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What is Schutzhund?

Schutzhund is a three-phase sport, based on the tests designed to prove the breed-worthiness of the German Shepherd Dog. The three phases are tracking, where the dog demonstrates its ability to problem-solve by learning to follow a trail left by a person and to find and indicate articles dropped by that person. An obedience phase, which demonstrates the dog's trainability and is generally considered to be more demanding and animated than the obedience routines normally conducted in kennel club competitions. A protection phase is where the dog demonstrates its courage, fighting spirit, protection instinct and ability to work under duress.

Translated literally, the word Schutzhund actually means "protection dog", but today the trials are geared towards being high performance sporting events that test both the handler's skills and the dog's natural abilities.

What is an FH test?

This is an advanced tracking test where dog follows a 1200 to 1800 paces scent trail made by a person walking over different terrains, across a sealed road and with various angles and difficulties (i.e.: cross tracks) to overcome. At some point, they drop something on the track, something like a glove or a wallet. The dog must then follow the exact trail without getting distracted, turning all the corners and indicate where the items were dropped. The track is laid by a stranger and is several hours old.

Is this sport a good idea? Should I teach my dog to bite?

Your dog already knows how to bite. Knowing when and why it will bite is information all owners of large working breeds need to understand. Learning about your dog's character should not be left up to chance. Schutzhund tests, under duress, the dog's predisposition to certain behaviours and the test is designed to identify and eliminate the weak and unstable, vicious or similarly undesirable types of animals. The control factor in the test reveals a dog's ability to take direction, also under conditions of high excitement and distraction, and in the process teaches our dogs when not to bite and when biting is an appropriate response. You will notice

that Schutzhund handlers learn how to teach their dogs control. Engagement in the sport will not change any dog's basic character and predisposition rather exposes what that character is while providing a structured platform for handlers to learn more about their dog's natural drives and abilities and how to shape and control these drives and abilities. It is no contradiction that a Schutzhund dog can also be, and most often is, a loving house pet and companion.

Can any dog do this?

Not all dogs are suitable for Schutzhund sport. A Schutzhund dog needs a natural drive and enthusiasm to work, the self confidence to work independently under direction and under pressure, stable nerves and a clear head to compete successfully in the sport. Dogs that are vicious, fearful or out-of-control are inappropriate candidates for finding any success in the sport. Competition dogs are expected to be under control and to ignore the other dogs around them. A dog's sociability, nerve, its noise sensitivity and whether it has a self confident attitude to social situations, towards people and other dogs, is specifically tested for in the BH test, a pre-qualifying companion dog test that all dogs must pass before they can take part in Schutzhund trials.

Do I have to have a German Shepherd Dog to do this sport?

There are many other recognised working breeds involved in Schutzhund; examples such as Rottweilers, Dobermans, Giant Schnauzers, Boxers, Bouvier des Flanders and Belgian Shepherd Dogs being amongst the recognised Sportdog breeds. There are some practical limitations that eliminate dogs from competition, such as size. While a Jack Russell Terrier might enjoy the sport, jumping the 1-metre hurdle with a 650 gram dumbbell in its mouth might prove too much of a physical challenge to its stature. For this reason there are designated breeds considered suitable for participation in Schutzhund. However, Schutzhund Australia focuses on promoting the talents of the German Shepherd Dog, even though owners of non-GSD working breeds are welcome and may participate at any Schutzhund Australia events.

This sport looks dangerous. Does anyone ever get hurt?

Accidents can happen in any sport and for this reason, also as in any sport, clubs must follow basic health and safety guidelines that address these issues. As a sport in general, Schutzhund sees relatively few instances of injuries and there are probably more accidents caused by handlers tripping over their own leashes than anything else.

Can my dog get hurt doing this?

Again, in any high performance sport accidents can happen and every effort is made to ensure the safety of the dog. The vast majority of dogs competing complete their Schutzhund careers without ever experiencing an injury. Of course the dog's handler has a responsibility to understand their dog's limitations too, and not permit it to work beyond its capabilities.

I am not comfortable with the "protection work." Is there still a way for me to participate?

The Schutzhund Australia Inc. Rulebook also offers individual competitions with titles only for tracking and obedience, at all the three levels of progression. However, Schutzhund Australia Inc. is a Schutzhund-based organization which has taken upon itself a responsibility to develop and promote Schutzhund as the premier working test for German Shepherd Dogs in this country.

People wishing to become Schutzhund Australia Inc. members need to consider that by joining Schutzhund Australia Inc. they are taking on a responsibility to be a part of the team seen to be supporting - in practice as well as thought, the organization's Goals as outlined in the Schutzhund Australia Inc. Constitution.

Why don't I hear more about this sport?

