

January is National Train Your Dog Month and there's no better way to celebrate the bond between you and your canine companion than by introducing some fun into your daily routine.

Tricks training is a great way to do that.

National Train Your Dog Month was established six years ago by the Association of Professional Dog Trainers, to remind new owners that, like children, dogs need socialization and schooling to become well-behaved companions.

Tricks are easy to teach and they both build upon and reinforce skills you and your dog have mastered—or are still working on—in basic obedience work.

They are also good exercises, stretching and working muscles that are not used in day-to-day activities like walking and running.

Another benefit is that a dog performing a trick is a surefire crowd pleaser, and dogs, like the rest of us, thrive on applause. Set yourself a challenge of teaching your dog two tricks a week for the next four weeks.

By February, your four-legged pal could be the star of your own little circus.

Start with two easy tricks this week and make sure to check back at the beginning of every week for two more tricks.

Follow along with the AKC Good Dog! Helpline trainers as they demonstrate tricks that are fun, easy to master, and guaranteed to spark a smile.

Every dog—giant breeds and toys, from puppy to senior citizens, Bulldogs to Mastiffs—has what it takes to learn a trick or two. Some may not have the physique for all all the moves, but they every dog can learn and enjoy some of them.

Let's Shake on It!