www.saynotothepinch.co.uk

Say NO to pinch & prong collars. Train with your brain, NOT pain.

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Train with your brain, NOT pain

At Happy Hounds Dog Training, we're committed to using force-free training methods. We do not use or advocate any training methods that inflict pain, fear or suffering to a dog, which is why we are very much against the use of choke, pinch, prong or shock collars.

Our training methods are based on the way in which dogs (and humans learn). This is the 'science' of dog training and is known as learning theory.

We like to think of it as the *training equation*, where what you add or subtract affects the outcome. Let us introduce you to the reinforcers and the punishers, which make up the *training equation*…

The reinforcers

When you use reinforcement in training, its role is to **increase** the frequency/likelihood of the desired behaviour.

There are two types of reinforcers:

- Positive reinforcement (**R+**) - where you **add** something to the equation, after the behaviour has been performed, to increase the frequency of it happening again.
  For example: You're teaching loose lead walking, your dog walks 10 steps without pulling on the lead, you give your dog some liver cake (**R+**), play a game of tug (**R+**) or let them 'go sniff' (**R+**)

- Negative reinforcement (**R-**) - where you **subtract** (remove) something to the equation, to increase the frequency of the desired behaviour.
  Using our example of loose lead walking, **R-** is the loosening of the choke/pinch/prong collar after the dog stops pulling (you are **subtracting** the pain). The idea of this is that the dog will associate the cessation of pain with the act of walking on a loose lead and therefore the frequency of walking on a loose lead increases.

The punishers

When you use punishment in training, its role is to **reduce** the frequency/likelihood of the unwanted behaviour occurring and, just like the reinforcers, there are two types of punishment:

- Positive punishment (**P+**) - where you **add** something the dog finds aversive. The use of the word positive in this sense is purely to do with the **addition** of the punisher, not in the sense of the word as we would commonly use it. The addition of **P+** causes a decrease in the unwanted behaviour.
  For example: You're teaching loose lead walking using a choke/pinch/prong collar. The dog pulls on the lead, the collar goes tight, the dog experiences **pain** and **discomfort (P+).** The **addition** of the pain aims to **reduce** the lead pulling.

- Negative punishment (**P-**) - where you **subtract** (remove) punishment in the training equation. In this context, **P-** is the removal or withholding of **R+.**
  In our loose lead walking example, if the lead goes tight and the dog starts to pull we stop moving (we **DO NOT** yank or jerk the lead – that is **P+**) and do not give the dog any reinforcement (moving forward/food/game of tug/go sniff) – this is **P-**. We either wait for the lead to go loose, or we encourage the dog back to our side and take a step with a loose lead and then reinforce (**R+**) the step that is taken on a loose lead.

For more dog training advice & information, visit: www.happyhoundstraining.co.uk

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Train with your brain—NOT pain

But, punishment works—doesn't it?

Well, in theory, yes! It can appear to work and is often used as a 'quick fix'. However, it is worth considering:

1) **P+** is subjective – what may be punishment to one, is not necessarily punishment to another (ever wondered why our prisons are over-flowing?).
2) To be truly effective, **P+** has to be delivered at the exact moment the 'crime' is committed and at the right degree of severity. Unfortunately, as humans, we tend to use a disproportionate amount of punishment well after the 'crime' has been committed.
3) If the above two aren't implemented correctly, what does **P+** teach you? In our opinion – absolutely nothing.

When **P+** is used, the recipient 'may' know what they're not supposed to do, but do they know what they should do instead? Have they really learned anything? All too often, the use of **P+** causes a vacuum which is filled by another (usually) unwanted behaviour.

But, everyone uses punishment, don't they?

If you're following the principles of positive reinforcement (**R+**), you undoubtedly will also be using negative punishment (**P-**); that is, of course, if your training subject doesn't have a 100% success rate. **P-** decreases the likelihood of the unwanted (or lack of) behaviour happening again. In dog training, it's often the withholding of the food reward/pay. It's the consequence of not doing what's asked. You may wonder why you didn't get your monthly bonus in your pay packet and you're likely to try harder to get it next month.

How does it make you feel?

Still with us? OK, here's something else for the mix - *classical conditioning* – the bit that affects our emotions and how we feel, often governing our immediate reactions. When we choose to use reinforcers or punishers they affect how we feel and how we will respond to future situations:

- **P+** = Hurt, confused, grumpy, uncooperative, possibly in pain.
- **R-** = Relief (as the bad stuff goes away/ceases) but could also be bewilderment, not knowing what you've done to deserve it.
- **R+** = Feeling good, happy, content, accomplished.
- **P-** = Working out how to get the good stuff back.

Which side of the training equation are you on?

At Happy Hounds we're on the side of using our brain and NOT pain to train our dogs. We use force-free **R+** (and **P-**) training methods and advocate reward based training only.

Make your voice heard—join the campaign …

We are in 100% support of the campaign to ban the sale and use of pinch/prong collars in the UK and if you agree, please do sign the petition at: **www.saynotothepinch.co.uk**

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