

SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

BUSINESS SERVICES



In-Home Private Sessions



Group Classes & Courses



Overnight Boarding



Bootcamps & Drop-Off



1000+ 5-Star Reviews



Google
Reviews ★★★★★



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In-Home Private Session

We don't just train dogs; we teach their humans too. That's why we've earned over 1,000 five-star reviews! After all, your dog should listen to their owner, not just the trainer. Together, we'll create a personalized plan to help your dog reach their full potential!



Group Classes & Courses

Our Group Classes are a key reason we were featured on Good Morning America, and our clients can't get enough of them! We call them 'Real World Classes' because we focus on what's truly important—teaching your dog to behave around other dogs, people, and distractions, while ensuring proper socialization. These classes are exclusively available to our private session clients, ensuring that everyone shares the same foundation (6+ month age requirement.) Plus, we offer a free class for every referral!



Overnight Boarding

The Say It Once Dog House is our boarding facility located in Lower Burrell. It accommodates just 25 dogs, ensuring personalized care and attention. With overnight staff on-site, you can rest easy knowing your dog is well-cared for around the clock!



Bootcamps & Drop-Off

Our Bootcamp program, started in 2022, has been such a hit that we've expanded it and now offer a week-long session every month! During Bootcamp, you drop your dog off for 5 days, or have them stay each night at the kennel, and our trainers create a customized training plan tailored to your dog's needs. Whether you want to refresh your dog's obedience, address specific behaviors, or prefer a structured environment over a typical boarding option while you're on vacation, Bootcamp is here for you!



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

HOUSEHOLD RULES



The Ignore Your Dog Rule

When you come home, ignore your dog for the first few minutes upon entering. The goal is to wait until your dog is in a calmer state before giving affection. Over these next few weeks you'll notice how much faster your dog calms down when you, or guests, come home.



No Announcements

Avoid announcing exciting activities when you need your dog to remain calm. Using phrases like "Who's here" or "Wanna go on a walk" can have a similar effect to giving a child sugar when you want them to stay calm.



Using The Leash In The House

The leash can be so much more than just a leash walking tool! It's great to use in the house during the beginning of your training to ensure that you can reinforce your commands so you only have to, Say It Once.



Put Your Toys Away

Separate your dog toys into two categories: chew bones and interactive toys like tennis balls and tug toys. Leave one or two chew toys accessible for your dog to enjoy openly, but keep the rest hidden. Creating scarcity adds value and increases your dog's interest in the toy. Similar to how we wouldn't let a child have an iPad all day, it's essential to regulate when and how your dog plays with their toys.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

HOUSEHOLD RULES P.2.



Feeding Time & Treats

Why do we go to work? To get paid. Your dog training should follow the same philosophy. When training, leverage your dog's natural drive for food to teach and reinforce desired behaviors. Similarly, like toys, limit access to food to just a few brief moments each day. We typically recommend two 5-minute meals per day, though some dogs may benefit from three meals.

A common issue in dog training is dogs gaining weight from too many treats. We suggest using 50% of your dog's meal for training, stored in a fanny pack for easy access. This approach helps maintain a healthy weight and keeps your dog highly motivated for their food. Remember, the more you hand-feed through training, the better. Dogs love to work and "hunt" for their food, and incorporating their meals into training is something they will enjoy and you will greatly benefit from.

It's also important to match the reward to the difficulty of the task. For basic obedience at home, use their regular kibble or meal. Save higher-value treats for more challenging tasks. This strategy will pay dividends in the future, ensuring your dog remains motivated and responsive during training sessions.



How to Feed Your Dog

It's best to have control over your dog's feeding routine. Encourage your dogs to go to their designated spot while you get their food ready, and train them to wait for your signal before they start eating. This practice will enhance your dogs' impulse control, both with their food and in general.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

PLACE TRAINING



What is Place Training

When you come home, ignore your dog for the first few minutes upon entering. The goal is to wait until your dog is in a calmer state before giving affection. Over these next few weeks you'll notice how much faster your dog calms down when you, or guests, come home.



