

# Rocco's

Hounds  
with  
Hearts



# JOURNAL

## THE JOURNEY TO GREATNESS!!

My name is Justin and my co-trainer is Mike. I myself have over two years experience with training dogs and Mike and I have been a team for over a year of that. We work great together and have transitioned many racing athletes into amazing, obedient pets.

We aren't afraid to take on a challenge and actually appreciate one because it not only keeps us sharp it is rewarding to help the dog overcome its issues which will lead to a happy stress free life.

Now here comes Rocco! Wow he is the tallest, longest, scinniest dog we have had here. I love Rocco's reddish brendal coat. I chose Rocco for a few reasons, his large size, his young age, and his whining and barking when we left him alone. A few challenges we are looking forward to tackling. His large size can be tough with heeling and spatial issues. His young age usually becomes an issue with focus, excess energy, and impulsiveness. Last and the hardest is the whining and barking when alone is a sure sign of seperation anxiety. Sometimes seperation anxiety can not be fixed only managed. We will talk about that later in the journal as our experiences with him grow.

# Hounds with Hearts



WE HAVE ONLY HAD ROCCO A COUPLE DAYS NOW AND KNOW WE HAVE OUR HANDS FULL. HIS SEPERATION ANXIETY IS AN EXTREME CASE WHICH CAUSES HIM TO DEFECATE INSIDE WHEN LEFT ALONE. THAT COULD CHANGE AS OUR BOND AND HIS TRUST GROWS WITH HIS NEW SURROUNDINGS. HE IS EXTREMELY CURIOUS AND HAS A VERY SHORT ATTENTION SPAN. HE ALSO LOVES BEING IN YOUR SPACE WHICH WITH HIS SIZE IT CAN BE A LITTE CROWDED.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE HE LOVES FOOD WHICH MAKES KEEPING HIS ~~TRA~~ FOCUS DURING TRAINING A LOT EASIER. HE IS NOT A SHY OR TIMID DOG AND HAS NICE CONFIDENCE WHICH WILL HELP WHEN I NEED HIM TO TRUST ME AS I LEAD HIM TO PERFORM NEW TASKS

ALL IN ALL ROCCO HAS COME TO THE RIGHT TEAM. OUR GOAL IS TO SEND HIM HOME NOT JUST EXCELLING AT HIS BASIC OBEDIANCE BUT ALSO MAKING SURE THE BEHAVIOR IS TOP NOTCH. WE ARE CONFIDANT WE CAN BUILD ON HIS STRENGTHS. THIS JOURNAL WILL BE SOMEWHAT OF A USERS GUIDE TO KNOW WHAT YOUR BOY IS CAPABLE OF AND TIPS ON HOW TO CONTINUE HIS POSITIVE BEHAVIOR. IT'S UP TO US TO GET ~~HIM~~ HIM TO KNOW SO MUCH AND BEHAVE SO WELL BUT IT'LL BE UP TO YOU TO KEEP HIM ON TRACK.

Enjoy →

- o SIT
- o DOWN
- o STAY
- o COME

- o HEEL
- o STOP
- o WATCH
- o CRATE
- o NAME (Rocco)



## WEEK #1 + #2

THE FIRST TWO WEEKS ARE BY FAR THE HARDEST. THE TRAINERS ARE GETTING USED TO THE NEW CANINES AND THE CANINES ARE GETTING USED TO EVERYTHING ELSE. WE SPENT THE FIRST FEW DAYS SOCIALIZING ROCCO W/ STAFF AND INMATES SO HE UNDERSTANDS HE'S IN A SAFE LOVEABLE ENVIRONMENT. HE WASN'T SHY AT ALL, HE LOVED THE AFFECTION AND DIDN'T HESITATE AT ALL TO APPROACH NEW PEOPLE.

