

POTTER LEAGUE FOR ANIMALS POSITION ON ANIMAL TRAINING

The Potter League endorses and utilizes the scientifically proven LIMA (Least Intrusive and Minimally Aversive) approach to animal training.

I. What Is LIMA?

LIMA is an approach to training and behavior modification that promotes the use of the least intrusive (forceful) and minimally aversive (unpleasant) strategies and techniques in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

II. Why Use It?

The LIMA approach focuses on positive reinforcement of desired behaviors as the first line of teaching, training, and behavior modification. Research has consistently shown that a positive reinforcement-based approach is more effective in achieving desired results than a punishment-based approach.

The LIMA approach aims to accomplish the desired change(s) through the use of classical interventions including reinforcement of an alternative behavior, desensitization, and counterconditioning.

The LIMA approach does not use punishment as a means of training or behavioral modification because punishment does not teach more appropriate behaviors and can facilitate or cause aggressive behavior and/or extreme fear. Also, punishment may inadvertently cause physical harm to the animal, increased aggression, a negative association with the person implementing it, apathy, and escape/avoidance behaviors.

III. Pros

- The LIMA approach has been adopted by both the APDT (Association of Professional Dog Trainers) and IAABC (International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants)
- The LIMA approach establishes standards that allow practitioners to change animal behavior effectively while minimizing stress or aversive experiences for the animals
- Positive reinforcement based training has consistently been proven to be more effective than other methods of training

IV. Cons

- Most of the general public does not yet understand the term “LIMA”
- Competency in the LIMA approach demands a higher level of education for trainers

V. Conclusion

Real animal behavior modification requires time and patience. There are no quick fixes. Training thru fear and dominance has been shown to be counter-productive in the long term, as it may create more severe problems that will need to be addressed. Adhering to the LIMA approach is a commitment to using the most positive, least intrusive and effective training methods to accomplish behavior goals.

References:

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