior

Once you have mastered the basics with your pet, you’ll find that many doors have opened for teaching advanced tricks, making lasting changes and truly understanding how your pet thinks.

On the ilovepets.co blog, we cover advanced topics like how you can [use research data to help you train your dog](#), how you can [teach your pet to learn by imitating you](#), and how you can stop your cat’s unwanted behaviors [without using a spray bottle](#).

Stay in the know with pet training and care updates - Like the [iLovePets.co Facebook Page](#).

Conventional Or Holistic Vet Care? What To Choose For Your Pet



With the rise of online resources from renowned holistic veterinarians like Dr. Karen Becker, you may find that the pet care advice you used to take for granted may not actually be as reliable as you once thought.

At the same time, a lot of holistic pet care advice circulating the web can be unsafe for your pets. Many of these new techniques are not proven to be safe or effective. Conventional veterinary medicine is based on years of peer-reviewed research studies - it's not something to dismiss.

There's a place for both holistic pet care *and* conventional pet care when it comes to your pet's wellness.

Diagnose First, Then Seek Alternatives

Being a super-smart pet parent means knowing when to seek professional care. If your pet has a health condition of any kind, it's crucial that you see a vet for a diagnosis. Do not try to treat them at home without confirming what they actually have - this can allow a simple, treatable condition to grow into something severe.

Always be honest and upfront with your vet about any holistic or alternative remedies that you plan to try. For example, you may want to try CBD oil for your dog's arthritis pain, and most vets will not recommend it, but you need to make sure they know in case of any chance of drug interactions.

While you and your vet may not always agree, it is important that you are always open-minded, and that you listen to them. At the same time, you will make all final decisions regarding your pet's care, so do not feel pressured to do anything that you disagree with. Sometimes, you may need a second or third opinion to find the best option for your pet.

Are All Vaccines Necessary?

You may have heard about some pets experiencing adverse side effects from vaccines.

Shortly after vaccinations, your pet may experience lethargy, swelling at the injection site, and a lack of appetite. These side effects are mild, and not unusual. Call your veterinarian if symptoms seem severe or do not subside within 48 hours.

Severe reactions like seizures, elevated heart rate, trouble breathing, and even death are possible, but rare.

Most of the time, the risks of leaving your pet unvaccinated are greater than the small risk of an adverse side effect. This is especially true with the core vaccine schedules for puppies and kittens.

However, only the rabies vaccine is required by law, every three years for adult cats and dogs. If your pet contracts rabies, it is almost certain that they will die. So, it's worthwhile to get the rabies vaccines.

Other vaccines are required if your pet is boarded, or goes to dog parks. You can work with your vet to decide which are necessary for your pet.

Senior pets, those with chronic illnesses or weakened immune systems may not be able to tolerate vaccinations. If you're concerned about your pet experiencing side effects, ask your veterinarian if titer tests are available. A titer test measures the antibodies in your pet's blood against an infection, making a vaccine unnecessary.

Parasite Preventatives - Toxic Or Necessary?

Popular [flea and tick prevention](#) products like Advantage, Frontline and Nexgard are extremely effective at preventing and managing infestations. However, depending on the formula you choose, they may either repel pests, kill pests on contact, or distribute a toxic substance through your pet's bloodstream so that when the flea bites your pet, the flea is poisoned and then dies.

Under normal circumstances, these products are toxic to pests, but produce no harmful side effects in your pet. They have, however, caused side effects like seizures, vomiting, muscle tremors, and in rare cases, death.

There are natural, nontoxic alternatives to flea and tick preventatives. These alternatives are typically made with essential oils, and they usually repel pests, but do not kill them. Holistic alternatives tend to be less effective than chemical treatments, but they may be effective enough to keep your pet safe.

The health risks associated with fleas and ticks are more of a priority than the small risk of adverse side effects of chemical treatments. So, you may decide to try a holistic alternative, but because they tend to be less effective and need to be applied daily, the alternative might not be right for you - in which case, chemical flea and tick preventatives should be fine.

Heartworm preventatives, on the other hand, [have no effective holistic substitute](#). You'll need to use a heartworm preventative year-round in warm climates. Heartworm is contracted through mosquitoes. Where there are mosquitoes, there is a risk of heartworm disease.

You do not want your pets to get heartworms. Heartworm disease is incredibly difficult and expensive to treat, and it does not always work. It's potentially fatal.

Preventing Pet Health Epidemics

Over 50% of dogs and cats are [overweight](#), 80% will have some form of dental disease by age three, and an increasing number of dogs and cats are being diagnosed with diabetes. What do all of these pet health epidemics have in common? They can be prevented with a high quality diet.