INTRODUCING THE NEW DOGS TO THEIR STOMPING GROUNDS AND IMPLEMENTING THE RULES, BOUNDARIES, AND LIMITATIONS CAN BE EXTREMELY CHALLENGING DEPENDING ON YOUR CANINES TEMPERMENT. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT. WE MAKE SURE THEY KNOW WHERE THEIR "PLACE" OR BEDDING IS TO NOT GET ON OUR BEDS, STAY OUT OF TRASH, NO JUMPING ON OR UP TO GREET VISITORS, NO BARKING OR CHEWING ON THINGS THAT AREN'T HIS AND THINGS LIKE THAT. FOR ME GOOD HOME MANNERS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE COMMANDS.

ALTHOUGH ROCCO DID GREAT WITH SOME THINGS HE DID TERRIBLE WITH OTHERS. HE PLAYFULLY JUMPED ON VISITORS, WOULDN'T STAY LAYING ON HIS PLACE, BARKED AND WHINED AND ALSO JUMPED IN OUR BEDS WHEN WE WERE GONE. THE MOST ALARMING THING WAS HE REPEATEDLY WENT TO THE BATHROOM INSIDE WHEN LEFT ALONE.

04 BOY, EXTREME CASE OF SEPERATION ANXIETY (SA) THIS HAPPENS WHEN THE DOG IS LEFT ALONE AND THE ANXIETY BECOMES SO EXTREME THEY RELEASE THEIR BOWELS. IT IS NOT INTENTIONAL OR MEANT TO

# Hounds with Hearts



GET "BACK" IT IS SOMETHING THEY CAN NOT CONTROL. WHAT WE DID IN HOPES OF PREVENTING THE ACCIDENTS IS PUT HIM IN A LARGE CRATE. DOGS WILL GENERALLY NEVER DEFECCATE IN THE CRATE UNLESS EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES. (EX: MULTIPLE HRS W/ NO POTTY BREAK, OR EXTREME ANX). ROCCO FURTHER PROVED OUR SUSPICIONS BY URINATING ALL OVER HIS BEDDING NUMEROUS TIMES IN A SHORT PERIOD.

SINCE ROCCO HAS EXTREMELY HIGH ENERGY, A HIGH PLAY DRIVE, LOW FOCUS, AND THE SA. WE DECIDED A LITTLE MORE DISCIPLINED LESS EXCITING REGIMENT FOR HIM WOULD BE BEST. FOR THESE FIRST COUPLE WEEKS WE CHOSE TO KEEP OUR ENERGY LOW BUT ASSERTIVE AND NOT ALLOW HIM TO RECEIVE A LOT OF EXCESS ATTENTION. WE HAD TO MAKE IT WHERE WE WERE GONNA BE HIS CENTER OF ATTENTION.

WE USED HIS HIGH ENERGY AND LOVE OF FOOD TO OUR ADVANTAGE. INSTEAD OF 2 OR 3 TRAINING SESSIONS A DAY ROCCO HAD 4 TO 6. INSTEAD OF FEEDING ROCCO A COUPLE SCOOPS OF FOOD TWICE A DAY WE TRAINED ALL DAY WITH HIS 4 SCOOPS, GIVING HIM PIECES HERE AND THERE. WHENEVER HE WAS DOING BEHAVIOR WE LIKED WE TELL HIM "GOOD BOY" AND GIVE HIM A COUPLE PIECES OF KIBBLE. THIS IS REINFORCING GOOD BEHAVIOR. PEOPLE ONLY WANT TO CORRECT BAD BEHAVIOR BUT YOU HAVE TO LET A DOG KNOW WHEN HE'S DOING RIGHT SO HE CAN FORM GOOD HABITS. WITH IN JUST A COUPLE DAYS OF THAT HIS FOCUS



# Hounds with Hearts



ON MY PARTNER AND I HAS INCREASED TEN FOLD. HE IS LEARNING THAT GOOD BEHAVIOR MEANS FOOD WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT WE WANT. HIS PROGRESS HAS MADE US EXTREMELY HAPPY.