Schutzhund is a high performance sport that usually requires a lot of informed coverage to be able to follow it properly - more than a cursory layman's explanation can provide and which does not fit well into the two minute "sound-bite" that is common to media coverage. Due to the protection work in Phase C, there can sometimes be misconceptions voiced by people without any understanding or basis to properly appreciate why testing a dog's protection ability and working drives is essential to the proper evaluation and thus the ability to protect the heritage of the breed from decline. To do this we proof a dog's ability in a test specifically designed for the breed to preserve its working heritage. A lack of attention to any breed's functional purpose can only result in a decline of that functionality, and the breed itself likely to fall into disrepute. The difficulties in finding a public forum capable of delivering an unbiased and informed discussion on Schutzhund in a country with Australia's limited background or culture in the sport often means sport participants may prefer to opt for a low-profile.

What are the dog's "drives"? Why do we need "drives" for training?

The successful education of a dog is founded on the imaginative utilization of mechanical manipulation of the dog's natural inheritance. As trainers, we are able to utilize and manipulate only those natural instincts each dog brings with it from birth. A trainer's own skill and ability is apparent in his/her capacity to activate and direct those "drives" into positive actions and reflexive responses. A trainer who accepts the basic differences in the fundamental abilities of each individual animal presented to them will take the time and effort to discover the range and depth of the material they are working with in order to achieve the best possible outcomes in both competition and breeding.

What drives should people expect in a successful Schutzhund? Drives are instinctive, motivational forces that "drive" a dog to specific actions or behaviours. They are used to give value to what we want the dog to do and to bridge unpleasant experiences it might incur in the learning process. This is a deeply complex subject that has as much to do with understanding genetics and the laws of inheritance as it has to do with understanding the practicalities involved in their selection and use. In a nutshell, dogs are motivated by inherent "drives", that, as a wild animal, would ensure their survival. While there are different schools of thought as to the number and type of drives dogs inherit, most agree there two critical drives motivating a dog's actions are those used for "survival" and "reproduction". A dog exercises its survival drives when seeking out food or activating its "fight or flight" responses. The reproductive drive is not able to be used in training and therefore is not a subject for discussion in relation to the sport.

The most useful drives for working dogs are those we can manipulate as trainers to motivate the dog to reach our predetermined human goals. One of the most common of the drives and instincts utilised in the Schutzhund is the PREY DRIVE. This is a less than critical but highly motivational drive that despite all its explosive hall marks, is actually a non-aggressive in its essence. This drive is ideal for building confidence in young dogs and other motivational-based work. Prey drive will calm grip on the sleeve and accommodate positive learning experiences, although its drawback is this is a drive that "wears out" if overused. (Example is that of a ball

mad dog which will eventually get tired of chasing the ball if it is thrown enough times.) Like all natural drives, prey drive can be enhanced or suppressed by the quality of the training.

SHARPNESS is a term that is commonly misunderstood to the extent it creates a negative impression. Sharpness is a dog's readiness to react in a hostile manner to real or imagined threats and stimuli. As trainers, when analysing this, it can be understood that too little sharpness is just as undesirable as too much. A medium level of sharpness is ideal in a good Sportdog. An ideally sharp dog is more likely to recognise and react to real threat.

A trait indispensable to the working dog is its predisposition for COURAGE. Canine courage is an instinctive reaction and not a deliberate action; to actively confront a threat and even to move against that threat if necessary. Dogs with little or no courage, regardless of how much "sharpness" or "prey drive" they might possess, will withdraw from confrontation involving serious conflict. Without courage, a "sharp" dog may make a good watch dog, but never a trustworthy and reliable Schutzhund.

On occasion we find a dog that although it displays all the hallmarks of courage, can only with difficulty be stimulated into assuming a defensive stance. These dogs may have a thick NERVE COSTUME or insufficient FIGHTING SPIRIT. Under no circumstances can fighting spirit be absent from the mental blueprint of a Schutzhund. It is the joy of the fight, the constant readiness to measure its strength under threatening conditions without being discouraged or distracted. This can be evaluated best in the Hold and Bark exercise, where the dog's fierce intensity when confronted with its rival can really come to the fore.

Out of the fighting drive comes the dog's PROTECTION or DEFENSIVE INSTINCT. There is a fine line between this instinct and the instinct to flee. This instinct has an advantage in that it does not wear out. A dog may tire of chasing a ball but it will not tire in the defence of its existence. Its enduring qualities and high level stimulation add great dimensions to the quality of the Schutzhund work. Trainers should be aware that using only a dog's defence in its development can cause neurosis.

People cannot talk about Schutzhund without mentioning HARDNESS. Some trainers identify hardness as those dogs which need severe corrections and methods to achieve an end. Other trainers want to equate hardness with "stubbornness", a dog that opposes correction. In fact no dog is "stubborn" or enjoys being punished. There are no canine masochists, only poor communications in training. In essence, a hard dog is one that has the ability to undergo, recover from and put behind it unpleasant experiences and situations very quickly.

