



## **Module 10 : History of Animal Training**

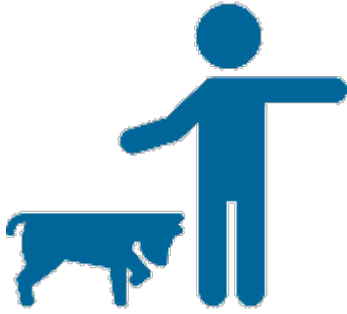
- The start of animal training
- Animal Behaviour Enterprises (ABE) work based on Skinner's models
- military animal training
- history of dog training

Module 10 will explore the varied people, institutions and training concepts used throughout history. Keep the following points in mind as you go through this module:

- The start of animal training
- Animal Behavior Enterprise (ABE) work based on Skinner's models
- Military animal training
- History of dog training
- The methods of today

**History of Animal Training - 4m56s**

### **10.1 Introduction**



## **Animal training has existed for centuries.**

Dogs were the first animal trained by humans. Scientists disagree about exactly when dogs evolved from wolves, but it is thought to have occurred between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago. Wolves took advantage of human settlements and the benefits they offered, and over time became dogs which had the capacity for simple training by humans.

Despite early anthropological and archaeological evidence of animal training, what is considered as modern "animal training" was started by early behaviourists such as BF Skinner and Pavlov. Both formed the theory of conditioning where Pavlov trained his dog using classical conditioning and BF Skinner studied his theory of operant conditioning.

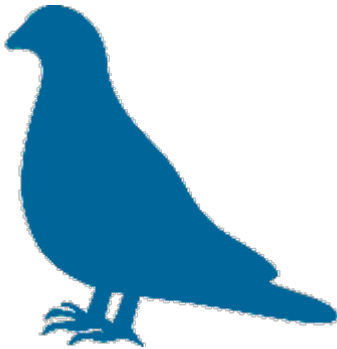
The concept of operant conditioning, allowing the training of certain responses to stimulus, has helped form what we consider animal training today.

Many animals have been trained to help humans with their work, from hunting to carrying heavy objects.

Historically, falcons and hawks were trained to help in the hunt. Dogs were also trained to hunt, such as fox hounds that go into the woods and forests to root out foxes for people riding on horseback. Dogs were trained for herding livestock and pulling sleds decades before BF Skinner's theory of operant conditioning was made public. In Asia elephants were trained to allow people ride them, to pull and carry logs, and for other heavy work. Horses and camels have also been trained for hauling and riding.

The first circus with elephants being led into the tent, standing on round boxes, and lifting beautiful girls onto their back is an example of animal training. Tigers and white tigers in circuses and shows in Las Vegas are other examples of animal training. Some fields like marine mammal training are newer than others.

## 10.2 Animal Behavior Enterprises (ABE) Continues BF Skinner's Work



**Marian Bailey and then husband Keller Breland were graduate students who worked with BF Skinner.**

They spent two years training "pigeons to guide Pelican missiles, according to an interview by Dr. Sophia Yin. Throughout World War II and the years after, the married couple worked on training animals, studying behaviour and reinforcing it with certain stimuli such as whistles and clickers. The couple started Animal Behaviour Enterprises (ABE) with the mission of demonstrating a scientific way to train animals. Their concept was to use positive reinforcement for the training. For 47 years ABE trained animals at the IQ Zoo and theme park in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The Brelands were known to train 1,000 animals for companies like General Mills who would use them for commercials. They also worked on special Navy projects and with Marineland in Florida.

The couple tried to revolutionise how animals were trained. They started by using whistles but realised a special dog whistle would be better. The couple designed dog whistles as well as clickers. The clicker was the first of its kind for animal training. They tried to market both items but found the reception in the market was not worth pursuing. When they started marketing the device in the 1950s it was still assumed that military training was the best way to train dogs. It was hard to accept that animals could learn through less physical methods.

It took them another few years before their training methods would take off. In fact, Keller Breland trained a chicken using the clicker. He attended fairs and other shows to delight people and teach them about a more humane method of training. It was during one of these shows that General Mills saw the trained chicken and approached the couple about training animals for commercials.