The Routine

When training the "place" command during the initial 30 days, it is crucial to keep your dog on a leash. Position your dog in a sit about four feet away from the designated dog bed. Prompt your dog with "Place," guide them using the leash, and acknowledge with "yes" and reward once they are on the bed. Use the "Free" command to release your dog. Reward your dog with treats for getting on and staying on the bed, but not for following the "Free" command. The goal is to get your dog to want to go back to the bed to get all rewards, and not come off the bed.



The Three D's

The 3 D's of Dog Training: Duration, Distance, and Distractions
To enhance the difficulty of place training, focus on one "D" at a time, starting with Duration. Initially, reward your dog every 10-15 seconds for staying on their bed, gradually increasing the time between rewards in each session. Once your dog can stay on place for 45-60 seconds successfully, begin moving back to the end of the leash, eventually dropping it while continuing to move around and intermittently rewarding them. Progress by adding more time and distance to the training. Eventually, your dog will be able to stay on their bed for 20 minutes with minimal distractions. Next, we will learn more about adding in distractions.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING



PLACE TRAINING P.2.



Distractions Your Dog Likes vs Dislikes

When training reactive dogs, it's best not to introduce immediate distractions that trigger them. Instead of beginning with challenging stimuli like other dogs, squirrels, or people your dog dislikes, start with three positive distractions your dog enjoys: food, toys, and people they like. Once your dog responds well to these temptations, you can gradually introduce more challenging distractions!



You want a B Student

After the initial lessons, if your dog consistently achieves a perfect score of 10/10, it indicates that the training may be too simple. On the other hand, if your dog is doing 5/10 correct, the training might be too challenging, risking the fun element. Aim for a balanced 8/10 score where the training remains challenging for your dog, yet they are still successful. Remember, if you are frustrated, they are too.



Quick Tips

- 15-20 minute lessons 2 or 3 times daily
- Move the bed throughout the house, backyard, and front yard
- Use different beds or items for your dog to get on. They will all be considered "place"



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

LEASH TRAINING



The Difference Between Heel & Free

We want to teach our dogs that there are two styles of walking. 1, your dog will stay directly next to your left side/leg, and we call this position the heel walk.

We also want to have a “Free” walk as well where your dog can sniff, potty, and hang out and be free to make their own choices.

No matter which mode we are in, there will always be one consistent rule, there is no pulling on the leash. Generally, at the start of your training, you want to focus as much as you can on the Heel position, especially until your dog starts to make better decisions, and listens to you in all aspects. The more freedom, the more decisions, the more mistakes they will make.



Teaching Heel

Start with your dog on your left side in a sit. Typically I would start in low distraction environments if possible. (Driveway, living room, etc.) Make sure you have food in a fanny pack that is easily accessible.

We will start with Figure 8's to warm up your dog. Say “heel” before any and all speed and direction changes to give your dog a heads up that there is a change coming.

Say “heel” and start walking. It’s important to keep the leash loose during this training. Obviously with a loose leash, your dog is going to “check out” after a few steps, and this is a good opportunity to say heel, stop and go in the opposite direction.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

HEEL TRAINING P.2.



Teaching Heel Cont.

If your dog doesn't turn with you, guide them with the leash towards you. We don't want to add in leash pops or corrections at this stage, as our dog is just learning the basics. The moment they start to check back in with you, whether through their own decision OR if you had to guide them, say a high pitched "yes" and reward your dog. Almost all turns will be away from your dog during the beginning portion, (if dog walks on left, you'll start with right turns). In playing this game, your dog will start to pay more attention to you. Only once your dog starts to have an understanding of the rules of this game, will you add in leash corrections for non compliance.

In the phase where we start holding our dogs accountable for not complying, it's important to note that you must give your dog 1-2 seconds to make a decision, don't correct immediately. At this stage, we should now start working on inside turns.

When turning towards your dog, hold shorter on the leash, guide your hand to your butt, and make an inside turn while guiding with your leg. It should not be abrasive to the dog, start with guiding pressure first.