FOR RIGHT NOW ROCCO IS WITH US ALMOST EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY. THE ONLY TIME WE LEAVE HIM ALONE IS WHEN WE GO EAT. WHEN I SAY ALONE I MEAN NO HUMAN, WE LEAVE ANOTHER GREY HOUND IN THE CELL AND HE IS DOING GOOD WITH THAT. WE LEAVE HIM LOCKED IN AND ANOTHER DOG FREE IN THE ROOM. IT JUST GIVES HIM SOME COMPANIONSHIP TO ENJOY FOR THE SHORT TIME. SA IS A VERY DELICATE THING AND WE ARE GOING TO WORK ON IT SLOWLY

THESE FIRST COUPLE WEEKS WERE FOCUSED MORE ON OUR BOND WITH HIM, TEACHING HIM HIS BASIC COMMANDS AND UNDERSTANDING GOOD BEHAVIOR. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE HE IS COMFORTABLE WITH US, HIS ENVIRONMENT, AND IS COMPREHENDING WHAT WE WANT BEFORE WE REALLY START WORKING ON HIS SEPERATION ANXIETY(SA)

ROCCO HAS DONE EXTREMELY WELL, HE HAS TAKEN TO MY PARTNER AND I EXTREMELY FAST. HE HAS A VERY STRONG UNDERSTANDING OF ALL HIS BASIC COMMANDS SIT, STAY, DOWN, HEEL, COME, STOP AND WATCH. HE IS A VERY INTELLIGENT DOG, HE HAS PICKED UP THESE COMMANDS RAPIDLY. WE ALSO TAUGHT HIM THE "CRATE" COMMAND, SO HE'S COMFORTABLE WITH GOING IN AND LAYING DOWN. YOU SAY "CRATE"

# Hounds with Hearts



AND POINT AT HIS CRATE AND HE WILL GO IN AND LAY DOWN. WE HAVE ALSO DRILLED HIS NEW NAME INTO HIM. NOW SAYING ROCCO HE LOOKS LIKE HE WAS BORN WITH IT.

THESE COUPLE WEEKS HAVE BEEN AMAZING PROGRESS FOR HIM. HE HAS A STRONG GRASP OF HIS BASICS AND UNDERSTANDS HE'S LEARNING. HIS NEW FOCUS ON US AND HIS WANT FOR FOOD HAS HIS WORK ETHIC ON A TOP LEVEL. HE'S A SWEET BOY AND LOVES BEING PET AND A LITTLE MASSAGE. HE PUTS HIS HEAD RIGHT IN YOUR LAP JUST WAITING FOR SOME ATTENTION. HE GETS A LITTLE WILD IF HE SEES ANOTHER DOG CHASING A TOY OR HEARS ONE SQUEAK BUT THAT'S ONE OF THE CHALLENGES WE GET TO WORK ON OVERCOMING. OUR GOAL WITH HIM IS TO HAVE HIM EXCEL AT HIS BASIC OBEDIENCE COMMANDS, CONQUER HIS IMPULSIVENESS AND ERADICATE THE SEPERATION ANXIETY.

# Hounds with Hearts



WEEK # 3

WE'VE TAKEN THIS WEEK TO NOT ONLY REINFORCE COMMANDS ROCCO ALREADY KNOWS BUT TO START ACTIVELY WORKING ON HIS SEPERATION ANXIETY (SA). USING ANOTHER DOG WE'VE BEGAN LEAVING ROCCO AND THE OTHER DOG "ALONE" FOR SHORT PERIODS OF TIME. ROCCO IS DOING GREAT WITH ANOTHER DOG IN THE ROOM. OUR PLAN IS TO GET ROCCO COMFORTABLE IN HIS CRATE WITHOUT ANY HUMANS IN THE ROOM, THEN WITHOUT ANOTHER DOG AND HOPEFULLY BY HIMSELF. EVENTUALLY ALONE AND OUT OF THE CRATE.

