

Training for Blood Donation

Introduction

At Pet Blood Bank UK, we like our donors to be as relaxed as possible during the whole donation process. Some dogs may be slightly nervous on the first visit. Typically, some dogs are wary of the noise and feel of the clippers or may not like their legs and feet to be touched. They may also find being lifted and held a strange experience, particularly if they are young. By following these guidelines, it may help prepare your dog for the next session, hopefully resulting in a successful donation. The training should also help make some common veterinary procedures less stressful for your dog.

Carry out training daily, in short, frequent sessions, rather than once a week for example. Treats can be used in the initial stages, which can then be reduced as the training progresses. Carry out the particular training which you feel your dog needs most.

One of the most helpful things you can do is to visit your vets regularly with your dog. Give him/her treats in the waiting room and ask the receptionist or Vet Nurse to do the same. Your dog will soon start to look forward to these visits!

Your vet will be most impressed if your dog ever needs its nails clipping or feet bandaged, as this is a very useful position for these procedures!

Good luck with the training – if you need any further advice, please contact Pet Blood Bank UK (01509 232222).

Training Sheet 3:

Training Your Dog to be Lifted and Restrained for Donation

Most dogs over 25kg in weight do not get lifted very often and can find this a strange experience. Similarly, some dogs have never been restrained in a lying down position and may struggle until they realise that nothing bad is going to happen and actually they can relax in this position!

To accustom a dog to being lifted for donation, one person can hold the front end of the dog with an arm around the neck and the other arm underneath the chest, holding the front leg furthest away (see picture below). The second person puts an arm underneath the belly and holds the hind leg furthest away from them.



To begin with don't lift your dog, simply hold him/her and release several times. When your dog is relaxed about this, practise lifting slightly off the ground, repeating the lift several times. **Remember to bend your knees when lifting, keeping your back straight.** Eventually your dog should be relaxed about being lifted until you are in a standing position. Treats and/or praise should be used when your dog is calm.

On the day of the donation, the Pet Blood Bank staff will normally lift your dog and roll him/her onto the table, on the dog's right- or left-hand side using the method described above.

Once on the table, your dog will be held lying down on his/her right- or left-hand side. The PBB team will normally hold the dog's head and legs for safety reasons, using the minimum amount of restraint necessary.

Encourage your dog to lie flat on their right- and left-hand side by luring with a titbit, held close to the nose (this can be done on the floor if a table is not available). Once your dog is readily lying down, use a command such as 'flat' so that the dog associates this word with the position. Some dogs will pick this up very quickly and will start to do it on command.



When your dog is lying down and relaxed, hold the legs nearest to the floor (see pic). If there is another person to help, they can hold the head by having a hand underneath the chin keeping the head flat to the floor/table. In the beginning, hold for a short time and let go while your dog is relaxed. If you let go when your dog wriggles, they will soon start to use this as a successful strategy to become free!

Repeat the above several times over a period of days or weeks, gradually building up the amount of time your dog is being held for to around 5 minutes.

Practise holding firmly every now and then, but **DO NOT FORCE YOUR DOG** into this position.

You should find that your dog learns to enjoy this, as most of them like the close contact and attention.

Good luck with the training – if you need any further advice, please contact Pet Blood Bank UK (01509 232222).