

## Dogs 101 – The owner’s manual for correct operation

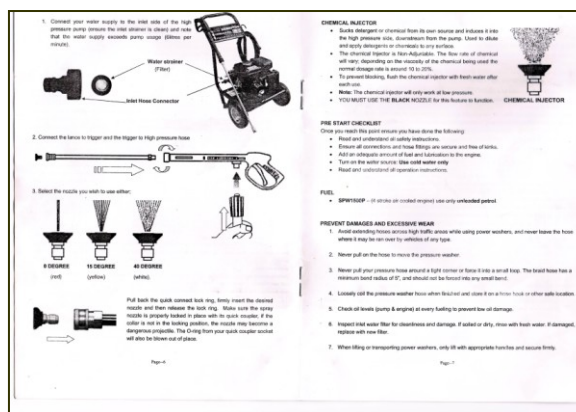
### Why create Dogs 101?

Dogs are famous for their role as animal companions in our society today. However, getting good and lasting outcomes from this human-animal relationship is not a given. Such bonds take knowledge to build and they take effort to maintain. While most people these days *do* appreciate that dog ownership *does* come with significant obligations, not everybody understands all of exactly *what* it is they should be doing.... And competent *behaviour management* is central in this.

Every household appliance on sale these days comes with operating instructions that have been written to cover all essential aspects of it’s proper use. From motor cars to lawn mowers, from toasters or power drills, they all come with these operating instructions – and it is for good reason that they do so....

Those owners who don’t know how to operate a new appliance properly:

1. May be let down when it fails to do what they expected it would and should
2. May break the appliance, ruin it permanently and have to dispose of it
3. May harm someone badly with it



Instructions

⇒ It is an anomaly in our obligation conscious society today that pet animals do not routinely and mandatorily come at the point of retail with standard operating instructions. The rationale for having operating instructions is the same.

The Australian pet owning community is currently well served with advice about *physical* pet health care. This instruction includes aspects such as grooming, feeding, exercising and disease prevention. A wide range of animal health care product and service providers already market such instruction very effectively to the community at large. It is in their commercial interest to do so. It is sound advice and it is so readily available that it is in fact difficult to avoid.

While advice of this (physical health) nature is all very well and good, it does little to help keep dogs right in the head – and that is important also.

The need for good behaviour applies to *all* dogs regardless of their size or type. The benefits of good behaviour include the health, safety, comfort and the fun of everyone involved (*including* the dogs themselves).

- ⇒ When dogs *do* end up becoming a nuisance, or a danger or just an inconvenience, it is unfortunate if these poor outcomes could have been prevented simply through better behavioural management.
- ⇒ Failure to manage dog behaviour competently can be expensive in terms of public and private risk and nuisance. It can also be expensive in terms of adverse welfare issues and increased animal shelter load.

### **AIAM, local Government and community**

The Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) has a dedicated interest in encouraging a national environment of competent dog ownership. How dog owners manage the behaviour of their pets is central to this. Dogs 101 is an education initiative through which AIAM seeks to focus community attention on better understanding the basics of dog behaviour management for the benefit of all (including the dogs themselves).

Animal management is a Local Government service intended to realise the following principal goals:

- Having municipal environments that effectively minimise public pet nuisance
- Having municipal environments that effectively promote competent (capable and considerate) pet animal ownership

Animal management involves working with a complex and interactive mix of the following three scientific disciplines:

- Animal behaviour,
- Human behaviour and
- Community behaviour

⇒ Most local authorities actively seek ways to respond to animal management issues in a positive, proactive and where possible, a non-regulatory way.

Dogs 101 is just such an initiative.

Dogs 101 embraces all five of these structural animal management components.

### **101 Format**

Dogs 101, is presented in the form of a 5 stage plan. While the 5 stages of the Dogs 101 plan follow one another separately, no stage is any more (or less) important than any other. Everything in the plan is linked with everything else. It is an integrated process that includes:-

1. Pet selection
2. Puppy socialisation
3. Leadership and training
4. Day to day management
5. Community consideration

It is important to note that Dogs 101 is not a theme set in stone. The 5 stage plan has the flexibility to be applied in a variety of situations. For example, Stage 2 (Correct Socialisation) won't have as direct an application if you either have or are planning to acquire an adult dog. Even so, the ideas involved with socialisation are still sound and worth knowing.

### ***Simple but sound***

The task of keeping any advice simple while at the same time preserving the integrity of the behavioural concepts involved can be demanding. Dogs 101 was shaped slowly and carefully so as to obtain the best combination of both simplicity and integrity of message.

**N.B.** No one should forget that the expression of any dog's behaviour (what it may do at any place or time) is a function of an unlimited range of combined effects. Dog temperament and personality are variables. Situational circumstances are variables. Degrees of control and restraint are variables.

The recommendations put forward in Dogs 101 as techniques for getting better behaviour come with no guarantees - they are recommendations. At the end of the day, the responsibility for a dog's actions rests with its owner.

AIAM advice is that dog owners should; be patient, be kind and most of all enjoy the time they spent with their dog. AIAM would like dog owners to think of this plan and its application as something that they *and* their dogs can embrace together for the benefit of all parties involved.

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