

MISSION EMPAWTHY NEWSLETTER

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MISSION EMPAWTHY, LLC



Welcome!

Thank you for signing up for our newsletter. We hope you find some useful tips and tricks and learn a little something along the way!

Winter is almost here and we're ready to make snow angels! In this issue, we will discuss what marker training is, tell you all about our absolute favorite pet photography studio, give you some safety reminders for your canine companion, and highlight an amazing resource right here in Northeast Ohio!

Upcoming events!

FREE EVENT! Join us at the Willoughby Hills Public Library (35400 Chardon Rd. Willoughby Hills, OH 44094) on March 18, 2025 from 6-7PM EST for a free presentation and demonstration on the power of positive reinforcement dog training!



Visit us at
www.missionempawthy.com
and follow us on Instagram and
Facebook!





Have you met our favorite pet photographer?!

Thoughtful Images is a photographic portrait studio that primarily serves northeast Ohio pets and their families. They also help small businesses with product photography, workplace imagery, and creating on-brand images for advertising, social, and other uses. Since 2001, they have captured warm, thoughtful portraits of your best furry friends so you can keep them with you forever. To save on stress to both you and your fur-kids, they do all the traveling, and bring the set to you! Or they meet in a gorgeous outdoor location to bask in the natural light. Thoughtful Images is a full-service studio - from your first design consultation to an in-person image reveal you can make your choices from, to the delivery of your final wall art and books, they are right there with you. Find them at www.thoughtfulimages.com, and follow them on Instagram or Facebook.

Safety Tip!

For those of you who groom your dogs yourselves, particularly for the manicurists and pedicurists out there, make sure you have Styptic Powder on hand! Brands like Kwik Stop® Styptic Powder help to stop the bleeding quickly if you accidentally clip your dog's quick in their nails. These powders also typically contain an active ingredient called, "Benzocaine" which acts as a painkiller to numb the soreness caused by clipping or grinding their nails too short.

Training Tip: Teach to your dog to file their own nails!

Does your dog hate having their nails clipped or ground down with a grinding tool? Teach them to file their nails themselves with a scratch board! Simple - take an old shoe box, use rubber cement and glue some 100 grit sandpaper to the top. Sit your pup down, grab a handful of treats, show them to your dog, then toss them inside the shoe box and present it to your dog. As soon as your pup tries to get to the treats with their paws by scratching at the box, reward them by opening it up so they can eat some tasty treats, repeat! Just be careful not to allow them to grind them down too far. The front paws are usually easy, for the back paws, see if you can get them to scratch their back paws on the board by rubbing their belly while they're laying down to see if you can get those back paws moving!





What is marker training anyways?

your clicker timing is spot on! Note- timing is critical when teaching dogs with marker training, too slow or too fast, you risk reinforcing the wrong behavior - for example, if you're too fast when trying to marker train a dog to lay down, you might accidentally train a "bow" instead of a "down" cue!).

So what exactly is "marker training" and why should I care?

"Marker Training" is a technique used in dog training that pinpoints a specific moment in time when a desirable behavior occurs to allow a trainer to capture that moment in time. The marker may be a consistent sound like a clicker or may be the word, "yes." This marker acts as a "bridge" between the time the dog does something correctly, till you can bridge the gap in time to reinforce them with a treat, toy, or other form of positive reinforcement.

So why should I care? What's the point? Marker training allows for excellent **precision**, no matter if the behavior you're looking to train is incredibly complex (e.g., teaching your dog to paint on a canvas) or very simple, (e.g., teaching your dog to sit on cue) this type of training provides clear and immediate feedback to your dog allowing them to create associations faster and allowing them to understand exactly which behavior you're trying to reinforce (assuming

Marker training also enables **consistency** in your training. It reduces the ambiguity for your canine companion since the marker, or bridge, always signifies the exact moment they've performed the correct behavior and that they will be reinforced positively. This is why it is absolutely critical that EVERY click translates into a reinforcer (e.g., a treat), even if you accidentally clicked your clicker! This is also why at Mission Empawthy we always use clickers rather than the word "yes" as it takes away the variable tone in your voice that could actually cause stress in your dog. Have you ever been frustrated in a training session? Did your tone of voice change ever so slightly with your dog? Chances are the answer is absolutely, so using a clicker removes this possibility!

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What is marker training anyways? (Continued)



until your dog is consistently conducting this lip-licking behavior. Then add a verbal cue, such as “yum!” just before your dog licks their lips, if they do it correctly, click and treat! We always want to add our verbal or physical cue **AFTER** the behavior is consistent and ‘clean’ so we don’t accidentally train a sloppy behavior.

Marker training also provides excellent **predictability and motivation**. This means that our dogs can easily predict that a reward will be coming when they hear that click noise. Dogs respond really well to the use of positive reinforcement, so using marker training creates a predictable training environment which can motivate them to keep learning and keep working for their next reinforcement.

Marker training is also incredibly versatile. It can be applied to very complex or very simple behaviors as well as for behavioral modification. For example, marker training can be used to “**capture**” a behavior. Let’s say you want to teach your dog to lick their lips on cue. This would be a great behavior to try to capture with marker training. If you know that your dog has a tendency to lick their lips before every meal, grab your clicker and some treats and as soon as you see your dog’s tongue come out to lick their lips click and treat! Do this repeatedly

However, if you want to use marker training for a bit more complicated cue, such as “Go to your mat,” then we would want to use another technique called, “**shaping**” coupled with our marker training. Shaping is the technique of gradually rewarding small baby steps, or successive approximations, of a desired behavior until you’re able to get your dog to reach their final goal behavior. Over time, you would increase (and sometimes also temporarily decrease) your criteria for the behavior until your dog conducts the final goal behavior.

–Victoria R. Brody, MPH, KPA-CTP, FFCP



Hometown Heroes



Melissa
Goldsmith^{PhD}

SPECIALIZED CARE FOR TRAUMA + ANXIETY RECOVERY

Here at Mission Empawthy, we love to highlight local heroes who make our community a better place. Today we're happy to spotlight **Melissa Goldsmith, PhD** – a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice, specializing in evidence based treatments for PTSD and some anxiety disorders. She's treated civilians and veterans who have experienced multiple and various types of past traumatic events. Using Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) or Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) for PTSD, she helps clients peel back the layers of their past traumas, step by step, to get to their core and examine how the traumas impacted their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. She validates clients' journeys and empowers them with the tools they need to recover, not just "cope." These short-term treatments help clients get back to living their lives in the "here and now." If this treatment approach sounds like a match for you, you can schedule a free 15 minute initial phone consultation at <https://melissagoldsmithphd.org/contact/> to find out more information. She sees clients in Ohio, in person and via telehealth.



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