

Front Range Animal Hospital
418 3rd Street, P.O. Box 326
Monument, CO 80132
(719)481-3455

Being Top Dog

It's not a matter of choice. Since dogs are pack animals, you and your family are now the pack. As far as your dog is concerned no pack can exist without a leader, and it's either you or him. That's the way it *has* to be. You may think that you really just want to be friends or partners with your dog, and you can be, but for the well being of your dog, you must be the one in charge. In today's complicated world, you cannot rely on your pet to make the decisions. Few dogs actively seek leadership and most are perfectly content for you to assume that role, so long as you do. But you *must* do so, or even the meekest dogs will try to take over. Remember that it's not a matter of choice. For everyone's safety, you have to be the one in charge.

Pack Leader's Bill of Rights

1. To eat first, gorge themselves, and own any pickings left over.
2. To stand, sit, or lie down where ever they want.
3. To have access to the "prime" spots in the household.
4. To control entry to, or from any room in the house
5. To proceed through all narrow openings first.
6. To initiate the hunt and dictate where to hunt.
7. To demand attention from subordinate pack members.
8. To ignore or actively discourage unwanted attention.
9. To restrict the movement of lesser ranking pack members.
10. To win all games.

By studying this Bill of Rights, you can tell who is the pack leader in your house. If you think it is your dog, you can become pack leader by adhering to the following do's and don'ts.

How to Become a Pack Leader

1. **Do-Eat** before you feed your dog. ***Don't feed your dog first.***
2. **Do-Restrict** access to your bedrooms and furniture. ***Don't let your dog restrict your access to anything in the house, or take up residence in the doorway.***
3. **Do-Proceed** first through narrow passages. ***Don't let your dog bound ahead of you.***
4. **Do-Run** in the *opposite* direction if your dog "takes off" on a walk. ***Don't chase your dog yelling "Come!"***.
5. **Do-take** your dog's kills (stolen articles or food) away from him. ***Don't allow your dog to keep or play with them.***
6. **Do-Call** your dog to *you* to give affection. ***Don't go over to your dog and give him affection.***
7. **Do-Ignore** or discourage pawing, nudging, and whining. ***Don't make a large fuss over your dog whenever he demands that you do so.***
8. **Do-Restrict** his movements with the Long Down exercise. ***Don't give more than one down command, or give up.***
9. **Do-Reward** your dog for completing an exercise well. ***Don't give more than one command or any command if you are not prepared to reinforce it!***

Reprinted with permission from Cool K9's