While the success of their items did not truly occur until the 1980s and later in the 1990s, many books have been written about their research, training methods, and history of how they helped propel animal training techniques into households around the nation.

Bob Bailey, Marian's second husband, joined the team in 1965. It was also the year that Keller

Breland died. Bailey became the assistant technical director and Head of the Government Department for ABE in a few short years. Later he became the Research Director, Executive VP and General Manager, as well as being married to Marian. Between the Breland's and Bailey's combined experience ABE trained 140 species of animals. They also trained about 15,000 to 16,000 animals throughout their career for various projects. Marian was responsible for the field of applied behaviour analysis. Throughout the years they devised various technologies to make training animals easier.

## 10.3 History of Dog Training - In and Out of the Military



**While dog training existed well before BF Skinner and Marian, and her two husbands, the world did not start to take notice until the First World War.**

The military was also looking to use dogs. During World War I dogs were an important asset. Many dogs were being trained for obedience based on their long known abilities that work well with humans.

Skinner was starting to make headway with operant conditioning in the 1930s but there were also other papers and research that started in the late 1800s. These methods were based on long established training methods.

Each culture had their own way of working with animals as far back as the first domesticated dog. Later, and in other cultures, the concept of breaking an animal as a way to train it to help humans started to emerge.

It was no longer about finding animals willing to form a human-animal bond, but about training animals for working, like horses, oxen and camels.

It is extremely clear in the history of animals and humans that the human species forgot about this symbiotic relationship. Humans started to change in their respect of animals. If we assess the late 1700s and 1800s, we see a change in human behaviour towards animals. The mustangs and bison

are just two animals that were exploited, even killed - for nothing more than what a human wanted. Mustang horses were killed because they were considered inferior to other breeds, as well as too wild. Numerous bison and buffalos were mass-murdered for their pelts.

This change in human behaviour also changed the methods of training animals, particularly dogs for military use. It was generally accepted that showing dominance through physical force was the way to train dogs for military service. Acceptable behaviour included headlocks when the dog refused to sit or lie down. Hitting when an inappropriate behaviour was seen was also considered acceptable. The inferiority and lower intelligence of the dog was thought to need a strong hand.

At the end of World War I, a number of trainers were no longer needed. The war was over. This meant the dogs were no longer needed. Some of the obediently trained dogs were sold to homeowners. A few of the dogs were able to go with their trainers.

At this time, the American Kennel Club found the training extremely important. More homeowners were starting to want their dogs trained as per the military, which they had heard about. The club started offering obedience training methods using discharged vets. World War II occurred and the training was again in need. It also meant that at the end of the war, there were even more well-trained dogs and dog trainers redundant.

Families were also starting to work more. More men were away from home. Women had to take up jobs that men vacated in order to serve their country. It left a void at home. Homeowners with dogs were no longer around so dogs were not receiving the same amount of attention. It was clear that obedience training was needed to stop some of the negative behaviour from appearing, as well as to ensure dogs would be able to stay home without needing to go out. It was a culmination of new training methods, military training methods and a need for owners to seek formal training that helped increase the concept of animal training beyond the success that the Brelands were starting to see through commercials and their zoo.

War did not stop and neither did animal cruelty with regards to training methods. It was common for trainers around the world to use choke chains and physical punishment on animals as acceptable methods of training.

It was not only military training making homeowners think these methods were acceptable. It was also a lack of fully understanding dogs and their intelligence to learn. We went from knowing animals were intelligent enough to pair with humans to thinking we were the superior species throughout the world.

Thankfully several methods started to appear, such as clicker and whistle training. However, it would take many years (with the mass marketing via books and TV) to provide better training methods despite the clicker and whistle training concepts of earlier decades.

History shows that in 1990 the Breland training method finally became accepted. The idea that operant conditioning with sounds could make a dog submit appropriately to the training started to appear on bookshelves, TV screens and homes. It was also marketed as a new training method, although several trainers throughout the world and particularly in the US had adopted this method much earlier.

Now many trainers use operant conditioning training methods with 100% positive rewards. Rewards are withheld or taken away when an animal does not follow the training. When a dog follows the behaviour the owner or trainer wishes to see, then there are methods of reward.

