

Pros & Cons of Different Dog Training Programs

by: Ryan Gwilliam



I created the "Pros & Cons of Dog Training Programs" because I know how overwhelming and confusing it can be to choose the right training approach for your dog. With the right program, you can transform your dog into the well-behaved companion you've always dreamed of!

Imagine not struggling with your dog's behavior anymore. Imagine confidently walking your dog, knowing exactly how to handle any situation. Imagine your dog actively trying to understand and follow your lead without constant frustration!

Dogs are capable of this transformation. Yes, even YOUR dog!

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Over the last 18 years, we've seen dogs overcome seemingly impossible challenges. These transformations include:

- Fixing leash reactivity
- Stopping nuisance barking
- Eliminating pulling
- Reducing anxiety
- Teaching thousands of dogs an “off button” or a “chill mode”

You're about to understand exactly which training program will work best for your unique situation. No more wasting time and money on approaches that don't work.

Without this guide, you'll continue to guess, waste money, and potentially damage the bond with your dog. Training programs aren't one-size-fits-all, and choosing the wrong one can be frustrating for both you and your dog.

Avoid wasting the precious years you have with your dog feeling stuck and frustrated. You both deserve a training approach that works and brings you closer together.

This guide will help you find that perfect path and set you and your dog up for success!

Here's How This Guide Works:

- **Section 1: Quick Overview (2 minute read)**
- **Section 2: Detailed Breakdown (5 minute read)**

You're about to learn everything you need to know to pick the perfect training program for your dog.

There Are 3 Basic Types of Dog Training Programs

Group Classes:

- Budget-friendly
- You do all the work
- Best as a follow up to your dog's first program to help refine skills
- Best for practicing skills your dog already has in a harder environment

I love group classes as step 2 for most dogs! I don't recommend them as a first step, but as a follow up once your dog has finished a training program they are excellent!

1-on-1 Sessions:

- Personalized attention
- You do most of the work
- Best if you want to do the training yourself and have the time/energy to do it

If you've got 60+ minutes a day to work with your dog, are great at following instructions, and can follow through consistently with new habits for you and your dog this type of program can work well for you.

Boarding School:

- Fastest results
- Trainer does most of the work
- Total dog immersion leads to faster results
- Ideal for:
 - a. Busy dog owners
 - b. Traveling dog owners
 - c. Convenience factor (max results while requiring less of your time)
 - d. Serious behavior challenges

This is my favorite option for dog owners to take. It makes for the smoothest hand off from your dog's trainer to you. Our Board & Train programs also come with unlimited follow up training sessions for 6 months, which helps ensure all the good behavior sticks!

In-Home Training

- Perfect for follow-up sessions
- Addresses home-specific behaviors (when the time is right)
- Helps reinforce training in your dog's home

- Not recommended as initial training because dogs stay in their comfort zone where bad habits are deeply ingrained

Here's the truth: Not the Best Starting Point, But Useful Later. We tend to use in-home sessions most often towards the end of a training program for specific issues. For example, helping a dog and a cat get along, or teaching a really barky dog how to relax while looking out their favorite window.

Most other issues people think they need an in-home session for fade away before one is needed! And when that's not the case, an in-home can be the perfect solution.