IT IS A DELICATE BALANCE BECAUSE AS WE WORK WITH ROCCO MORE AND MORE WE BUILD A BOND AND DEPENDANCE. THAT DEPENDANCE CAN SOMETIMES INCREASE A DOGS SA. WE ARE MAKING SURE THAT WE ADD PLENTY OF "ALONE" TIME WITH HIS TRAINING. (w/ ANOTHER DOG)

ONE THING WE HAVE FOUND TO BE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL WHEN IT COMES TO ROCCOS' BEHAVIOR IS TO CONTROL OUR OWN ENERGY LEVELS. ROCCO IS A HIGH ENERGY DOG WHICH CAN FEED INTO HIS ANXIETY. IN ADDITION TO HIS EXERCISE WE ONLY SHARE CALM ENERGY W/ ROCCO. WE STRUCTURE HIS PLAY AND EXERCISE IN THE FORM OF LONG WALKS OR CONTROLLED GAMES OF FETCH. ALSO EXTENDED TRAINING SESSIONS TEND TO TAKE THE EXCESS ENERGY OF HIS AND FOCUS INTO →

# Hounds with Hearts



SOMETHING POSITIVE, MENTAL EXERCISES AND MAKING THE DOG THINK CAN ACTUALLY TIRE THEM OUT AS MUCH IF NOT MORE THAN PHYSICAL EXERTION ALONE. AFTER THE EXCESS ENERGY IS REMOVED WE MAKE SURE TO ONLY SHARE CALM ENERGY ~~W/~~ WITH ROCCO. NIPPING IN THE BUT HIS ATTEMPTS AT GETTING WILD AND EXCITED.

ALL THIS HAS HELPED HIS GENERAL BEHAVIOR, FOCUS, AND ANXIETY TREMENDOUSLY. BY ALSO LAYING DOWN FIRM RULES, BOUNDARIES, AND LIMITATIONS ~~ON~~ ROCCO IS BEGINNING TO LEARN WHAT IS EXPECTED OF HIM. WHILE ROCCO MAY BE HIGH ENERGY HE IS ALSO SOMEWHAT SUBMISSIVE AND DEPENDANT. FROM OUR EXPERIENCE THESE TWO TRAITS CAN MAKE FOR A VERY OBEDIANT AND WELL BEHAVED DOG BUT ONLY IF YOU LAY A STRONG FOUNDATION. WITH HIGH ENERGY DOGS IT IS IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH STRONG RULES, BOUNDARIES, AND LIMITATIONS.

REMEMBER YOUR DOG IS NOT ALLOWED TO BEND A RULE OR BREAK IT ON OCCASION, IT IS ALL OR NOTHING. STICK TO THAT AND YOU WILL BE REWARDED WITH AN OBEDIANT DOG.



- WAIT
- TAKE IT
- FETCH / BRING IT



## WEEK #4

THIS WEEK WE WORKED ON SEPERATING THE VERBAL AND NON VERBAL COMMANDS ON THE OBEDIENCE THAT ROCCO ALREADY KNOWS. WE ALSO TAUGHT A FEW NEW COMMANDS AND PROGRESSED ON HELPING ROCCO OVERCOME HIS SEPERATION ANXIETY.

FOR MOST COMMANDS WE TEACH THERE IS A VERBAL AND NON VERBAL WAY TO GIVE THOSE COMMANDS. IN THE BEGINNING ALL COMANDS ARE GIVEN WITH BOTH FORMS (VERBAL + NON VERBAL) BUT AS THE DOG GETS SMARTER AND BETTER WE CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE HIM BY VARYING THE METHOD OF COMMAND. MOST DOGS ARE BETTER AT RECOGNIZING THE NON VERBAL HAND AND FOOT GESTURES. SINCE DOGS GENERALLY COMMUNICATE THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE THIS MAKES SENSE. BY USING THE VERBAL (OR NON) WE CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE HIM AND REINFORCE TASKS.

THIS WEEK WE TAUGHT ROCCO "WAIT" AND "TAKE IT" AND FETCH / "BRING IT". "WAIT" AND "TAKE IT" IS A SIMPLE COMMAND THAT IS USED FOR ITEMS OR FOOD THAT YOUR DOG IS ALLOWED TO HAVE AT YOUR DISCRETION. "WAIT" CAN BE USED IN ALL SORTS OF SITUATIONS WHERE YOUR DOG IS ANTICIPATING AN ITEM SUCH AS A TOY, TREAT, OR AN EVENT, SUCH AS ~~ANY~~ PLAY TIME OR GREETING A PERSON. JUST TELL ROCCO "WAIT" AND HE WILL KEEP STILL AWAITING YOUR NEXT COMMAND. "TAKE IT" CAN BE USED FOR TOYS OR TREATS. WHEN ROCCO IS WAITING ON AN ITEM

# Hounds with Hearts



JUST TELL HIM "TAKE IT" AND THAT GIVES HIM YOUR PERMISSION TO ENGAGE.