Pet foods are formulated to meet AAFCO standards, meaning they contain all of the vitamins and nutrients your pets need each day. However, low-quality pet foods are made with high starch content, which could consist of rice, peas, potatoes, corn, or wheat, with artificial vitamins and minerals added to meet those standards.

Just like with humans, pets thrive when they get their nutrients from fresh, high quality ingredients. A species appropriate diet for cats and dogs should be largely made up of fresh, raw meat. When this is not possible, choose a high-quality kibble (we love and recommend Victor pet foods), and supplement with [fresh treats or toppers](#).

All Pets Need Routine Vet Care

Whether you have a cat, a dog, a horse or other creature, yearly checkups and regular blood-work can catch illnesses early. Most animals tend to hide pain, so you would not know if something was wrong until they showed severe symptoms.

Take the time with your vet to ask questions. You should feel comfortable talking to your vet about your own research and any questions or concerns you have about your pet's care. If you do not feel you can be open and communicative with your vet, seek another - the right vet will be the best advocate for your pets' health and help you keep your pet healthy between visits.

Need a new vet? Check out our list of [great veterinary clinics in Grand Prairie, Texas](#).

Super-Smart Ways To Save Money On Pet Necessities - And What You Should Never Skimp On



Pet ownership can be expensive, and you're likely to spend more on your pet than you've budgeted for, no matter how carefully you plan. Unexpected vet bills and rising costs may be out of your control, but you can make room for extra expenses by cutting costs where you can.

There are some areas of pet ownership in which you do not need to spend a lot of money. There are other things that you should never skimp on, or you could compromise your pet's care or create bigger costs in the long run.

You Should Save Money On:

Treats. Snacks and treats should make up no more than 10 percent of your pet's diet, including dental chews like [Himalayan Yak Cheese Chews](#) - which are more expensive than some, but make up for it in their long-lasting goodness.

You can make your own treats for pennies on the dollar by [dehydrating your own single-ingredient treats](#), or even inventing your own recipes using combinations of pet-safe ingredients.

Basic grooming. You should aim to trim your pet's nails and brush their teeth at home. It will take some positive reinforcement and patience to get them used to it. Grooming at home reduces stress and cuts costs, so it's worth the learning curve.

Accessories. Your pets only really need one harness or collar that they will use for identification and/or walks. Be prepared to spend enough to get something that is comfortable and sturdy enough for

everyday use. You may also have to spend more on a coat or jacket that is warm enough and fits properly. Additional outfits and accessories can be cheap if they're frequently switched up and used for fashion purposes.

Food. Buying larger bags of food will help you save money, but only if you're able to store it correctly. Once opened and exposed to air, dry food starts to deteriorate. After three weeks, it is no longer fresh and good to feed. You can freeze dry food to help it last longer once the bag has been opened.

You can take advantage of sales and coupons to further stretch your pet food dollar. Some pets can easily handle diet changes with no problem, while others need a slow, gradual transition between foods. It's helpful to change foods once in a while to make sure your pet's stomach is adaptable. Ask your vet about finding a few different brand options that are appropriate for your pet.

Potty pads. Litter, potty pads and small animal bedding are all cheaper when bought in bulk. Prevent mold and mildew by storing in an airtight container.

You Should Never Skimp On:

Food. Buy the best quality food you can afford. If that means you'll have to feed the cheapest kibble available, that's okay - do your best to supplement with fresh ingredients when you can manage it. There's no perfect food that is appropriate for every animal. Look for a food that your pet likes and that they thrive on. This means a shiny coat, plenty of energy and small, low-odor poops.

Beds. Your pet's bed should be thick enough that they don't sink to the floor. A quality bed becomes even more of a necessity when your pet is older and may have mobility issues or arthritis. A good, comfortable bed will also dissuade your pet from using your furniture, if you prefer to keep them off your couch and bed. You can, however, spread a few cheaper beds throughout your home if your pet likes to nap in different spots.

Habitats. For most small animals that live in cages and aquariums, bigger is better. A tank or cage is a one-time purchase if you get the right one, the first time. Keep in mind that your pet may grow, or you may decide to add a companion later on. A too-small habitat will need to be cleaned more frequently as wastes will build up quickly.

Invest In Experiences, Not Things

While many pets love being spoiled for choice when it comes to toys, you don't need baskets and baskets full of them.

The best way to spend money on your pet is to invest in new experiences. Take time off and make memories. Take your cat for walks. Take your dog to a new beach every summer. Go for longer trips and give your pets plenty of time to smell, explore, and experience enrichment.

Remember to take photos - when they grow up, and when they pass away, you'll *always* wish that you had more photos to look back on. Make sure to back them up, make prints, post them on social media - make sure those memories last.

Learn More About Super-Smart Pet Ownership

Explore The iLovePets.co Archives:

[Dogs](#)



[Cats](#)



[Birds](#)



[All Pets](#)

