

# HOW TO FIND A QUALIFIED TRAINER OR BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT

Finding a good dog trainer is more difficult than you might think. Dog training is an unregulated field with no educational requirements and no required credentialing. Outdated, force-based methodology can cause more problems than it claims to help. Here are our tips for finding a qualified dog trainer.

## How To Sniff Out A Trustworthy Trainer

Start your search by asking your pet's Fear Free Certified® veterinary team for recommendations on skilled trainers in your area. Many trusted, reward-based training organizations have searchable databases of professional members. Among them are the following organizations:

- **Fear Free Certified Animal Trainers**  
Directory at [www.fearfreepets.com](http://www.fearfreepets.com) and [www.fearfreehappyhomes.com](http://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com)
- **The Academy for Dog Trainers**  
<https://www.academyfordogtrainers.com/find-a-trainer>
- **Pet Professional Guild**  
<http://www.petprofessionalguild.com/Zip-Code-Search>
- **The Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers**  
<http://www.ccpdt.org/dog-owners/certified-dog-trainer-directory/>
- **The Association of Professional Dog Trainers**  
<https://apps.apdt.com/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=TrainerSearch>
- **The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants**  
<https://iaabc.org/consultants>
- **The Karen Pryor Academy for Animal Training & Behavior**  
<https://karenpryoracademy.com/find-a-trainer/#!/directory/map>
- **Peaceable Paws Academy**  
<https://peaceablepaws.com/pat-miller-certified-trainers/>
- **Animal Behavior College, ABC Certified Dog Trainer Database**  
[https://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com/dog\\_trainer\\_search.asp](https://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com/dog_trainer_search.asp)
- **Victoria Stilwell Positively Dog Training**  
<https://positively.com/dog-training/find-a-trainer/find-a-vspdt-trainer/>



## Value Trainer Credentials

Ideally, the trainer you choose is certified or has a graduate status through a trusted, reward-based educational institution. Many trainers list credentials on their website or following their name. If you don't see credentials, ask. Seek out trainers who have gained credentialing or schooling through educational institutions rooted in humane, reward-based methods.

These common, highly regarded trainer credentials can serve as a starting point in your search:

- Fear Free Certified Animal Trainer
- Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner (KPA CTP)
- Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC)
- The Academy for Dog Trainers Graduate (CTC)
- Victoria Stilwell Academy Graduate
- Victoria Stilwell Positively Dog Trainer (VSPDT)
- Certified Behavior Counselor Canine (CBCC-KA)
- Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT-KA or CPDT-KSA)
- Animal Behavior College Certified Dog Trainer (ABCDT)
- Professional Canine Behavior Consultant (Accredited) (PCBC-A)
- Canine Training Technician (Accredited) (CTT-A)
- Professional Canine Trainer (Accredited) (PCT-A)
- Pat Miller Certified Trainer (PMCT)



## Trainer Insurance

Inquire about insurance coverage. Trainers should be covered by training insurance except in countries where such coverage is unavailable.

## Dig Deep Into Trainer Methods And Skills

Credentials don't guarantee good training techniques or teaching abilities. Before signing up, observe a couple of classes to see first-hand the trainer's methods, equipment used, interpersonal skills, and abilities with individual dogs. This is imperative, as punitive, force-based methods increase stress and the likelihood of behavioral issues, including aggression. Reward-based training methods help strengthen the bond between you and your dog, are safer, and more effective over the long term.

For a list of red lights and green lights for qualified trainers, check out our Red & Green Lights in Training handout.