As your dog starts to progress, start doing this exercise with distractions that your dog likes, not dislikes. Food on the ground, scattered treats, toys, etc. Remember, loose leash, give your dog 1-2 seconds to comply, and always say heel the moment before making a directional change, much like a turn signal on a car.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

FREE WALK TRAINING



The goal of the free walk is that your dog is able to walk anywhere they want within the six foot radius of the leash (shorter leashes will make this more difficult). There is only one rule, do not pull. However there is no positional requirement for your dog to say on your left side, so allow your dog to meander around.

Don't use any treats during the free walk, as we want our dogs to disconnect from us and enjoy life being a dog. When your dog inevitably starts to put tension on the leash, immediately say "no", and give your dog 1 second to respond. If they are still pulling on the leash, stop your feet, and firmly tug the handle of the leash. The goal of this leash tug is to be attention getting, so make sure that it is firm enough to do just that.

We also use a change direction cue in the free walk, a simply phrase such as "let's go" that should signal to your dog they need to move in the direction that you are going. They don't have to come to the heel position, there is no food for complying, and if they do not follow in said direction, apply the attention getting leash correction to adjust your dogs course.

The most common question we get when teaching both styles of walking is how much of one, versus the other, should we be focusing on. I always stress the importance of first teaching your dog how to heel, so be sure to spend more time on that command during the beginning few weeks of your training. However it's important to note that once your dog is trained, they will spend a significant portion of their time back in the free walk.

When switching gears, just like driving your car, put your dog in park first. Ask your dog to sit, check in with you, and then free or heel.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

YES/CLICKER TRAINING



What is Marker Training

Marker training is a method of dog training that uses a specific known as a "marker," to precisely indicate the moment a dog performs a desired behavior. This marker will either be the word "yes" or by using a clicker, and it helps the dog understand exactly which action is being rewarded. Yes/clicker will always equal food!

The process begins by creating an association between the marker and the reward. This is the easiest and most important step for many dogs on their training journey, and it's also the easiest one to screw up! We want our dog to react to the word "yes" the way we used to act when we heard the ice cream truck as kids. If my dog hears the word "yes" from a football field away, he will run back enthusiastically because he knows food is coming!

Marker training makes it easier for your dog to learn and easier for you to teach not only basic obedience, but also for teaching complex tricks and changing unwanted behaviors. It also strengthens the bond between the dog and the owner.



How to Condition

1. **Prepare:** Have food hidden in your pockets or a fanny pack. Avoid holding food in your hand during training.
2. **Frequency:** Train three times daily during the first week.
3. **Mark and Reward:** Say "yes" in a slightly higher-pitched, enthusiastic voice. Wait about one second, then grab a treat and give it to your dog.
4. **No Expectations:** During these sessions, your dog isn't doing anything right or wrong. You are simply saying "yes" and giving your dog a treat.
5. **Expected Response:** After a few days, your dog should start to snap their head back and respond as if they are going to get a treat when they hear "yes," even if they weren't paying attention initially.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

YES/CLICKER TRAINING P.2.



How To Use In Obedience Training

Once your dog is conditioned to associate the word "yes" or the clicker with food, you will notice the benefits during training. When your dog performs a desired behavior, you should mark the moment they complete it and then reward them. This clear cause-and-effect will help your dog understand why they are being rewarded.

Do you always have to say the word yes? Absolutely not, but if you do, you must give them food. We will always use "good boy" or "good girl" just as you do now to mean, you are doing great, give some love and praise, but it doesn't necessarily mean food is coming.



How To Use in Behavioral Training

I cannot stand mice. They freak me out. As soon as I see them I react, and it's always an over the top reaction. I don't think about reacting, but my association of mice is not good. They scared me and my mom when I was 6 years old playing super Mario, and it's been over since then. We both had a melt down that day.

However, If my mom would've high fived me and given me a finders fee of \$20 for "finding" the mouse, I would've had a different reaction to mice in the future. This is most important in dealing with reactive dogs, nervous dogs, or dogs that are resource guarding.

If your dog is reactive, they have poor associations, and most likely poor skills and impulse control which we will build, to those specific triggers. However, you can actually change the way your dog feels about these triggers, we call this Counter Conditioning. When your dog sees a trigger from a distance that doesn't make them react, and we immediately mark and reward, through time your dog will start to look at you as soon as they see the trigger, expecting a reward. We will talk more about this later on.