## **FACT**



The very first live animal to go into space was not an astronaut, but actually a dog! Laika, a Russian dog, orbited the earth in the Russian spacecraft Sputnik in 1957

*Source: [pets4homes.co.uk](http://pets4homes.co.uk)*

## **10.4 Training with Rewards**

**BF Skinner had negative and positive reinforcement for his animal training sessions.**

The Brelands and eventually Bob Bailey started using sounds from clickers and whistles to teach animals the behaviour they wanted to see. A combination of whistles and clickers is still used in operant conditioning training methods today. However, all feedback to the animal is provided in a positive manner, or a reward is withheld until the behaviour is seen. The change in mistreating animals also led to a change in the types of rewards being offered.

Animal training started off with a food related reward. If the animal hit the right lever, listened to the right command or showed the behaviour or response a trainer wanted then a treat was given.

In the 1990s, and more recently, the concept of rewarding with more than food started to take hold. Sea World is a good example of this training method. They use whistles combined with hand signals to train their dolphins, orcas and seals. However, food is not always the reward as affection from the trainer or owner could also achieve the required results from the animal.

## **10.5 Pet Psychology**

**Pet psychology helps us observe, understand and help our pets by establishing a better relationship with them.**

By gaining awareness of their communication methods, language, postures, habits and behaviours, we are able to identify their needs in terms of attention, food, veterinary care or simply, companionship.

Animals cannot speak and it's up to us to decode their non-verbal signals and behaviour and accurately gauge their emotional or physical needs.

The idea that pets feel emotion and have psychological issues has not been a well-received concept in the past. The history of ethology, as you have already learned, started decades ago, yet the idea of pet psychologists being able to help read pet behaviour, diagnose a psychological issue and repair it, has been ridiculed. However, pet psychology is an essential part of training.

The best trainers know that more than rewards are needed. The need for animals to receive love from their owners and trainers indicates that pet psychology is necessary for success.

## **10.6 Types of Animal Training**

## **Dog training with clickers and whistles is just one type of training.**

Operant conditioning is also a method of training. There are a couple of other things that have yet to be mentioned in full detail.

### ***Breaking a Horse***

Breaking a horse used to mean teaching a horse to obey reins, whips and guide ropes, in an effort to saddle the horse and place a bit into the horse's mouth. This form of training was sometimes met with dominance, where the trainer would try to dominate the horse or break certain behaviours in the horse. In the 1980s a movie, *The Man from Snowy River*, showed that a horse did not have to be "broken" but instead respected and guided. The book *Horse Whisper* also highlighted the need for psychology tactics to help a horse. The methods changed from "breaking" the horse to fixing what was wrong through compassion and understanding.

Animal training has taken on more humane methods. There are several trainers who do not believe in "breaking" an animal's spirit, but in working to find the motivation of the animal. An animal can learn to fear its owner with ease when aggression is shown. However, using kindness, positive reinforcement and ignoring bad behaviour by not rewarding it with any type of attention, has become a better way for trainers and pet owners to work with their animals.

Animal training has also looked towards desensitisation processes. Humans tend to be desensitised to certain stimuli. For example, a workplace may play music and often the same soundtrack. A human can desensitise themselves to this music. It becomes unnoticeable. Animal training methods from recent decades are using desensitisation with animals, such as helping an animal get used to loud voices, sounds or other things that can be distracting.

This type of training is usually used in parks, zoos and places such as Sea World. However, it can also be useful in the home. Pets that are not used to a community apartment may become very anxious due to the increased noises. However, with desensitisation training the animal can start to ignore all sounds, except for those that let them know it is you or your other family members.

## **Summary**

You have explored animal training throughout history starting with the concept of training animals to help aid in hunting and other human related work.

You learned that operant conditioning is a newer term compared to the knowledge that early humans had.

This module also explored early military dog training and how animal training has evolved from these crueller methods to more acceptable behaviour training methods.

You learned about clickers and whistles, including the thinking and the people behind the devices, and the eventual acceptance of different training methods based on behaviour, personality and emotions.

The main theme was to understand that all animals are intelligent on certain levels and their training needs to fit their ability to learn and their motivations, never requiring physical force.

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