It is possible for a "soft" dog to display many excellent traits useful in Schutzhund training that lead to top results. With soft dogs it is important for the trainer to recognise a dog's limitations and apply his skill, tact and patience to compensate for any deficits of drive, such as a lack of robustness, by utilizing what stronger drives a dog may have, such as prey drive. Soft dogs do not do well in situations where pain or fright might occur and Schutzhund can produce many surprises and conflicts for the dog to deal with. A hard dog is quicker to shrug off any negative experiences and therefore is more suitable for the sport and for surviving handlers without a finger tip feeling for training dogs.

FUEHRIGKEIT is a German word that has no English equivalent, other than to say it means the dog's connection and responsiveness to its trainer. Some might call it "trainability". Such dogs

are sensitive without meaning they are soft. “Fuehrig” dogs are sensitive to the moods and actions of the handler and light to manipulate.

Working dogs are needful of possessing a working TEMPERAMENT, which manifests itself in the level of enthusiasm and energy it puts into the work. Dogs with a high temperament will notice and react quickly and energetically to stimulus in their environment. A medium temperament serves best as an overly temperamental animal can be excitable and difficult to structure in the work, just as dogs displaying little temperament can be unenthusiastic and difficult to motivate.

Basic fundamentals shaping character, such as SELF-CONFIDENCE, IRRITATION LEVEL and NERVE COSTUME, play an important part in the foundation of a good Schutzhund. Shyness and bad nerves undermine the ability to competently structure a dog’s working ability. High self confidence and thick nerves bring stability and although “nervy” dogs may not necessarily be nervous, rather than highly strung, their hypersensitivity means they will require more structure and invariably blow exercises because of this.

Ideally working dog breeders should be selecting for animals possessing a *medium* Irritation Level (not lightly upset or hard to impress at all) and a *medium* Temperament, a *high to very high* level of Prey drive, Protection instinct, Courage, Hardness, Fighting Spirit, Self Confidence and UNTERSCHOCKENHEIT (recovery from shock), a *medium to high to very high* Fuehrigkeit (responsiveness) and a *medium to high* sharpness. Noise sensitivity should be indifferent.

What is a Schutzhund Helper?

The Helper is the "bad guy" who acts as the dog’s rival in the protection and guarding phase of the Schutzhund test.

What are “working lines”?

German Shepherd Dog breeders, like those of many working breeds, tend to specialise in either the working aspects of the breed or its conformation aspects. Herman Martin, the former President of the SV once said that German Shepherds are a very large breed and there is enough room in it for accommodating many varying interests. Working lines refers to dogs that come from a background where the ancestors have been principally selected for their successes at Schutzhund trials. Usually all the dogs in a working line pedigree have advanced Schutzhund titles and have individuals recognised for excellent performances in the sport rather than in the showing. Working line dogs invariably out of imported German or other related European bloodlines.

Do I need to spend a lot to get a good dog?

Schutzhund is still a developing sport in Australia and therefore “working line” GSDs, which means those from lines bred for their performance capacity, have a smaller population than the more established “showline” GSDs. As a result, prices for working line puppies, especially those coming from fully imported lines, when they are available, are usually higher. Importing is complicated and expensive. That said, there are many dogs in Schutzhund world wide, that were bred primarily for show purposes or bought originally as pedigreed pets, that have gone on to compete successfully.

How long does it take to get a title?

Because all the foundation work with a green dog is time consuming, the longest waiting period is getting to the first title. By the time you get your first title, most people are, generally speaking at least, three-quarters of the way onto the next title. How well you progress can depend on the quality of the club, the Helper, the dog and naturally the trainer, and the amount of work put in each week will also affect how quickly work progresses. It can take up to a year or more to get your first title, but, if working to a plan, it's possible to complete the next levels within a few months. And as with much in life, the journey itself is a reward.

What are the titles available?

To start with all teams will need to pass a "BH" - which is a preliminary title and involves a basic obedience routine and some temperament testing in both social situations and one on one. After passing a BH it is allowed to move onto Schutzhund 1, 2 and 3, (SchH I, SchH II, SchH III), and also an FH and a FH II (tracking titles) if this proves to be a discipline of special interest.

Do I have to compete? Can I do this to just have fun?

You don't have to compete - you can do the sport as a way to just do something with your dog. In the process both you and your dog will get an education that never goes to waste, but when you, your dog and the club is putting in so much work, you might want to try competing anyway.

Can I do this on my own?

Most home training is on your own, but some aspects, such as the protection work, you will need to work together with the Helper, usually at the club's training grounds. Obedience training benefits from having someone else watch you on a regular basis to point out things you might have missed. Tracking can be a challenge for the novice trainer and it can be very helpful to have some experienced mentoring to start you off.