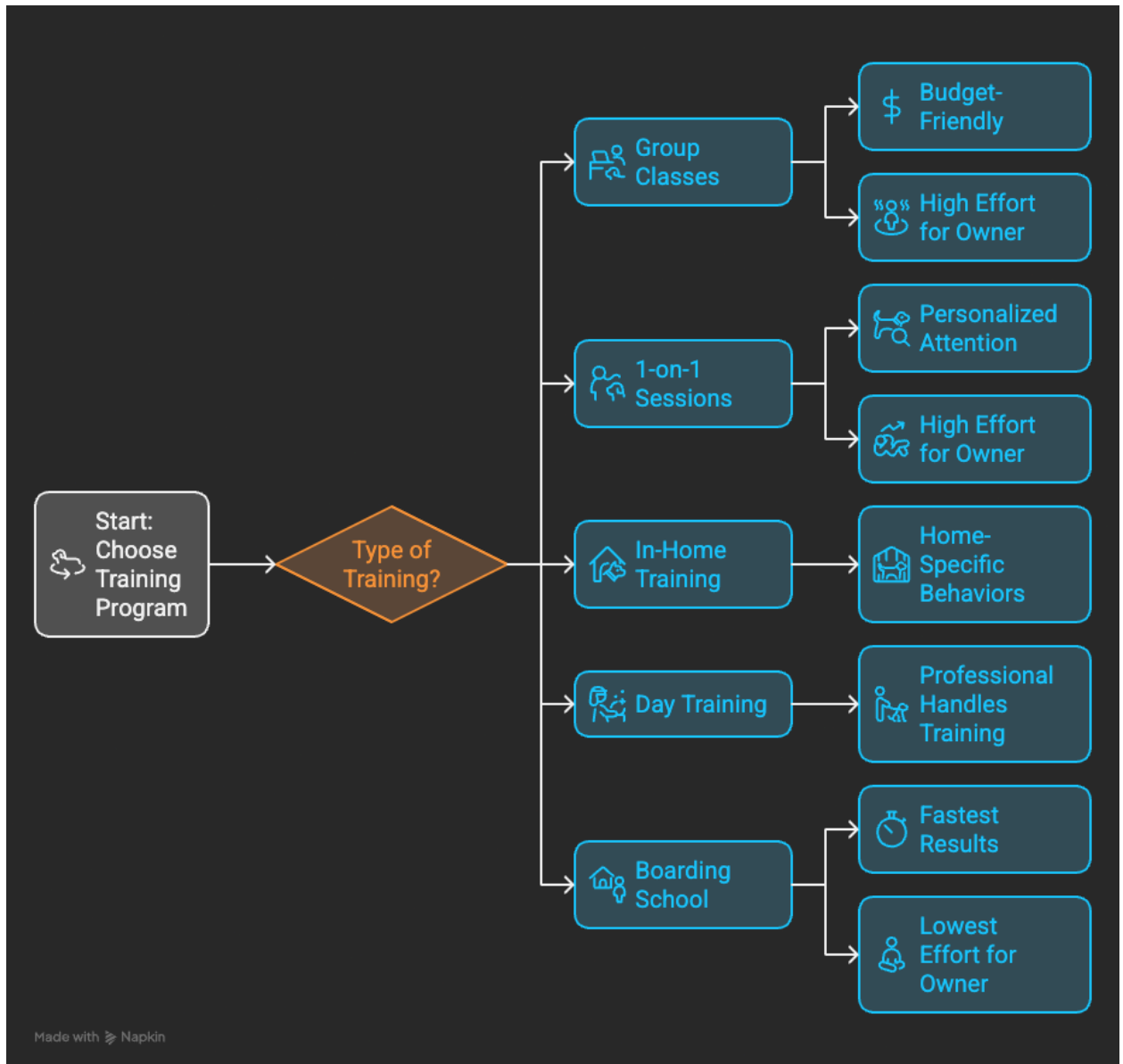
Day Training Programs (gaining popularity for good reason)

- Trainer works with your dog during the day
- You maintain training at home in the evening and on weekends

Ideal for:

Owners wanting professional guidance and handling
Dogs who struggle with overnight boarding
High-anxiety dogs

These programs are great for dog owners who don't mind dropping off and picking up their dog each day, and want to make sure their dog gets professional handling. While your dog won't progress quite as fast as in a board and train program, progress is still fast compared to a 1 on 1 program thanks to lots of hands-on time with their trainer.



Finding the right dog training approach is simpler than you think. Let's rank what matters most:

1. **First, your dog's unique needs** - because every dog is different and some behaviors are easier to fix than others. Our free evaluation session helps us get crystal clear on your specific challenges.
2. **Next, consider how much time you can realistically dedicate** - whether it's 15 minutes daily or 60+ minutes needed. Your availability each day affects which program we recommend BIG time.

3. **Then, get honest about your training goals.** Bigger goals require more time, so beware of "quick fix" promises. Real transformation takes consistent work.
4. **Finally, factor in your budget** - more professional training typically means faster, lasting results. The more training we do for you vs you do yourself will affect the price of the program.

Ready to find your perfect program? [Take our Dog Training Matchmaker Quiz](#)

Want to dive deeper into each program type? Keep reading...

So which Dog Training Program Should You Choose?

Which program type provides the best value for your time and money? It depends on several factors, but I'll simplify as much as possible.

Group Obedience Classes

Pros

- Cheapest option
- Great for "proofing" skills your dog already has
- If your dog is ready for it - lots of distractions to practice with (other dogs, people, new environment, lots of action)

Cons

- If your dog isn't ready for it, all the distractions will frustrate you and your dog (this can make your dog's behavior worse instead of better)
- Little to no personalized attention from the trainer
- Results are usually slower because you'll need to figure many things out on your own
- Classes have to be cookie cutter in order apply to all the students in class

Group classes are best as your 2nd round of training. Group classes have lots of distractions which is fantastic for teaching your dog that the good behaviors they know still apply when distractions are around.

We call this “proofing”, and it makes your dog’s training rock solid when done right. If your dog doesn’t have consistent, good behavior in the home already, I’d wait to do a group obedience class.

This is usually the cheapest option, so if you’re on a tight budget this might be your best option. Some training is definitely better than no training!

