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Tips Yo Find The Right Dog Trainer

Dogs add an entirely new component to the dynamic of a household. Whether a dog is being welcomed into the bustling home of a family or the more sedate environment of a singleton's apartment, the four-legged friend will soon acclimate to its new surroundings and become a beloved member of the family.

The transition from a pet-free home to one with a dog is not always smooth, especially if the dog exhibits certain behaviors. Chewing is a common behavior exhibited by dogs after they enter a new home that may alarm new dog owners. The ASPCA notes that it's normal for puppies and dogs to chew on objects as they explore the world. Some dogs may do so to alleviate pain stemming from incoming teeth, while others chew to keep their jaws strong.

Destructive chewing may be a byproduct of anxiety or frustration, and such behavior can be especially hard for new dog owners to comprehend and corral. In such instances, dog owners can benefit from working with professional dog trainers. The American Kennel Club notes that dog training is an unregulated industry, which can complicate the process of finding trustworthy trainers. In recognition of that difficulty, the AKC offers the following tips to dog owners searching for the right trainer.

- Ask about a trainer's philosophy. Dog trainers use various methods, but the AKC emphasizes the importance of finding trainers who use positive reinforcement training. Such a philosophy rewards appropriate behavior and teaches alternative behaviors in place of inappropriate ones. The AKC notes that positive reinforcement training is science-based and fosters a love of learning in dogs while strengthening the bond between dogs and their owners.
- Find out which services the trainer offers. Trainers offer different services. Some may specialize in one-on-one training, while oth-



Dog trainers can help dogs acclimate to new homes and help their owners adjust to their new roles. More information about dog trainers can be found at www.akc.org.

ers train in class-like environments that can promote socialization. Each dog is different, so a training environment that works for one dog may not work for another. Speak with various trainers about their services and then choose the one that most aligns with your dog's personality.

- Ask for a trainer's credentials. The AKC notes that certification with certain organizations is not mandatory, though certifications may indicate how serious a trainer is about training dogs. Trainers should be forthcoming about their credentials, including any certifications they may have. The Association of Professional Dog Trainers (www.apdt.com) can help dog owners learn about the various types of certification so they can make the most informed decisions possible when choosing a trainer for their dogs.
- Take note of your own comfort level with the trainer. The AKC reminds dog owners that dog trainers teach dog owners, who will need to be comfortable with a trainer to get the most of his or her services. Ask to observe a training class and take note of the trainer's interactions with both the dogs and their owners.