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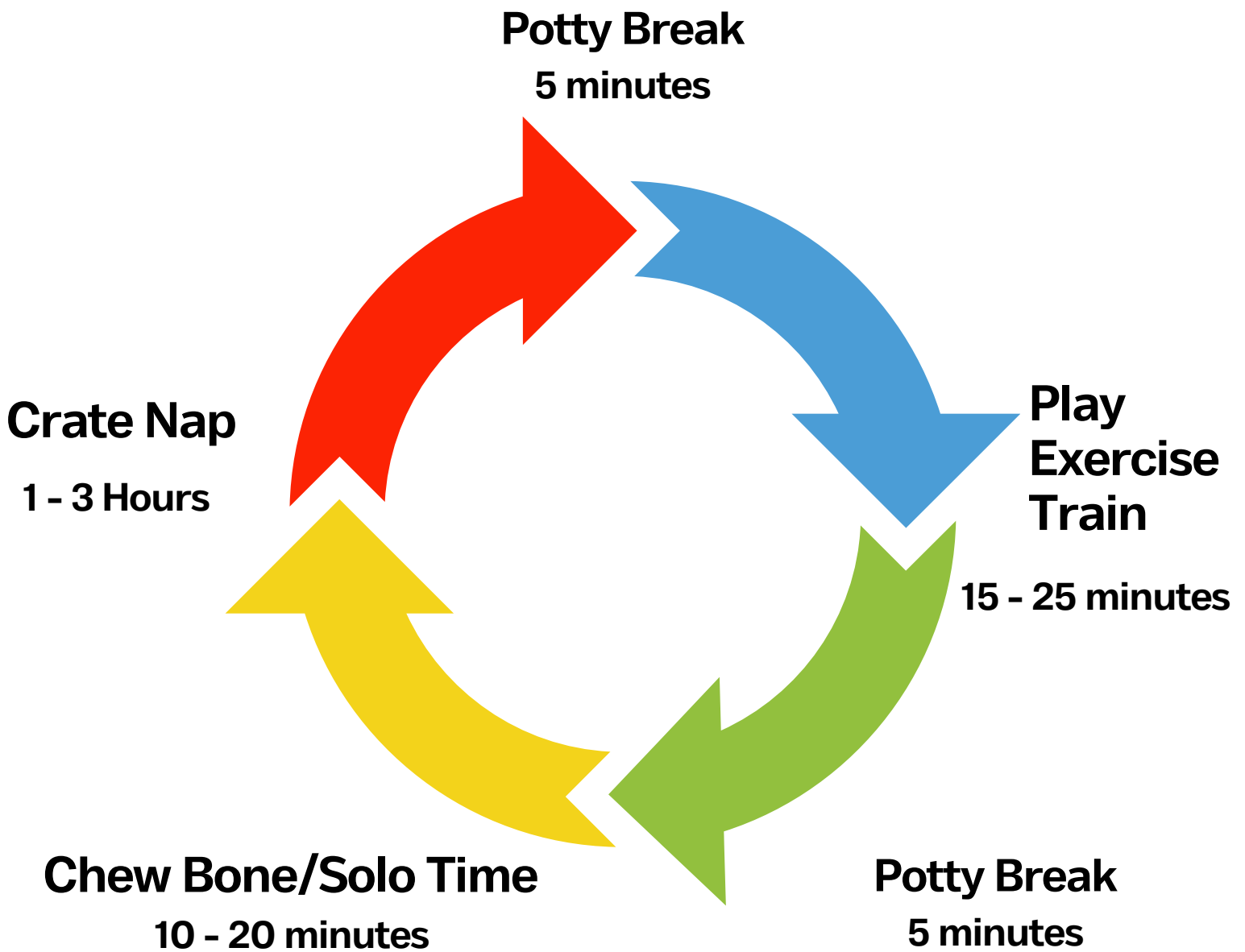


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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