How far can I go as a competitor?

Schutzhund Australia Inc. has competitions on a state and national level, and its future goals are to send pre-qualified teams to world competitions - so, in theory, you can advance to representing Australia at an international level.

Different people tell me different things about how to train my dog? What is right?

There are just as many theories for training as there are opinions, and in time you will also develop your own. Always bear in mind that the training methods are entirely dependent on the nature and quality of the dog that you are currently working with and what worked fabulously for another dog you had or one someone else has trained, may not work at all with this one. A failure to communicate is not the fault of the dog.

I'm new to the sport. Should I start with a young dog and do all the training myself, or should I buy a dog that is already trained?

There is a great deal of satisfaction to be had from training a dog right from scratch, but it is also a very long road and being doubly difficult to train a green dog and yourself, this can be

discouraging for some people. There are not very many trained dogs available and they tend to be expensive, but if you can find a good one available, it can offer a less challenging start to a lifetime of enjoyment in dogsport.

I have an older dog? Can I use him?

This always depends on the dog's age, health and attitude for the work. There are many dogs that have started training for Schutzhund from an older age.

How do I select a good puppy for the sport?

The best thing is to do a lot of research and connect with some Schutzhund clubs that can give you information on dogs suitable for the sport and breeders who can coach you on selecting a puppy. But in essence, if you want to do Schutzhund you will want a dog that can be specifically good at the sport. You will be looking for an outgoing, confident and pushy puppy – one that is not noise sensitive or shy with new people or in new situations, with a good appetite and lots of play and prey drive that likes to chase, catch and then pull (hit back) and fight strongly for the rag or toy in order to win it. These are only general guidelines. There are no magic formulas for picking a puppy so the advice of the breeder is always important as they see the litter every day and even then it is impossible to be sure which puppy in a litter will turn out the best.

Does anyone use clicker training in Schutzhund?

Some people train exclusively with positive motivational techniques, also with excellent results, although more commonly the most successful trainers blend positive/negative reinforcement techniques to get their desired results. There are many roads to Rome and at the end of the day the success of the technique will depend on the trainer's skill in communicating with it.

How do I pick a club to train with?

You need to do some research to find your local clubs, and then give their contact people a call and go out and visit them. Watch them train, look at the standard of their dogs, talk to the members and pick a group where you are comfortable with the people and with the standard of training you see.

How much does it cost to join a club?

This can vary depending on the facilities offered by the club. In most Schutzhund clubs there is the annual membership and then weekly training fees to pay, plus trial fees and some related equipment costs. Unless you are competing interstate or internationally, it is a relatively inexpensive sport. The average membership fees will be around \$150 plus / minus annually.

What do I need for equipment?

Like anything, you can spend a lot of money on equipment, but usually there are some basic pieces of equipment that you will eventually need to get and these should not be too exorbitant to buy, such as:

- a 10 metre tracking line (official length required for competing)
- a good quality, medium length leather obedience leash

- a stronger, longer, heavy-duty leash for the protection work
- a Fur-saver collar (mandatory for competing)
- a selection of tugs, “*wassels*”, balls or similar toys for training (you may go through a variety while finding the special ones your dog really goes for)
- wooden regulation-size dumbbells (see Trial Rules)
- possibly a pinch collar (especially if you have a high-drive dog)
- a crate to secure your dog when you are not actually working with it
- gumboots, for laying tracks in the early mornings

The club supplies the venue (trial field), the protective gear that the Helper wears, the blinds, jumps and A-frame. Your club can also help you find good places to buy equipment. You can acquire the equipment as you need it without buying it all at once. In addition, you will require a certain amount of wet-weather gear for yourself. Schutzhund is an outdoor sport and training and trialling stops for nothing short of direct lightening strikes or cyclones.

Many people like to use commands for competition that are distinctly different from the commands that they use around the house. This is one way to indicate to the dog that you are "working" and makes it easier for you as a trainer to be consistent with the behaviour that you ask for from the dog. This separation allows you to tell the dog to "down" around the house, and "*platz*" on the field without confusing the dog. The dog understands that "down" around the house means come and lay down but you aren't under an imperative command. The more formal and powerfully commanded "*platz*" means the dog should lie down and continue to lay down and pay attention until the next command.

In addition, the trial rules use German commands to honour the heritage and tradition of the sport of Schutzhund. The German language seems to lend itself to being yelled out on an open field. It is not necessary to learn to speak German, just learn a handful of terms. Alternate English commands are allowed in trials, if used consistently. Even if you don't choose to use the German commands, in this sport you will probably hear them in conversation.

