



Choosing a Trainer Guide and Bay Area Referral List

When choosing a trainer or training method for your dog, the choices can be overwhelming. There are so many options, so much jargon, and what can feel like opinions from all directions about the type of training that is best for your dog.

When choosing a dog trainer, there are a few key pieces of information to keep in mind:

1. **Dog training is an unregulated industry.** This means that *anyone* who chooses, regardless of their education, experience, or methods, can set up shop and advertise themselves as a dog trainer.
2. **Behavior science is a science,** like physics and chemistry. And like physics and chemistry, it has natural laws, and is extensively studied in universities all over the world. This is important to understand because of #3:
3. **The behavioral scientific community overwhelmingly agrees that using positive reinforcement is the most effective and humane training method.** Studies have consistently shown that aversive methods, such as the use of punishment (discomfort/intimidation) and the long-disproven “dominance theory” to train behaviors lead to behavioral fallout such as fear, aggression, and learned helplessness, and are not as effective as positive reinforcement.
4. **Various certification programs DO exist** that provide a scientifically based, up-to-date, ethical framework for training dogs. Though as stated in #1, they are not required by law in order to call oneself a dog trainer.

Choosing a Certified Trainer

We recommend that owners work with a Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT) or a CTC/CTBC, or KPA-CTP who has their Certificate in Training and Counseling/Behavior Consultation. Make sure that they list a *certification*, and not just a “membership.” By choosing a CPDT, KPA-CTP or CTC/CTBC to work with, *you’re ensuring these trainers have been certified based on a level of demonstrated education around the science of animal behavior* as well as a certain level of professional experience. Additionally, ALL these credentials require proof of ongoing continuing education at intervals, which means that trainers will stay on the forefront of the latest and most scientifically supported techniques.

Additionally, dog trainers with industry credentials *adhere to a code of ethics* which supports utilizing training and behavior modification methods based on accurate scientific research, emphasizing positive relationships between people and dogs and using positive reinforcement-based techniques to the maximum extent possible. “Balanced” training may sound desirable, but *studies have shown*

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that mixing aversive methods with positive reinforcement can lead to significant behavioral fallout.

To learn more about choosing a professional trainer, check out the following links:

- [American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior](#) (AVSB)
- [Association of Professional Dog Trainers](#) (APDT)
- [American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#) (ASPCA)

If you are specifically looking for help with SEPARATION ANXIETY:

For separation distress and anxiety, you can look additionally for the “Separation Anxiety Pro” (SA Pro) or “Certified Separation Anxiety Trainer (CSAT) designations.

Here is a list of certified positive reinforcement trainers offering private training in the greater Bay Area:

Ali Sutch, KPA-CTP

[Up 2 Snuff Professional Humane Dog Training](#)

Amelia Lindbergh, CTBC

[All Ears Dog Training](#)

Alisha Ardiana, CPDT-KA, CTBC, FDM, KPA-CTP

[Empawthy Dog Training](#)

Jenna Hardy, RVT, CPDT

[Best Behavior Company](#)

Amy Cook, Ph.D.

[Play Way Dogs](#)

Ellen Yoakum, SA Pro, KPA-CTP, CPBT-KA

[Pet Harmony](#)

Dan Clark, KPA-CTP

[Out of the Bark](#)

[Family Paws Network](#) (various)

Resources and trainers for families with dogs and young children

Emily Fleisher Nusymowicz, CTBC

[Mindful Paw dog Training](#)

Erika Slovikoski, CPDT-KA

[Stardog](#)

Imogen Poropat MSc, KPA CTP

[Canny Dog Positive](#)

Joan Mapou, CTC

[Joan 4 Pets](#)

Jane Moorhead, AD-Pro Trainer

[Game On Positive Dog Training](#)

Fiona O'Donnell, CPDT-KA

[It's Not Magic Dog Training](#)

Kathryn Horn, CTC

[Paws and Cues Dog Training](#)

Lauren Flato, VMD, CPDT-KA

[Sit, Stay, Wag](#)

Lea Orloski, CTBC

[Canine Centric](#)

M. Cecilia Sternzon, CPDT-KA, MBA

[Canine Higher Learning](#)

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Margaret Daul, CPDT-KA, CPDT-KSA, KPA-CTP,
ACDBC
[Family Dog Training](#)

Pamela Wyman Van-Rhomberg, CTC, CSAT
[DogEvolve \(virtual\)](#)

Rebekah Piedad KPA-CTP (virtual or long
distance board and train)
[Yes Dog](#)

Sara Scott, CPDT-KA
[Sarah Scott Dog Training](#)

Shelly Leong-Peterson CTC, SA Pro
[Bright Lights Dog Training](#)

Stacy Braslau-Schneck, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA
[Stacy's Wag N Train](#)

Kayla Murcurio, KPA-CTP
[Kayla's Pet Services](#)

Dani Agnew, CTBC, SA Pro
[Oaktown Paws](#)

Mary Stope
[Mary's Angels Dog Training](#)

Quin Longino, CPDT-KA, CCDT
[Pup Professor Dog Training](#)

Rochelle Ball, CPDT-KA
[Athens Dog Training](#)

Shane Stanis, CPDT-KSA
[Mighty Mutts Dog Training](#)

Shoshi Parks, CPDT-KA, CSAT
[Modern Hound](#)

Tania Lanfer, APDT, CSAT
[Cannon Dog Training](#)

Cory Abshear, CTBC CCUI
[Dog Trek Oakland](#)

Anna Wong, CCUI, KPA-CTP
[Mutts Have Fun](#)