DAILY CYCLE

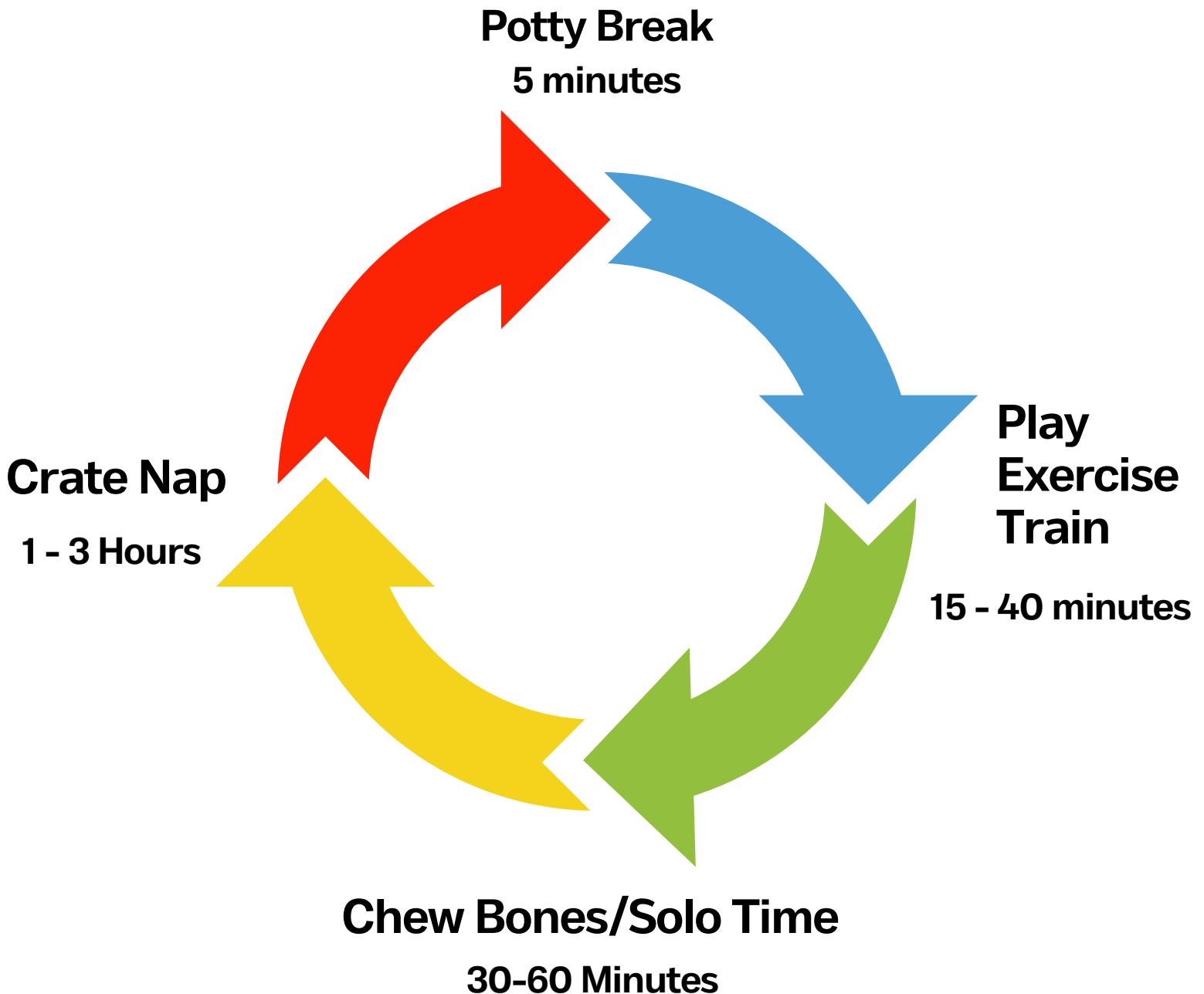
PUPPIES 5 MONTHS & YOUNGER



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DAILY CYCLE

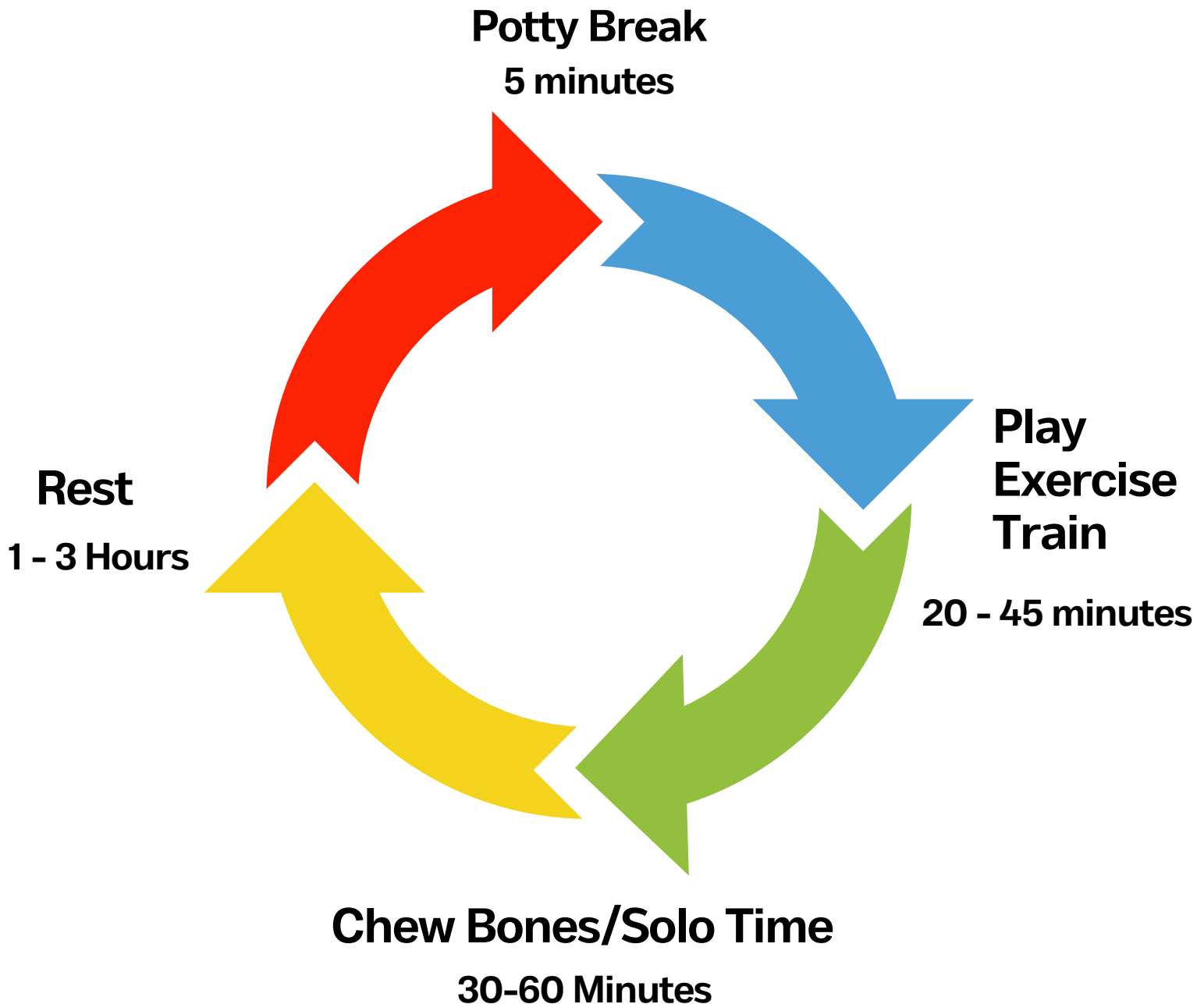
6 - 18 MONTHS



SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

DAILY CYCLE

18+ MONTHS



SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

DAILY CYCLE EXPLAINED



Who Should Follow The D.C.

Dog's need a ridiculous amount of sleep, and when they don't get it there behavior will plummet. Puppies, adolescent dogs and dogs with behavioral issues all should be following a similar daily cycle, with these dogs needing around 16 hours of sleep per day!

