

## Living with a Deaf Dog

Living with and training a deaf dog can be very rewarding. Set realistic expectations, be patient, and always remember to celebrate victories - no matter how small.

### Helpful Tips

- Deaf dogs may bark a little louder than other dogs, since they cannot hear themselves. They just bark the only way they know how, which is sometimes loud. Try to ignore the barking or use distraction techniques and reward your dog after a period of silence.
- Sleeping deaf dogs can easily startle if not woken carefully. If you need to wake up your deaf dog, try tugging on the edge of his blanket or placing your hand in front of his nose. All of these can help him to gently wake on his own. When he wakes, always offer a treat so he associates being woken with a positive reward.
- Deaf dogs cannot hear an approaching car or their name being called. Always have your dog leashed when you're in an unfenced area.
- Add a tag to your dog's collar stating that he is deaf. Make sure to include your phone number and address.
- Most dogs follow hand signals. Pointing towards their bed "Go to your bed", raising your hand over their head towards their rear for "Sit" and palm towards the floor for "down" etc. You could also use ASL signs to communicate or just make up your own signs— which may be easier for you to remember.
  - Try creating one-handed signals that will be easy to use when your other hand is holding a leash. What would be useful to communicate to your dog on a walk? "Wait," "Sit," "Close?"
  - The more signs you use, the more your dog will watch you and wait for you to communicate. Remember to praise your dog often for watching you! Use exaggerated facial and body expressions, pets and treats.
- Not every communication has to be in sign. Give two gentle tugs on the leash for, "Let's go," when on a walk.
- Let your dog know when you're leaving a room or the house so he knows not to search around for you. If possible, try to crate train your dog so he will be safely tucked away when you leave home.
- Attach a bell to your dog so you always know where he is.
- Supervise your dogs. If you have another dog at home, you have a great teacher who can help your deaf dog; however, your deaf dog will not be able to hear any auditory communication from your other dog. If there is any growling it will be important for you to intervene to prevent any escalation in behavior.

## Suggested Reading

### **Living with a Deaf Dog: A Book of Advice, Facts and Experiences about Canine Deafness**

Susan Cope Becker

### **My Dog is Deaf – but Lives Life to the Full!**

Jennifer Willms

### **Hear! Hear! – A Guide to Training a Deaf Dog** (available as PDF: [deaf-dogs-help.co.uk](http://deaf-dogs-help.co.uk))

Barry Eaton

### **Through A Dark Silence: Loving and Living with Your Blind and Deaf Dog**

Debbie Bauer

## **Blind and/or Deaf Dog Organizations**

The Oregon Humane Society is not affiliated with any of the organizations listed below and is not responsible for the services offered. This is not a complete list of organizations. We encourage you to reach out to organizations on your own ask for details about training methods and practices. We recommend trainers that use force-free, positive reinforcement based training.

### **Deaf Dogs of Oregon** | [www.deafdogsoforegon.org](http://www.deafdogsoforegon.org)

Advocacy, education and owner-support organization.

### **Deaf Dog Education Action Fund** | [www.deafdogs.org](http://www.deafdogs.org)

Education and funding resource for the purpose of improving or saving the lives of deaf dogs

### **Amazing Aussies Lethal White Rescue of Arizona** | [www.amazingaussies.org](http://www.amazingaussies.org)

Adoptions, rescue and educational resources for blind and/or deaf dogs.

### **Australian Shepherds Furever** | [www.australianshepherdsforever.org](http://www.australianshepherdsforever.org)

Guidance and education for owners with blind and/or deaf Australian Shepherds.

### **Association of Professional Dog Trainers** | [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com)

Use the “Locate a Trainer” search tool to find a dog trainer in your area.

**Need help? Call our free pet behavior help line at (503) 416-2983.**