

Introduction

Introduction

Congratulations. By ordering this book, you've taken the first step towards creating a more harmonious home life for you, your family, and your dog. Training your Australian Shepherd is an important part of being a responsible dog owner.

Your Aussie can bring a lot of joy to your life – but there's also a lot of frustration involved when you can't get your dog to do what you want. That's why this book exists. It's designed to be a simple guide to training, specific to Australian Shepherds. It will cover all the problem behaviors specific to Aussies and highlight the best practices and techniques for getting positive results with your Aussie training efforts.

There are lots of generic dog books out there. They can give you an overview, but they can't give you the same insight a book on your specific breed provides. This book takes the best techniques from the most cutting edge developments in dog training and presents you with the ones that work best for Australian Shepherds.

Apply the principles and techniques contained in this book and you will begin to see a huge improvement in your dog's responsiveness to your commands and his or her overall behavior.

How to Use This Book For the Best Results

The advice in this book is meant to be put into practice. We'll discuss a lot of the theory behind training your dog, but theory is no good if it's not followed by practice. Training is about practice – it's about repetition.

That's why I want to provide a few words of warning here: reading this book is not enough on its own. You have to make the commitment to applying the information here if you want to see results. Even as I write this, I know some readers will read the book and never apply it. This message is addressed to you, the reader who really wants to see huge breakthroughs in the behavior and obedience of your Aussie.



Melissa Kopp

Wyett (quiet riot) at 4 months old, trying to swim in the pool with no luck. But he had a lot of fun splashing!

Chapter 1

Chapter 1: Aussie Psychology 101 – Understanding Your Dog’s Natural Behavior

Quick Chapter Breakdown

- The origins of Australian Shepherds
- How the Aussie’s breeding explains natural behaviors
- The key principles of Aussie training
- Understanding what motivates your dog
- Why exercise can solve many problem behaviors on its own

What’s in a Name? The Origins of the Australian Shepherd

I know you may be eager to get straight to the training techniques, but to ensure your success in training it’s important to develop an understanding of how your dog’s mind works. In fact, if you know how your dog’s mind works, you can even develop your own techniques to deal with problem

behaviors as they arise. This chapter is all about understanding the way your dog thinks and the principles behind all the training tips we'll be going through in this book.

Most owners assume their breed originated in Australia. The Australian Shepherd must have been bred in Australia, right? This is not actually the case. The breed developed in the United States. Settlers from across Europe, including shepherds from Great Britain, Scotland and Spain as well as Latin America and Australia emigrated to North America. Many shepherds brought with them their favourite herding dogs to help manage the flocks of sheep that came with the massive influx of settlers. These flocks of sheep did include many from Australia. But the breed itself was bred on the ranches of the U.S. [More about Australian Shepherd history here.](#)

This origin as a working dog explains many of what Aussie owners today consider to be “problem behaviors.” Those behaviors that seem so annoying in a suburban, family setting – behaviors like herding and nipping children – were actually bred into the dogs to make them more useful on the ranch. Aussies are herding dogs first and foremost, and much of their natural behaviour can be understood when you look at this history.

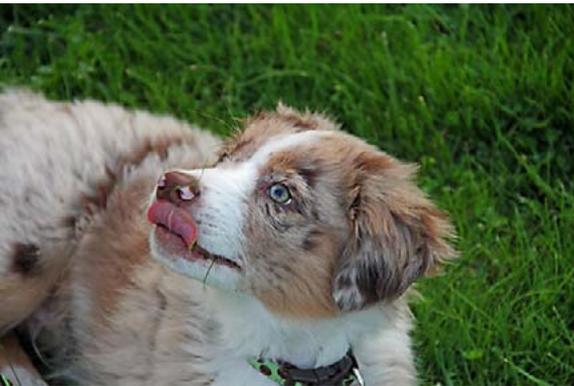


Photo: Lindsay Murray and Peggy Murray
Owners: Tyler Marson and Lindsay Murray

Max can sit, stay, shake hands and high five along with playing with his Frisbee.

So let's get one thing straight here: Aussies act exactly how they were bred to act. Every behavior they display is there for a reason – it was an important part of their job as herding dogs. Most of what we now consider problem behaviors are actually just behaviors the dog has been bred to produce – by HUMANS. The problem isn't the dog, it's a change of scenery. We now have Aussies in our suburban homes. We don't all live on ranches. So we need to teach them to adapt to this new lifestyle.

Let's look at some of the characteristics Aussies usually show, and why those were considered useful for their original job:

- They display herding behavior, rounding up other animals (even kids!)
- It was their job to defend the herd against predators, so they have a guarding instinct and are very loyal. This also explains why Aussies can be cautious of people and animals they don't know. It also explains some aggressive behavior.
- They were working dogs who needed to be fit and energetic enough to manage a herd of cattle or flock of sheep, which explains why Aussies need a lot of exercise



Melissa Kopp

Wyatt is 5 ½ months old here and loves to play in the prairie grass at home. He is a big loveable bear!