SINCE ROCCO IS SUCH A HIGH ENERGY DOG EXERCISE IS VERY IMPORTANT. TO MAKE IT EASY WE ARE TEACHING ROCCO TO PLAY FETCH. ROCCO LOVES CHASING A BALL. BRINGING THE BALL ALL THE WAY BACK THO IS A BIT OF A CHALLENGE FOR HIM. THE COMMAND IS "BRING IT" AND ALTHOUGH HE DOESN'T HAVE IT ALL THE WAY DOWN YET HE IS SHOWING GOOD PROMISE.

WITH REGARDS TO HIS SEPERATION ANXIETY WE HAVE BEGUN A RIGOROUS PROGRAM. WE WILL LEAVE HIM ALONE IN THE ROOM (NO DOG) AND STANDING OUTSIDE THE DOOR. WE'VE STARTED WITH JUST LEAVING HIM ALONE FOR A FEW SECONDS THEN GOING BACK IN AND TREATING HIM IF HE IS GOOD AND CORRECTING HIM WITH A VERBAL "AHT" IF HE STARTS BARKING. WE HAVE BEEN DOING THIS TWICE A DAY FOR A MINIMUM OF 30 MINUTES. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET UP TO INTERVALS OF 1-3 MIN AND WILL CONTINUE THIS REGIMEN UNTIL WE'VE WORKED UP TO HOURS.

- BOW
- BACK



## WEEK # 5

THIS WEEK, IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING TO REINFORCE BASIC COMMANDS WE'VE ADDED TWO NEW COMMANDS "BOW" ~~AND~~ (MORE OF A CUTE TRICK) AND "BACK". HOLDING TO FISTS SIDE BY SIDE BRING YOUR FISTS DOWN AND SAY "BOW" AND HE WILL TAKE A BOW. WE TAUGHT HIM THIS BY LURING ~~THAT~~ INTO THAT POSITION AND THEN CAPTURING MOTION AND ALSO WHEN HE GIVES A GOOD STRETCH.

WE ALSO TAUGHT "BACK" USING THE BACK OF YOUR HANDS IN A SHOOING MOTION TELL ROCCO "BACK" AND HE WILL STEP BACK A FEW PACES. THIS IS A USEFUL COMMAND FOR ROCCO AS HE IS A BIG DOG AND TENDS TO CROWD YOUR SPACE SOMETIMES.

WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS THIS WEEK WITH ROCCO. WE'VE BEEN BRINGING HIM OUT TO THE RECREATION YARD DAILY AND KEEPING HIM ON HIS "PLACE". THIS IS GREAT IMPULSE CONTROL FOR ROCCO WHOM ~~RECALLS~~ ASSOCIATES THE REC YARD WITH PLAYTIME. REC LASTS ABOUT AN HOUR SO AS A REWARD FOR STAYING PATIENTLY ON HIS "PLACE" WE GIVE UP THE LAST TEN OR FIFTEEN MINUTES TO A GAME OF FETCH. HE IS DOING MUCH BETTER WITH FETCH AND IS NOW BRINGING THE BALL ALL THE WAY BACK TO US. THIS DAILY EXERCISE IS HELPING TO CURB HIS EXCESS ENERGY WHILE ALSO TEACHING HIM TO CONTROL HIS IMPULSES AND TO STAY CALMLY ON HIS "PLACE" IN A PUBLIC OR PARK TYPE SETTING.