English commands	German commands	Pronunciation
Heel	<i>Fuss</i>	Fooss - long o sound as in moose
Sit	<i>Sitz</i>	Sitz rhymes with "fits"
Down / Drop	<i>Platz</i>	Platz rhymes with "cats", with a "pl" instead of "c" in front
Here / Come	<i>Heir</i>	Hee-ah Hang on the "ah" sound slightly longer.
Fetch / Bring	<i>Bring</i>	Brrring. Roll the "r"
Search / Seek	<i>Such</i>	Tsuuk - rhymes with poo with an "s" in front and the final k sound that is almost sibilant.
Out / Leave	<i>Aus</i>	Owwss - rhymes with "house"
Stay / Stand	<i>Steh</i>	Sh-tey – rhymes with hey. "Sit-stay" and "down-stay" is a double command and are not permitted in a trial
Hop / Up / Over	<i>Hopp</i>	Hop
Go	<i>Voraus</i>	For-owss - rhymes with "for house"

Hunt / Look	<i>Revier</i>	Ree veer – can roll the r's
Go out	<i>Voran</i>	For-un. In German a v sounds like an f. Roll the r if you can. Use "voran" as the command to the dog to run to the blind and search for the helper, also used instead of "revier".

What is Pfui?

Pfui, sounding a bit like poi (as in New Zealand Maori dancing), is a strong sounding command that translates in human terms to mean "shame on you". It is used to tell a dog that his behaviour is not acceptable at the particular time - as opposed to "no", which means the behaviour is never acceptable. For example it could be used if you wanted to tell the dog to stop barking at someone right then without giving it a message it is never to bark at anyone.

For more commands, phrases, and other languages.

<http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/dog/language1.htm> pronunciation sound files

<http://www.eastgermanshepherd.com/german.html> translation of German frequently found on pedigrees.

TRAINING TIPS AND IDEAS

Focus

Having the dog keep its focus and attention on you at all times is critical to presenting a polished competition dog. Start off by teaching the dog to make eye-contact with you. You can do this at home, quite informally, even as a young puppy. Show the dog a treat or a toy, but don't let it get it. Instead wait for the dog to get frustrated and to look to you to give it up. When the dog looks at your eyes, reward it immediately by giving the treat. Build on this, and build up the length of time the dog maintains eye contact. (Don't reward the dog looking half way between the treat and your eyes at the same time.) Eventually, you will have a dog that seeks to maintain eye contact as you work, creating a truly beautiful picture. To turn this into a part of the trial program, start with the dog maintaining eye contact in front of you at first, and then start to position yourself to its side, with the dog in the correct position.

Most dog "language" is "body language."

If your dog is not sitting straight or forging ahead you should check your shoulder position. Dogs learn to orient their own position off your shoulder, and by dropping your shoulder to look at where the dog is causes it's "landmark" to move to a new position and the dog adjusts accordingly. Teach your dog to orient itself with your body in the correct position. Check your body language also if the dog is anticipating the sit in motion. Remember, body cues are considered "handler help" for the dog and you will lose points for it in a trial.

Don't rush for a trial

Don't introduce new techniques or try to fix things a week before a trial. Plan ahead by being proactive and not reactive and if you have 3 weeks to go and you have a lot to fix, then you

aren't ready and won't be in that time. Dogs aren't machines and can only learn so much at a time.

Increasing a dog's speed

An increase in the dog's speed in an exercise can be achieved by creating frustration in getting to its reward. For example; to teach the dog to drive into the front sit, try running backwards and calling while another person holds the dog back. Call the dog's name and your assistant releases the dog to race full tilt towards you.

Show, Practice, Proof

When teaching new exercises it is most effective to teach the behaviour through phases that first show the desired action and reward it with motivational toys or food. To achieve compliance without the imperative of an immediate reward the dog is then compelled to show you the behaviour without the assistance of motivational tools or rewards. Then to renew any loss of drive and motivation caused by the compulsion, when the dog executes the correct behaviour it is again rewarded through the reintroduction of motivational tools and rewards upon compliance.

Three steps in learning are to:

- Learn the basics through showing and rewarding (praise, toy, food etc)
- Practice by repetition
- Proof what has been learnt without rewards and when conditions aren't optimal

For example; when teaching the sit start with your puppy using a piece of food and move it up to the puppy's nose and over his head until he has naturally sat in order to see it better. Associate the command sit with the action and immediately feed and praise the dog. Repeat the experience regularly until the puppy goes automatically into sit position to be rewarded. To check your progress, say the word "sit" and see what it does. With repetitions the reward doesn't always come every time. To proof what he has learnt, tell him to sit, and then gently tug with the leash a little toward you. Most likely the puppy will get up and come to you. But take him back to the original location he was at, put him back into a sit and reinforce it with praise and then back off again to the end of the leash. Again say "sit" and gently pull on the leash. Repeat as often as necessary until you see that the puppy is resisting being pulled out of position when you pull him out of position. If he resists and remains fixed in position, praise lavishly. This teaches the puppy to understand that sit means sit and stay in position until either called or picked up by the handler.

