



## We Choose How We Treat Our Dogs

There are still too many trainers and pet owners who treat their dogs like prisoners. Yes, people still use prong, choke and shock collars in the way they were intended; literally to pinch, choke and shock dogs. And yes, people still demand complete control of their dogs insisting they immediately submit to their every demand without hesitation. Sadly, animals are trapped in homes and situations where normal canine behaviours are often discouraged and even punished. Some claim they train their dogs in this manner to compete in sports while others claim it is for their or their dog's protection. Regardless of the justification, dogs physically and mentally suffer when they are not given the freedom to move and behave normally without threat of pain and injury.

There are multitudes of ways to manhandle a dog into compliance, from pinching and twisting the flaps of their ears, sitting on them, shocking them, snapping them with whips, sticks and other weapons to threaten and punish them. As one man told us, his dog would be "wearing his foot" if he didn't immediately do as he says. Why as a society do we still accept this type of treatment and training for those who cannot defend or speak for themselves? Decades of research have provided the evidence we need to understand that dogs suffer as we do. And we don't know of anybody, who can speak, who would consent to being abused.

Thank goodness, the world is now honouring how dogs feel, think and learn. Despite this, some people are not capable, intellectually or compassionately, to adjust their way of thinking. It is why we need legislation. When seeking a trainer, particularly for breeds labeled as 'tough' such as German Shepherds, Rottweilers and Dobermans, please choose a trainer who understands learning theory and has been educated in modern scientific methods of teaching. Your dog's life may literally depend on it.

There are military, police, protection and hunting dog associations that train without any use of pain and fear and produce stable highly effective dogs. These trainers are progressive animal advocates who through their choice of positive training methods are bettering the lives of every animal they train. There are many trainers who prove every day that confident, loyal and complying dogs are best achieved through rewards, patience and kindness cultivating a relationship of safety, deep affection and respect. Every animal trainer should strive to be one of them. - BSCC