ALSO ROCCO HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES WITH HIS SEPERATION ANXIETY. WHILE ROCCO IS STILL IN HIS

# Hounds with Hearts



WE ARE PROUD (AND VERY RELIEVED) TO REPORT THAT ROCCO HAS HAD ZERO "ACCIDENTS" THIS WEEK. WE ARE STILL WORKING ON HIS SA, TWICE A DAY AND HAVE NOW GOTTEN UP TO INTERVALS OF 5-10 MINUTES GOING BACK INSIDE TREATING HIM FOR BEING GOOD AND OF COURSE CORRECTING WHEN BEING BAD, NOW THAT HE SEEMS OVER ~~ALL~~ THE ELIMINATING IN THE ROOM OUR GOAL NOW IS TO GET HIM TO STOP BARKING AND WHINING. THIS PROGRESS HAS SHOWN US THAT ROCCO CAN OVERCOME HIS SA WITHOUT MEDICATION. SOMETIMES CASES ARE SO SEVERE THAT THEY NEED MEDICATION BUT WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WITH HARD WORK AND PERSEVERANCE ROCCO WON'T BE THAT CASE. USUALLY AFTER THE FIRST CORRECTION OF THAT SESSION HE MAINTAINS GOOD QUIET BEHAVIOR FOR THE REMAINING INTERVALS. WE HAVE ALSO LEFT HIM WITH A TOY ON OCCASSION TO KEEP HIM DISTRACTED WHICH SOMETIMES TENDS TO WORK TEMPORARILY.

- Touch
- Shake
- Bells
- Say Hi

# Bounds with Hearts



- Week # 6 -

Rocco is coming along great. He is learning to channel his energy into positive behavior and good obedience. He is doing great with his basic commands and has had a lot of success concerning his separation anxiety. We are now up to 10 min intervals, leaving him alone and correcting his barking and praising his good (quiet) behavior. This week we've started in on more advanced commands. The first command we taught was "touch". As you will see "touch" will form the basis for a multitude of different advanced tasks. When we teach "touch" we teach the dog to touch a post-it note with his paws. We then use this post-it note or "touchpad" to get the dog to learn to touch and interact with different objects. For example, we use the touch pad to teach your dog to ring a set of bells, but you can just as easily use it to teach your dog to turn on/off lights or to ring a doorbell simply by holding the touchpad up to the switch or button and telling your dog "touch". Once Rocco touches the post-it note and activates the switch or button beneath you would capture that action with a command like "lights" or "doorbell". You can tape the post-it note to the switch and if need be, make it smaller and smaller as your dog advances, eventually doing away with the touchpad and "touch" command altogether. Then the command simply becomes "lights" or "doorbell" or whatever command you have chosen. Without the touchpad in your hand, extend your palm to Rocco and tell him "shake" and he will give you his paw.

"Bells" - As I've said, we use the touch command to teach "bells". You can find a set of bells for dogs at most pet stores. It is basically a nylon strip with a loop at the top (for hanging on door knobs or hooks) and three sets of bells hanging at different heights. Rocco is already adept at ringing the sets of bells we have here, however, new environments and new equipment/objects can sometimes be daunting for dogs so you always want to be careful and take it slow when introducing new objects. When introducing new objects, first set them on the ground (obviously with something like a vacuum cleaner or lawn mower have it turned off)



# Hounds with Hearts



and let the dog approach them on their own and stand over them, this will make the object less intimidating and threatening to your dog. Put treats next to and on top of the item to create a positive association. Use good treats every step of the way to make it a good experience for your dog. In the case of a new set of bells you may want to hang them up and hold them in your hand until your dog feels comfortable with them, then he should be fine with you adding distance. Bells can be used for several different purposes. One popular use for bells is as a bathroom alert. So the dog rings the bells everytime they need to go outside and eliminate. This command takes a little bit of time to teach. Most commands are taught with repetition, doing them over and over again in a short period of time. Because of the nature of this task that is not possible. You want your dog to know that ringing the bells means to go outside to use the bathroom, not just to go outside. So when its time to use the bathroom first go over by the bells and gesture to them and tell Rocco "Bells". Once he rings them it is straight out to the bathroom and right back inside. Eventually your dog will make the connection and begin ringing the bells on their own when they need to go out. Either way, I would recommend a fixed eating and bathroom schedule. A fixed routine creates a good structure that is beneficial to your dog's balance, as well as behavior. If you wanted to you could just as easily use the bells for your dog to tell you that he is ready to come back inside. You can also use the bells as an alarm clock or for medication reminders. Dogs have very good internal clocks. If you have your dog ring the bells at the same time everyday and reward with a high value treat they will pick up on the game very quickly. Start off staying next to the bells and giving the command, then, as your dog advances, drop the command and just stand next to the bells. Eventually add distance and soon no matter where you are Rocco will ring the bells at the appropriate time to let you know "Hey, its time for my treat!". Always treat for this command. The bells are a fun way to interact and communicate with your dog. They can be used for a wide variety of commands. If you are going to teach multiple commands using bells I would recommend using different bells with different sounds placed in different locations.