Always end on a high note

Always end with a success exercise that the dog does well as the last experience on the training field is what the dog will take away in its memory as being the strongest. Even if you have to go back to a basic exercise and do something that you are sure the dog knows and can do well.

Never associate negative experiences with a command

A command from you should be a positive thing, your permission to do something. Watch your dog's ears. Are they pinned to his neck or upright and alert? When you say "heel," does your dog spring to your side or slink into position in anticipation of forced marching up and down the field or random leash corrections for something he thought he was doing right? When he does the

command well, praise him verbally for this and repeat the command word when the dog is in the correct position, to reinforce a positive association with the correct behaviour and the command. If he misses a command, immediately mark the mistake verbally (ie: with “pfui”, or, “na,na,na”) – in a firm voice but without being intimidating, and then pick up the dog and start right from the beginning again. If the dog repeats the mistake you can take him through it again, or if it is a disobedience, correct him firmly enough to make him want to find a solution to his discomfort, but without using the command to remind him, so he has no negative association between the command word and the correction occurring. When he complies you immediately mark his success with praise, stopping the stress immediately. You then repeat the command in combination with the correct position. Verbally or physically marking incorrect or correct behaviour must be done within 2 to 3 seconds of the behaviour occurring for the dog to make a connection between what it has done and what you are on about.

Playing with your dog

Playing with your dog will be the best investment you will make in a future Sportdog. Having fun and learning new games together is a great preparation as a dog “learns how to learn”. Whether incorporating different exercises into a game that involves chasing balls, sticks and playing tug of war with you – it’s all time well spent. Pulling is particularly useful for future training as it teaches the dog to maintain a firm grip and keeps the focus on you as the centre point of its interest. Just remember prey drive wears out and not to overdo it and always stop on a high note, always letting the dog win the tugging contest and carrying the tug off feeling proud and confident.

Don’t give a command you can’t back up

When training your dog, don’t give a command that you can’t back up. Don’t yell after you dog as it bounds, collarless, across the paddock after another dog. All you do is reinforce that your commands have no power over him.

Never call a dog to you to punish it

This is so basic it should be engraved in stone. Never call the dog to you to punish it. If you have to correct your dog for disobedience, go to your dog and take control from there. Punishing your dog for coming when it was called is the fastest way to teach your dog not to come.

Training in drive

Get your dog’s mood right before starting training. To do this your dog needs to be “in drive” and you can achieve that by playing, teasing and frustrating it for a reward it values and then when your dog shows maximum interest, give the command. The response will be quicker and smarter and if correct you offer the reward as payment. There are many excellent books and videos on this topic.

For better understanding of the topic search the web for Ivan Balabanov’s two part DVD series Obedience Without Conflict; “Clear Communications” and “The Game”, as well as the Gottfried Dildei series of training tapes; “Tracking” and “Problem Solving Tracking”, “Basic Obedience”, “Advanced Obedience”, “Correction, Agitation, Mood & Bite Problems” (These DVDs also cover Protection). Some recommended dogsport books on the topic are Gottfried Dildei and

Sheila Booth's "Schutzhund Obedience - Training in Drive", and Tom Rose and Gary Patterson's "Training the Competitive Working Dog".

Teach one thing at a time

Don't confuse your dog by teaching too much at once. Break each exercise down into individual components and then rehearse them. Break down the exercise by teaching its portions separately, then put them all together when the dog is clear on each component. For instance, the "retrieve over a 1-metre hurdle" is a very complex exercise. It consists of heeling into position, for which you need focus and a straight position; the retrieve, which consists of going and getting the dumbbell, then bringing it back, and a straight sit in front, followed by holding the dumbbell, without chewing it. Teach all these elements separately before attempting to put them altogether and teach in reverse to its order of execution, starting with the last part of the exercise first.

Be consistent

So basic, but it bears repeating. If you ask for straight position when you ask for a sit, then a sit is always a straight position, not rolled onto a hip. If you don't intend to reinforce incorrectness, like around the house, then use a different command word.

Keep it short

Break the training up into two shorter sessions rather than wear out its ability to concentrate with one long session. A short session is more effective because the dog can maintain focus and energy for the task better, especially when in drive, which wears out if overused. Always end on a high note with something the dog does successfully.

Practice with distractions

Once your dog understands the exercise, you can start to introduce external distractions to proof what it has learnt.

Problem solving

When something has gone wrong and your dog isn't performing the way you want or expect it to then take your training back a step and look at what it is that might have gone wrong. Don't try every single suggestion or training tip you have heard, but if there isn't any signs of improving the behaviour after a number of repeated attempts, then it's time to try something else. Be sure, by proofing the exercise without "helping" or manipulation, that the dog understands the exercise and what you want. Consider there may be other factors involved, for example, if the dog isn't biting firmly, make sure that it doesn't have a cracked tooth or some problem with its mouth.

