

The Unshocking Truth about Remote Training Collars

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Does your dog pull you down the street? Jump on the kitchen countertops to steal food? Bolt out of an open front door? Bark incessantly? If he's demonstrating these or any number of other bad behaviors, effective and humane help is at your fingertips. Literally. There are many common behavior problems that can be solved quickly with a remote training collar.

But, wait just a minute! Aren't remote training collars really "shock collars"? The answer is an emphatic "NO!" The truth is, these training tools are constructed with micro amperage and don't have the capacity to shock like an electrical outlet. Rather, the remote training collar is an effective, safe communication tool that teaches a dog to develop self-control and a solid sense of teamwork.

According to the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior, behavioral problems are the number one reason pets are relinquished to shelters. They're also the largest preventable cause of death in pets in the U.S. But, by using remote training collars to promote and teach appropriate, acceptable behavior in our canine companions, these statistics can be reduced dramatically. Why? Because—by promoting consistently good behavior— they allow dogs and their owners to enjoy happy, fulfilling and long-lasting relationships.

Randall Lockwood, vice president for research and educational outreach for The Humane Society of the United States says, "new technology employed by responsible manufacturers has led to products that are being used safely and effectively to preserve the safety and well-being of many dogs and strengthen the bond with their human companions."

What's Does a Remote Collar Feel Like?

The remote training collar consists of a collar with a receiving unit that the dog wears. The owner carries a hand-held transmitter that he or she uses to deliver the appropriate vibration. It eliminates the need for constant treats, managing long leashes or chasing a dog down to remind it to cooperate.

Experts compare the collar's feel to the electrical stimulation administered by medical devices used in treating humans. Many physical therapists and chiropractors use transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation, more commonly referred to as a TENS unit. The unit is usually

connected to the skin using two or more electrodes. A typical battery-operated TENS unit is able to modulate pulse with frequency and intensity. Martin Deeley, director of the International Association of Canine Professionals, says that , like the TENS unit, the remote training collar “contracts and releases the muscle to give the tapping or pulsing sensation at the lowest level necessary to communicate with the dog.” If the TENS unit is too low, it cannot be felt. If it’s too high, it’s uncomfortable. The correct level is different for every patient. And the same is true of dogs and remote collars.

The Role of a Professional Trainer in Teaching Dogs about Remote Training Collars

A remote collar should NEVER be used with a dog without both the dog and owner being taught about it by a professional dog trainer who is certified to do so. The trainer will teach the dog the “language” of the collar by instructing him regarding what the vibration emitted by the receiver means. It’s the trainer’s job to determine the lowest level of stimulation necessary for each dog.

Professional trainers utilize the collar as a prompt to get the dog’s attention. It’s very similar to tapping someone on the shoulder, cuing him or her to turn around and get information. The intensity of this tap can change according to the distraction level of the person being tapped. Have you ever watched a young mother chatting with her friends while her toddler is pulling on her shirtsleeve? Of course, the mother isn’t ignoring her child. Instead, she’s just oblivious until the child yanks hard enough to get mother’s attention. The same is true for the remote training collar. The dog learns to look to his owner for direction whenever he feels the tapping vibration.

Again, a professional trainer determines the lowest level of stimulation necessary to get your dog’s attention when surrounded by minor distractions—such as kids playing or people walking by. But, when high level distractions are present – such as a deer running past or a ball flying by – then a higher level of vibration may be necessary to get the dog’s attention.

The vibration of the collar is the same as saying, “Pay attention. I’m about to tell you something important.” The professional trainer teaches the dog that the vibration means pay attention, find the boss, a direction is coming. The correct level is the level at which the dog can recognize that he is receiving a signal from the training device and it’s at that level that we have the dog’s attention.

In addition to teaching dogs about the remote collar, professional trainers also teach owners to deliver the appropriate signal at the instant they want their dog's attention. This eliminates the extremely ineffective time delay common with a leash and collar.

Sean Hayes, engineering manager for Tritronics, a leading manufacturer of remote dog training equipment, asserts "the remote training collar is much easier, safer, more consistent and provides less distraction to the dog. The dog is receiving the same stimulation every time. Compared to other training devices like a choke collar, which should be used properly, the remote collar allows perfect timing, and is more humane and effective."

The remote training collar provides consistency since it is used at all times and in all situations—both indoors and outdoors. It allows the owner to maintain gentle, effective control even at a distance when the dog is off-leash, reminding the dog that he is part of a team. And this leads to a happier, healthier relationship for both dogs and their owners.

If you're interested in learning how remote collar training can be used to effectively and humanely address behavioral-related issues with your dog, call Carolina Dog Training at 919.349.0000 or visit us at www.carolinadogtraining.com.