Hounds  
with  
Hearts



The last new command we taught Rocco this week was "Say Hi".  
"Say Hi" is a very cute trick. Simply put Rocco in a sit tell him "Say Hi"  
and wave at him and he will wave back. It is very cute everytime.

• Roll Over

# Hounds with Hearts



— Week # 7 —

It is week seven and Rocco is doing great. We have been putting a lot of time into reinforcing Rocco's basic commands. Rocco is very treat motivated but in order to get him to work without treats (the ultimate goal) we have begun to wean him off of them. By the time Rocco leaves here he will be working (for us) without treats. However when you start working with him it is important to use treats. In the beginning you want to build a good bond and a positive association between you and your dog. Treats as a reward system is a great way to do that. Use tasty treats and lots of them in the beginning for commands and to reward good behavior. Then as he gets used to working with you wean him off by treating him more sporadically. One treat every three commands some times or one treat every 5 commands then maybe one treat every other command or three treats on the first command. Keep him guessing. The idea is that he never knows when he is getting a treat so he works hard every time. Always use praise coupled with the treat and also when you don't give a treat. Eventually this praise will become his sole reward. Rocco gets very attached to people and is very praise motivated as well as a result of his bond. Working on his basic commands we've been doing "Puppy Push ups" having him go from a sit to a down and back to a sit over and over. This is a good way to tire him out and get his sits and downs nice and sharp. Also we've begun to teach him "Roll Over". Just move your hand in a circular motion (as if you are luring with a treat) when he is in a down and tell him "Roll Over". He is doing great on this command. Also he is making strides when it comes to his separation anxiety. We are now leaving him alone in the room and in his crate for 15-30 min intervals. We are doing this three times a day and we have really been seeing our hard work pay off. Rocco is doing great overall and has really come a long way in the little bit of time that we've had him.

- o Eat
- o Lap

# Hounds with Hearts



— Week # 8 —

Feeding time can be hectic, especially with a big dog like Rocco who acts as though he is perpetually starving no matter how much he eats. To make dinner time a breeze we've taught Rocco the "Eat" command. When we are fixing Rocco's food we'll put him in a down stay on his bed or his "Place". We will fix his meal and then place the bowl on the ground still keeping him in a down stay on his place. When he is calm and we are ready we'll tell him "Eat" and gesture towards his bowl. Rocco is very good at this command and you won't have to tell him twice. We've also taught Rocco "Lap" this week. Because Rocco is such a large and excited dog we've refrained from teaching him "Paws up" which can lead to counter surfing for food and jumping on people but we have shown him lap which is a controlled way to give your dog some affection. When you are seated, drag your hand across your lap, as if you are luring your dog, and tell Rocco "Lap". He will then put the front half of his body on your lap for some lovin'. Rocco is a bit sensitive when it comes to his ears but he loves a good neck scratching. This week we've also turned a corner with his separation anxiety and done away with his crate. This means that we are going back to baby steps. The object now is to keep him, quietly, on his place while he is alone in the room. So we have gone back to 1, 3 and 5 min intervals of leaving him alone and correcting him if he gets up off of his place or begins to whine and treating him when he remains on his bed and quiet. We are doing these training sessions three times a day for 30-45 min. each time. Rocco is doing great and is beginning to really get comfortable being left alone, a complete 180° from when he first got here. We are still working diligently at getting him sufficient exercise and making sure that he turns up all of that excess energy of his before it becomes frustrated and can lead to disobedience or back to behavioral issues. It will be very important for Rocco to have a fixed schedule of frequent exercise times.