Educate yourself

Trainers are often only as good as their mentors. Seek out mentors whose training results you like and who have proven they can not only "talk the talk", but also "walk the walk." Take advantage of technical advances by watching educational videos and using the internet to look for contacts and information. Most importantly, go to various Schutzhund clubs, speak to the people training and titling dogs and attend their seminars. Attend trials with competitors above

your own competitive level. A dog is only as good as the person handling it and to make educated decisions we first need to educate ourselves so we can make informed decisions of value.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Newcomers to Schutzhund can find themselves confused when it comes to the abbreviations and acronyms they encounter within the breed and the sport that are based on the original German language and especially found on pedigrees and documents with German origins.

It is difficult to cover every conceivable acronym that you are going to encounter, however, the below are the most common used in the breed and the sport of Schutzhund. These are presented below with related abbreviations in alphabetical order for ease of reference. Some explanations are provided where the meanings are not self-evident. This should help you make sense of the terms used in conversation, and appearing on pedigrees and in ads for dogs and litters.

A stamp	'a-stamp' (indicates a passing hip score with regards to testing for hip dysplasia/joint laxity). The SV certification ratings are: a-normal = certified normal hips a-fast normal = certified near normal hips a-noch zugelassen = certified hips, still permissible for breeding
“a”	ausgeprägt - Pronounced. Used by the judge in describing a dog’s fighting spirit. See TSB in trial rulebook.
AD	<i>Ausdauerprüfung</i> - endurance trial 20 kilometres in 2 hours.
ANKC	Australian National Kennel Club
AZG	<i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Zuchtvereine und Gebrauchshundverbände</i> — German VDH association of breed registries and working-dog sport clubs. The AZG has the purpose of administrating uniform national Schutzhund rules.
BS	Australian Breed Survey
BH	<i>Begleithund</i> – Companion Dog test. The preliminary and prerequisite test for a dog before it can commence its Schutzhund titles. A combination temperament and obedience test.
B	<i>Besitzer</i> - Owner
BSP	<i>Bundessiegerprüfung</i> – German National trial for GSDs
BSZS	<i>Bundessiegerzuchtschau</i> – German National show for GSD conformation
CD, CDX	Companion Dog, Companion Dog Excellent. Obedience titles granted by the ANKC State Affiliates
CHD	Canine Hip Dysplasia
DHV	The German Dogsport Club (Deutscher Hundesport Verein), which is the National

	parent club, or the Union of the Dog Sport Clubs of Germany.
DVG	<i>Deutscher Verband der Gebrauchshundsportvereine e.V.</i> (member of DHV) An all breed working dog sport club and one of the larger members of the DHV. An alternate organization for Schutzhund competitors.
EZ	<i>Einfache zucht</i> (Simple Breeding) Only one parent has a working degree.
FCI	<i>Fédération Cynologique Internationale</i> - the World Canine Organization of Kennel Clubs. Membership is currently at 79 countries.
FH (FH 1, FH 2) IPO-FH	<i>Fährtenhund</i> – Master level tracking dog titles
G	<i>Gut</i> – Good. A show or performance grading.
GSD	A common abbreviation for German Shepherd Dog.
GSDCA	German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia - a member of the ANKC & WUSV.
GSSCC	German Shepherd Schutzhund Club of Canada - a WUSV member
GZ	<i>Gebrauchshundezucht</i> - Working Dog Breeding. Where both parents have working titles.
H	Hündin – Female (bitch)
HD	Hip Dysplasia
HOT	A Handler-Owner-Trained dog is called a HOT dog.
IPO	<i>International Prüfungsordnung</i> (International Schutzhund trial rules) Class levels are 1, II, III, almost identical test to Schutzhund.
KKL1 KKL2	<i>Körklasse 1</i> (graded as recommended for breeding by the SV) <i>Körklasse 2</i> (graded suitable for breeding by the SV)
KLZ	<i>Kör-und-Leistungszucht</i> – Breed surveyed and Performance-based Breeding. Both parents have passed Breed Survey and all four grandparents have Schutzhund titles.
KZ	<i>Körzucht</i> – Papers from Breed-Surveyed parents.
LBST	Lifetime Breed Suitability Test
Lbz	<i>Auf Lebenszeit</i> - Breed surveyed for life
LZ	<i>Leistungszucht</i> – Performance-based breeding, where both parents and all four grandparents have Schutzhund titles
M	<i>Mangelhaft</i> – Faulty. A show or performance grading.
ng	<i>Nicht genügend</i> - Insufficient. A grading used by judges when scoring a dog's fighting spirit. See the trials rules under TSB.
OFA	Orthopedic Foundation for Animals – an American non-profit registry which issues certification on various health concerns not limited to Orthopaedics. Reference is usually relates to hip certification. Also see "a stamp" OFA Excellent - no dysplasia, superior hip socket conformation OFA Good - no dysplasia, a well formed, congruent hip joint OFA Fair - no dysplasia, minor irregularities in the hip joint present OFA Borderline - no consensus between radiologists to place hip into either a normal or dysplastic