1 On 1 Sessions

Pros

- Individualized attention
- Personalized homework
- Each lesson customized to your dog

Cons

- Your dog’s social skills don’t get the attention they need (social confidence and politeness training are often overlooked by dog owners, but trainers know how important it is)
- You do the heavy lifting to train your dog

Typically you come once each week to meet with your trainer for around an hour and then go home to practice the new exercises for a week.

This can be a good way to go if you’re good at forming new habits quickly. You’ll do most of the heavy lifting while your dog is in training, so be sure to take good notes and follow through.

This style of program will require more time from your day. Keep in mind, your dog’s training will take a little longer since you might confuse your dog if your timing is a little off. Some people skip ahead and try something too advanced for their dog (like trying to have your dog heel around distractions when they aren’t quite ready yet), and this can slow your training results down.

Is it the right fit for you?

All in all, this can be a good option if your dog’s issues aren’t too serious, you have the time to invest, and are good at forming new habits quickly.

In Home Training Sessions

Pros

- Individualized attention
- Trainer can address issues that might get missed if they hadn't come to your home
- You save time since the trainer comes to you

Cons

- Your home is often the hardest place to learn since that's where the bad habits formed. Learning on neutral territory is often easier for your dog and less confrontational.
- If your dog is territorial or aggressive this is not a good option and can be dangerous for the trainer. This is why we save in home sessions for after the trainer and dog have bonded!
- Your dog's social skills don't get the attention they need (social confidence and politeness training are often overlooked by dog owners, but trainers know how important it is)
- You do the heavy lifting to train your dog

This has all the same benefits and drawbacks as a 1 On 1 Session course. In addition, it has the perk of the trainer being able to see you and your dog in your home environment.

Customers often think they need in home sessions when they don't. We encourage customers to come to us for sessions because:

- We have all the training equipment we need
- We have distraction dogs and humans at the ready (this makes practicing new skills in a controlled environment sooooo much easier)
- We get to work with your dog without you there (we include day training with pretty much every 1 On 1 session we do). This helps your dog bond with us faster, and we get to see if your dog acts differently without you around (most dogs do) which helps us speed up your training results dramatically.

That being said, we can sometimes fix things faster when we see exactly what is going on at home. If you would like some in-home sessions, be sure to tell your trainer about it and they'll let you know when the right time to schedule one is (we usually do in-home sessions towards the end of the dog's training rather than the beginning).

Is it the right fit for you?

In home sessions are a good fit for you if you don't care about the increased cost (in home sessions typically cost double), your dog's issues aren't too serious, you have the time to invest, and are good at forming new habits quickly.

Day Training Program

Pros

- Professional trainer does the heavy lifting
- Socialization classes speed up progress (they learn good habits from the other well trained and socialized dogs)
- You get to see your dog every night
- Results come faster

Cons

- Progress can be slowed when your dog comes home at night if you aren't consistent with house rules
- More drive time = you have to drop off and pick up each day

These are becoming a popular choice, and I really like the results we're getting. In a Day Training program you drop your dog off each morning and pick them up in the evening, typically this happens Monday - Friday. You'll also meet with your trainer every week or two to discuss what your dog is learning and to show you what you need to practice at home.

Your dog won't stay overnight which is bad for some dogs and good for others. Many dogs benefit from getting out of their comfort zone entirely and living with us for a few days at a time, but it's not for every dog. It really does depend, so discuss this with your trainer.

Is it the right fit for you?

If your dog is generally friendly with humans and other dogs, you live close to us, and don't mind the extra drive time this might be the right type of program for you.

You will need to be good at following through with the new rules your trainer gives you so your dog is forming good habits at home as well.

Boarding School, Board & Train, Boot Camp

Dog trainers use different names for it, but basically your dog lives with the trainer for a period of time. You get trained either at the end or at several points during the program.

This is my favorite training program for most dogs! We get you faster results because we're 100% consistent with your dog's new behaviors and our timing is perfect. Your dog is completely immersed in a new way of living, and the results last a lifetime as long as you follow through at home.

During Boarding School your dog lives with us Monday - Friday for however many weeks you choose. We used to keep dogs on the weekends too, but I found dogs learned faster if they got the weekends off!

We have found that dogs learn faster when they get the weekends to relax at home, be around their family, and come back fresh for the next week of training.

Is it the right fit for you?

If you're looking to save time and to get the fastest results possible, this is the training program for you.

Pros

- Your dog is immersed in a new way of life
- Results come the fastest for most dogs
- Your dog can get trained while you're on vacation (instead of spending money on boarding or pet sitting, you spend it on your dog's education)

Cons

- More expensive
- You don't get to see your dog every night

Conclusion

I hope this gives you some clarity on the different dog training programs available.

When you're ready to get your dog trained, here's how you can work with us:

Book a call - tell us about your dog and we'll suggest a program based on your dog's needs and your goals for them. If we're a good fit for you and your dog, we'll even give you a free training session to get your dog started on the right path now!