



Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League



MID-ATLANTIC GREAT DANE  
RESCUE LEAGUE

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TRAIN YOUR  
GREAT DANE!



*A Layman's Guide for  
New Great Dane Owners*

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## WHY TRAIN YOUR GREAT DANE?

### Training Your Great Dane

Because of their size, an un-trained Dane can be a difficult companion to live with.

It's never too early to start training Dane puppies. They can be taught basics like "sit" and "wait" at age 8 weeks. They can start puppy training and socialization classes as early as three months old. At that stage, they are very impressionable and a relatively manageable size.

For their own safety, and for the safety of their owners (and others), all Danes should be taught not to bite – even in play.



Classes should be fun for both trainer and dog

Because the Great Dane is bred for companionship, their desire to please makes adult Danes easily trainable. However, this is a very sensitive breed. For best results, they should only be trained using positive motivational methods. Danes should learn (at a minimum) the five basic obedience commands: heel, sit, down, stay, and come.

Some Dane owners train their dog to stand up and put its paws on the owner's shoulders. Before you allow this, ask yourself if it's OK for him to do that to your 70 year old grandmother or your 2 year old toddler?

### Jean Donaldson's Top 10 Dog Training Tips

**Behaviorist Jean Donaldson**, author of *The Culture Clash*, *MINE!!* and *Dogs Are From Neptune*, directs The San Francisco SPCA's Academy for Dog Trainers.

1. Expect your dog to act like a dog. Don't take it personally when he exhibits typical canine behavior. He's not being "bad," he's just being a dog.

2. No more free lunch! "Dogs are happiest when they're exercising their predator skills," she says. "Make them work for their food, like stuffing it inside chew toys, hiding it around the house, or teaching them to do tricks for food rewards." Your minimum training should be done every day at mealtime. Make them sit and wait for you to release them to eat!

3. Start off structured, then you can slack off later, rather than letting him run wild for the first few weeks and then clamping down when the behavior isn't so cute anymore.

4. Don't wait for him to develop bad habits like chewing the furniture or urinating on the carpet, before you intervene. Assume this behavior is likely to happen, and act preemptively to manage it before it develops. Bitter apple works wonders!

5. Give your dog acceptable outlets for his doggy energy and behavior, rather than punishing him.

6. Don't lay guilt trips on your dog. "Dogs are neither moral nor immoral," she says. "They're amoral, meaning that they respond to what they understand to be the consequences of their behavior." So manipulate those consequences to ensure positive outcomes.

7. Enjoy your Dane! Get involved in organized dog sports or informal activities, such as agility, flyball tug-of-war, fetch, or a fun game of hide-and-peek.

8. Provide a wide variety of social interactions every day. Give your dog positive experiences early with tall, short, small, big people, but especially to children. "What's the worst punishment a person can get in prison?" says Donaldson. "Solitary confinement." Dogs are social animals, too!

9. If you have a puppy, handle him endlessly. And make it as pleasant an experience as possible, so he'll associate being handled with good feelings.

10. Enroll in a positive reinforcement training course. There are many reputable trainers in the mid-Atlantic area. Ask your Great Dane Rescue, local Animal shelters, SPCA or Humane Societies where positive reinforcement dog training courses are offered.

### House Train Your Dane

Expect confusion & mistakes the first few days – even in a trained dog!

*To house train your Dane, it is VITAL to use a crate and/or a confinement area* so as to not allow opportunities for accidents the first week or two. Set your dog up to succeed!

1. If using a crate, it should be just large enough for dog to turn around in and stretch out

2. If using a confinement area, confine to one un-carpeted room (kitchen ideal) with pet-proof gates

3. Start immediately! You can always relax the regimen later, but it's very tough to start relaxed and then try to tighten up if there's a problem

4. Provide extra trips outside:

- First thing in the morning
- After eating
- Every 2 - 3 hours
- Last thing before bed

If dog doesn't eliminate during an outing, try again 30 minutes later

5. Accompany your dog to eliminate – *go with him* rather than sending him so that:

- you know whether he's gone or not
- you can reward at the right instant – praise and small food treat as he finishes

6. Interrupt him ("Ah! Ah! Let's go outside!") at the *start* of any mistakes indoors, then hustle him outside to finish. If he finishes outside, praise and reward him. **Note: Punishment is not a good practice in any relationship with a dog.**

7. Consistently praise and reward *all* outdoor elimination for first few days – you can slack off later.



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