	category OFA Mild (Grade I) - mild hip dysplasia present OFA Moderate (Grade II) - moderate hip dysplasia present OFA Severe (Grade III) - severe hip dysplasia present
R	<i>Rüde</i> – Male dog
ROM	ROM - Register of Merit: A title given by the German Shepherd Dog Club of America to animals which have produced a minimum number of conformation Champions and other winning offspring.
SchH: SchH 1, SchH 2, SchH 3	Schutzhund trials have 3 levels of titles awarded. Each level is a progression and built on the skills learned in the previous level. Used as an abbreviation, "SchH" can refer to either the dog or the sport.
SchHA	A limited SchH title, without the tracking portion.
SG	<i>Sehr Gut</i> - Very Good. A show or performance rating.
SG1, SG2, etc.	See V1 (Conformation gradings and related placings at a show.)
SGR	Sieger (male winner) or Siegerin (female winner) -the best male or female at the German National Breed Show (conformation.)
SV	<i>Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde</i> (German Shepherd Dog Club of Germany). The original GSD breed club and breed registry that is based in Germany. The SV is not only the largest breed-specific registry in the world, it's also extremely active. In addition to being a breed registry, the SV also promotes working-dog activities, i.e. by awarding working titles (SchH). They also sanction conformation shows and Koerung (Breed Surveys). The SV is a member of the German Kennel Club (VDH) and FCI.
SZ	Precedes the dog's SV registration number. I.e.: SZ 1234567
TD, TDX	Tracking dog titles granted by ANKC State Affiliates
TSB	<i>Triebveranlagung</i> – The dog's drives, self-confidence, and robustness grading at a trial.
U	<i>Ungenügend</i> – Insufficient. A show or performance grading.
UD UDX	Utility Dog, Utility Dog Excellent. Advanced obedience titles granted by the ANKC State Affiliates.
USA	United Schutzhund Clubs of America
SchH USA	United Schutzhund Clubs of America. An American GSD breed and Schutzhund organisation.
V	<i>Vorzüglich</i> - Excellent. A show or trial performance grading. Only awarded to show dogs with working titles.
NZB	<i>Nachzucht Bewertung</i> - A progeny evaluation.
v.	<i>von or vom</i> . Found between a dog's call name and its kennel name which directly translated means "of" or "from." (Whether "von" or "vom" is gender specific to the gender of the kennel name - not the dog.)
V1 V2, V3, etc.	Conformation grading and ranking at the BSP. V being excellent and the top rating. The first top placed dog is V1, the second top graded dog is V2, etc. until reaching the dogs with conformation graded as SG standard, which from there they are ranked

	SG1, SG2 etc until the next lower graded dogs are reached.
VA	<i>Vorzüglich-Auslese</i> - Excellent Select. The top conformation rating given out only at the main Sieger Show for the crème-la-crème of the dogs. (i.e.: VA-1, VA-2 etc. Also see V1.)
VDH	<i>Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen e.V.</i> - German Kennel Club. Is Germany's all-breed national kennel club.
“vh”	<i>vorhanden</i> - Present or Sufficient. Used by the judge to describe a dog's fighting spirit in a trial or protection test. See trial rules for TSB.
WDA	Working Dog Association – an all breed USA-based Schutzhund club associated with the GSDCA/AKC.
WUSV	<i>Welt Union der Schäferhundvereine</i> - World Union of GSD clubs. International breed umbrella for GSD breed clubs worldwide. The author and owner of the GSD international breed standard for the FCI (see FCI) Currently represents more than 60 countries, established to bring all GSD clubs worldwide closer together in sync with the SV rules and standard used in Germany. (See SV) The WUSV is allied to the FCI through a direct membership as well as through its membership in VDH. (See VDH).
Z	<i>Züchter</i> - Breeder
Ztgl	<i>Zuchtauglich</i> - Suitable for breeding. Subject to the dog passing their ZTP.
ZTP / ZTPr	<i>Zuchtauglichkeitsprüfung</i> - Breed-Suitability-Test. Incorporating the dog's hip rating, conformation grading, and passing a test for its basic working ability.
ZW	<i>Zuchtwert</i> - ZW-value. The <i>Zuchtwert</i> evaluation is SV's Breed Value Assessment in relation to hip dysplasia.

Other sources

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Park/5378/glossary.html>

<http://realgsd.ca/GSDinfo/Papers/intdogorgs.htm>