You want to keep a similar schedule consistent 7 days a week. No matter if you work from home, or are home more on the weekends, still try you best to maintain a regimented schedule. As your dog matures into the well behaved dog of your dreams, you will no longer need the crate during the nap times.

Do not overlook the importance of this cycle for dogs that fit the description above! This is a vital step in the process.



Considerations

If you are going to leave for work in the morning, it is okay to crate your dog during the time that you are gone. Yes, even the 9 hour day. However, you need to get up 30 minutes early and put your dog through a rigorous dog training or play session in the morning to satisfy their needs.

If you work from home, crate your dog away from your home office during nap times.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

DAILY CYCLE EXPLAINED P.2



Decompression before Sleep

Humans, much like dogs, utilize one of their five senses to unwind.

1. Eyes - Some prefer to watch TikTok reels or enjoy Netflix after a long day at work to help them relax.

2. Nose - Some find comfort in lighting candles or applying lavender lotion as a way to decompress.

3. Ears - It's quite common for people to listen to music to achieve relaxation.

4. Touch - A warm bath or a soothing massage can greatly aid in relaxation.

5. For dogs, the most significant sense is taste. Ensuring that your dog has food before settling down for a long nap helps soothe their nervous system. This aligns with their natural rhythm: dogs expend energy hunting or scavenging for food, eat, and then drift off to sleep.

Mimicking this natural cycle is beneficial; placing them in a crate encourages them to rest.

The food doesn't always have to be their meal. It can be a frozen kong with peanut butter, a healthy bone, a small treat, or anything of the sort.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

BUILDING CONFIDENCE



Building Confidence

The primary objective of fostering confidence in your dog is to utilize physical challenges that they are capable of overcoming, yet may have a mental barrier that prevents them from trying. We will gradually simplify the physical challenge to help your dog succeed, offer rewards for their accomplishments, and then progressively increase the difficulty. Our aim is to introduce some stress for your dog, as it is crucial for their development; however, we must ensure it is not overwhelming to the point of causing them to shut down, which would be counterproductive.

The ultimate aim of these confidence-building games is to enhance your dog's mental resilience and teach them how to cope with stressful situations. As you guide them through these challenges, you will also cultivate a strong bond of trust between you and your dog.

For anxious dogs lacking confidence, it's beneficial to dedicate time each week for small confidence-building games. You don't need elaborate setups. Different surfaces and varying elevations are among the simplest methods to help boost your dog's confidence—it's essentially parkour for your dog. Let's explore some effective games to help boost their confidence.



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SAY IT ONCE DOG TRAINING

BUILDING CONFIDENCE P.2.



Confidence Games

The most fundamental and instinctive way to boost your dog's confidence is by taking them on more hiking adventures. When dogs navigate obstacles like logs, climb cliffs, or leap through streams, they experience small victories along the way. Challenge your dog by making each log you encounter an opportunity for them to leap onto, enhancing their sense of achievement.

Another excellent option is to explore empty playgrounds for kids. These spaces provide a variety of new and unique obstacles for your dog to explore. From metal steps with holes to slides, benches, and other features, your dog will encounter plenty of stimulating challenges. Ideally, your dog will gain enough confidence to go down the slide, but remember to assess the safety based on their size before allowing them to try it.

We may not think twice about it, but all of those playground items have a different surface, and they feel so foreign to your dog. Most dogs initially may have an aversion to how it feels on their feet, but with rewards and encouragement, you can get your dog to overcome that small amount of stress.

You can also create obstacles in your home and during your daily walks to help your dog build confidence. Simple exercises, such as teaching your dog to jump over a broom placed across two small elevated surfaces, or encouraging them to leap onto a small surface like a dining room chair (ensuring it is pulled away from the table), can be very effective. Additionally, consider using elevated surfaces like neighborhood electric boxes for jumping practice. Embrace creativity in designing these activities to enhance your dog's confidence and agility.

The end goal is to teach your dog that they can do ANYTHING. Building confidence is a huge component in a training program built on helping nervous dogs.



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