

**FEAR FREE
HAPPY
HOMES**

Helping pets live happy, healthy, full lives

HOW TO FIND A QUALIFIED TRAINER OR BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT

Finding a good dog trainer or behavior consultant is more difficult than you might think. Dog training is an unregulated field with no educational requirements and no required credentialing. Outdated, force-based methodology can cause more problems than it claims to help. Here are our tips for finding a qualified dog trainer or behavior consultant.

How To Sniff Out A Trustworthy Trainer or Behavior Consultant

Start your search by asking your pet's Fear Free Certified® veterinary team for recommendations on skilled trainers or behavior consultants in your area. Many trusted, reward-based training and behavior consulting organizations have searchable databases of professional members. Among them are the following organizations:

- **Fear Free Certified Animal Trainers**
Directory at www.fearfreepets.com and www.fearfreehappyhomes.com
- **The Academy for Dog Trainers**
<https://www.academyfordogtrainers.com/find-a-trainer>
- **Pet Professional Guild**
<http://www.petprofessionalguild.com/Zip-Code-Search>
- **The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers**
<http://www.ccpdt.org/dog-owners/certified-dog-trainer-directory/>
- **The Association of Professional Dog Trainers**
<https://apps.apdt.com/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=TrainerSearch>
- **The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants**
<https://iaabc.org/consultants>
- **The Karen Pryor Academy for Animal Training & Behavior**
<https://karenpryoracademy.com/find-a-trainer/#!directory/map>
- **Peaceable Paws Academy**
<https://peaceablepaws.com/pat-miller-certified-trainers/>
- **Animal Behavior College, ABC Certified Dog Trainer Database**
https://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com/dog_trainer_search.asp
- **Victoria Stilwell Positively Dog Training**
<https://positively.com/dog-training/find-a-trainer/find-a-vspdt-trainer/>



Value Trainer & Behavior Consultant Credentials

Ideally, the trainer or behavior consultant you choose is certified or has a graduate status through a trusted, reward-based educational institution. Many trainers and behavior consultants list credentials on their website or following their name. If you don't see credentials, ask. Seek out trainers and behavior consultants who have gained credentialing or schooling through educational institutions rooted in humane, reward-based methods.

These common, highly regarded trainer and behavior consultant credentials can serve as a starting point in your search:

- Fear Free Certified Animal Trainer
- Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner (KPA CTP)
- Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC)
- The Academy for Dog Trainers Graduate (CTC)
- Victoria Stilwell Academy Graduate
- Victoria Stilwell Positively Dog Trainer (VSPDT)
- Certified Behavior Counselor Canine (CBCC-KA)
- Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT-KA or CPDT-KSA)
- Animal Behavior College Certified Dog Trainer (ABC DT)
- Professional Canine Behavior Consultant (Accredited) (PCBC-A)
- Canine Training Technician (Accredited) (CTT-A)
- Professional Canine Trainer (Accredited) (PCT-A)
- Pat Miller Certified Trainer (PMCT)



Trainer & Behavior Consultant Insurance

Inquire about insurance coverage. Trainers and behavior consultants should be covered by insurance except in countries where such coverage is unavailable.

Dig Deep Into Trainer & Behavior Consultant Methods And Skills

Credentials don't guarantee good training or behavior consulting techniques or teaching abilities. Before signing up, observe a couple of classes to see first-hand the trainer's/behavior consultant's methods, equipment used, interpersonal skills, and abilities with individual dogs. This is imperative, as punitive, force-based methods increase stress and the likelihood of behavioral issues, including aggression. Reward-based training and behavior consulting methods help strengthen the bond between you and your dog, are safer, and more effective over the long term.

For a list of red lights and green lights for qualified trainers and behavior consultants, check out our Red & Green Lights in Training & Behavior Consulting handout.