- o Pick it up
- o Wag your tail

# Hounds with Hearts



Week # 9

Just two weeks left and Rocco is doing great. We have been continuing to reinforce all of his basic obedience and have weaned him off of treats. Rocco's obedience is very sharp and he responds well to all commands. This week we've taught a couple of extra commands. The first one, "Pick it up" can be used to get Rocco to retrieve objects. This task has been hard for Rocco. We've been using "pick it up" as a command with his ball and for playing fetch as a way to sort of charge up and capture the command. Rocco loves his squeaky ball and since he needs very little encouragement to pick it up we started with that. This week we've been able to get him to pick up one of his stuffed animals. Later in the week we will introduce other items such as a medicine bottle and other toys. This may be something fun and challenging for you to keep working on with him. Just tell him to pick up the object and when he does you can then assign the name such as Toy or Kong or leash. The other trick that we worked on this week was "Wag your tail". Just wiggle your index finger and tell Rocco "Wag your tail" and he will wag his tail. A cute trick. We've also been putting more time into overcoming Rocco's separation anxiety. We now have Rocco staying on his place with no crate. We have been able to keep him on his place and quiet for intervals of thirty minutes. We have been doing this training three times a day. For the rest of the time Rocco is here we will continue to leave him alone for longer and longer periods of time. Using the same method of correcting him when he barks or gets off his place and rewarding him for staying put and staying quiet, it will be up to you to re-establish these old rules in his new environment. Rocco already knows what is expected of him from us. Once he realizes that his new family expects the same in obedience and behavior he should catch on very quickly.



# Hounds with Hearts



## Week #10 - Conclusion.

Week Ten and Rocco is ready to go. Just a few pieces of advice when it comes to caring for your new dog. We have an old saying here "A tired dog is a good dog" and that is absolutely true. One of the most important things for Rocco is exercise. The more exercise the better. A daily run early in the day coupled with a long walk in the evenings and a training session thrown in there is optimal. With that excess energy removed Rocco will be able to focus. That focus brings us to the next most important thing: Rules, Boundaries and Limitations. Dogs crave structure and clearly defined Rules. With a focused dog you can now establish these Rules Boundaries and Limitations letting your dog know clearly what is expected of him, what places he can go and what places are off limits and what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is not. Remember it is all or nothing. Your dog is not allowed to bend a rule or break it on occasion. For dogs, consistency is key for good behavior and obedience. Last in the hierarchy is affection. Let your dog know you love him and reward his good behavior. Affection is always good as a reward for good behavior. Too much affection or "Free love" as we call it can be dangerous if it throws off the balance of the hierarchy. Remember it's Exercise then Rules, Boundaries & Limitations, then affection. The majority of all behavioral issues stem from an unbalance in this hierarchy! Also important and on the topic of structure is a consistent Feeding and bathroom schedule. Since Rocco had an issue early on with toileting in the house this is especially important for him. Feed him at set times during the day and (at least in the beginning) give him ample time and opportunities to use the bathroom outside. Err on the side of caution. When feeding use the "wait" and "Eat" commands to exercise your leadership position and work on Rocco's impulses. And have fun! A walk or a training session is the best way to build a bond with your dog. Keep it fun and positive and your dog will respond in kind. Best of luck with your new dog. Enjoy! - Mike & Justin

- o Whisper
- o Speak

# Hounds with Hearts



Just a couple of last minute commands that we taught Rocco this week. Whisper and Speak. To do whisper move your fingers (index and thumb) in a pinching motion and whisper the command "whisper", and Rocco will speak in a low voice. To command speak move your whole hand in an open and shut motion (as if working a puppet) and in a loud voice tell him "Speak!" and Rocco will let loose a mighty bark.