



## American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

### How to Hire a Dog Trainer

It is advised that dog owners call, interview, and ideally observe a trainer prior to hiring them. **If the trainer you are considering using falls into any of these categories, you should pick another trainer.**

1. The equipment recommended for basic obedience includes or is focused on choke collars, prong collars, or shock collars.
2. Trainers who ban head collars of any kind may rely unduly on force.
3. The trainer instructs you to manage your dog's behaviors by pinching toes, kneeling the dog in the chest or abdomen, hitting the dog, forcibly holding the dog down against their will, constantly yelling at the dog, frequently yanking the collar constantly, or using prong, choke, pinch or shock collars or electronic stimulation.
4. The trainer believes most or all training is about encouraging the person to be "alpha" and teaching the dog to "submit".
5. The trainer explains that most dog behavior, for example, jumping on people, occurs because the dog is trying to be "dominant".
6. A trainer recommends "alpha rolls", "scruffing", "helicoptering", "choking" or any other painful or physical methods as a means of "training" or modifying behavior.

\* Please note that having initials after one's name is not a guarantee of a trainer who will not engage in these practices. To maximize the chances of recommending or using a qualified trainer, the dog owner will need to ask the trainer some basic information, and see for themselves how the trainer treats the dogs in the classes/consultations.

