

GROUP CLASS SAFETY

The Holistic Hound Dog Training



Updated December 2024

What are group classes?

Group classes are a necessary next step after your first few sessions to proof your dogs training in distracting environments. The only reason we wouldn't use group classes is if a) your dog has aced all exercises within the class and no longer needs proofing here or b) if your dogs particular issues don't include working around other dogs and humans.

On weekdays, classes tend to be smaller so we tend to spend the first chunk of time on basic leash work, then moving on to a mixture of fence work and exercises specific to each dog attending. We may finish up with some socialisation at the end of the class if needed.

If you are attending a class on a weekday, arrive for the start time mentioned on the event page & calendar. They tend only to run for 1.5-2 hours max.

On Saturdays, I generally run classes in the mornings for about 3 hours (times can differ slightly through the year so check the Fb events or Calendar via the website to see what times we aim to start and finish).

Due to higher numbers on Saturdays I split the class into 3 parts, 1 hour each in this order:

- 1. Socialisation** – dogs who are more advanced practice their leash work, recall, impulse control and socialising with other dogs in a controlled environment. Some will be off leash (if appropriate), others not.
- 2. Fence Work** – dogs who are unpredictable/unknown with their socialisation are worked on the fence with othe dogs until we know the dog well enough to have them socialise without it).
- 3. Basic Leash Work and Counter Conditioning** – this part of the class is for beginners and dogs who need counter conditioning with other dogs and humans (if your dog is fearful of dogs or humans this is likely you).



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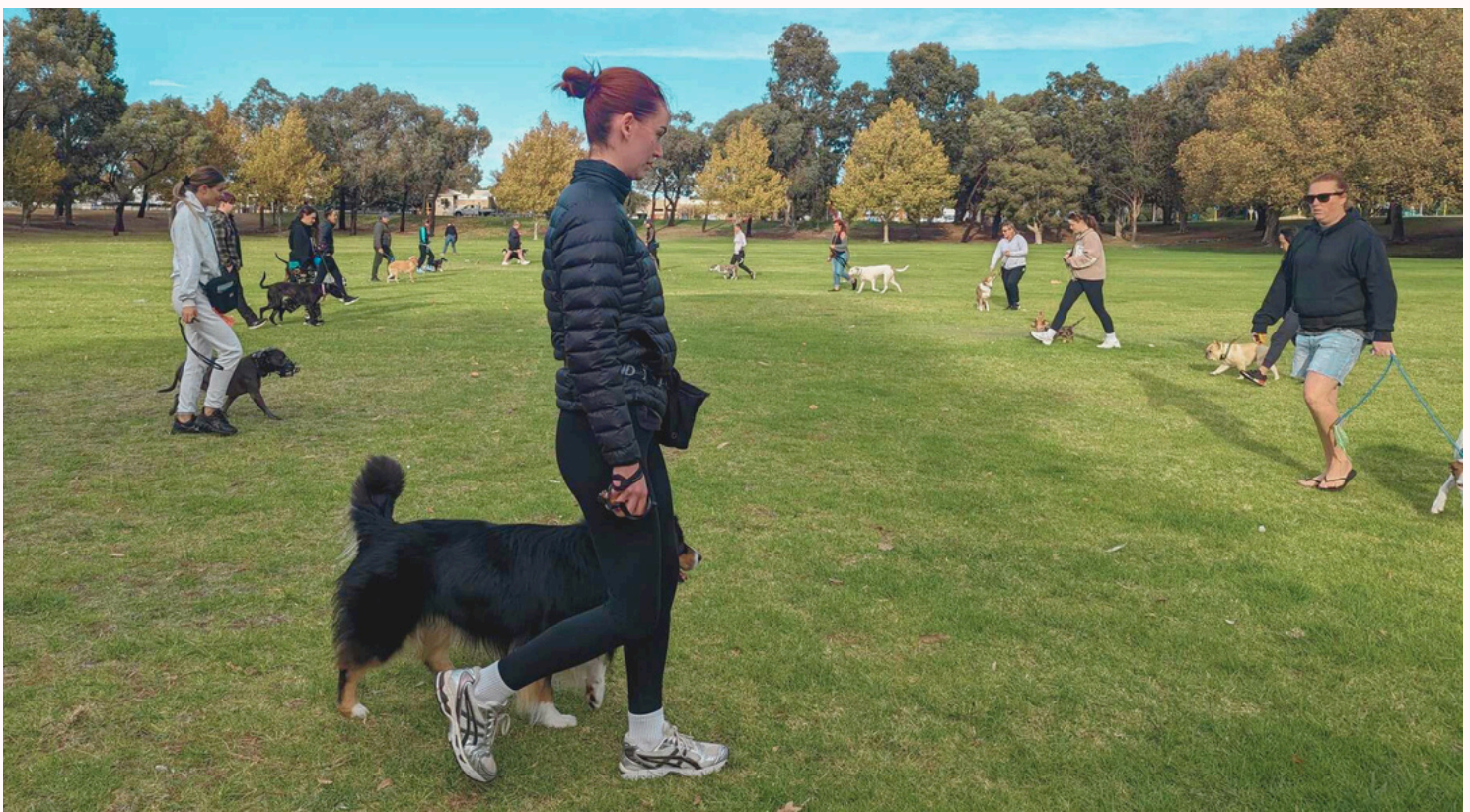
If you are BRAND NEW to a group class and you haven't attended one before, my advice is to read the below information, ensure you are ready and confident enough to give it a go and then work at a distance that is safe and comfortable for you and your dog. Your aim is to use us as a distraction and to teach your dog to ignore us and look at you instead. You can stay for as long or as short as you like, leaving when you feel the session is over or you are out of food.

I would recommend this is done anytime during weekday classes or during the Fence Work & Leash Work/Counter Conditioning portion of a Saturday class – ie. Last 2 hours (though, if you can ONLY attend group class during the socialisation hour, please contact me to see if this may be appropriate).

You will then attend Basic Leash Work (1), then Fence Work (2), and then Socialisation (3), generally in that order. Lately though, I've been doing less Basic Leash Work (unless the clients present need it) and the last 2 hours of the class are a bit more meshed together. If you're unsure what time to arrive, just ask.

When you first arrive at a class, have a walk around and let your dog become familiar with the area, have a sniff and go to the toilet. Ensure you bring poo bags to clean up after your dog. I always have water on me, but you could bring that also. Bring ALL your tools, ensure e-collars are charged, put on correctly and switched on, ensure slip leashes/prong collars are on correctly/safe and bring food.

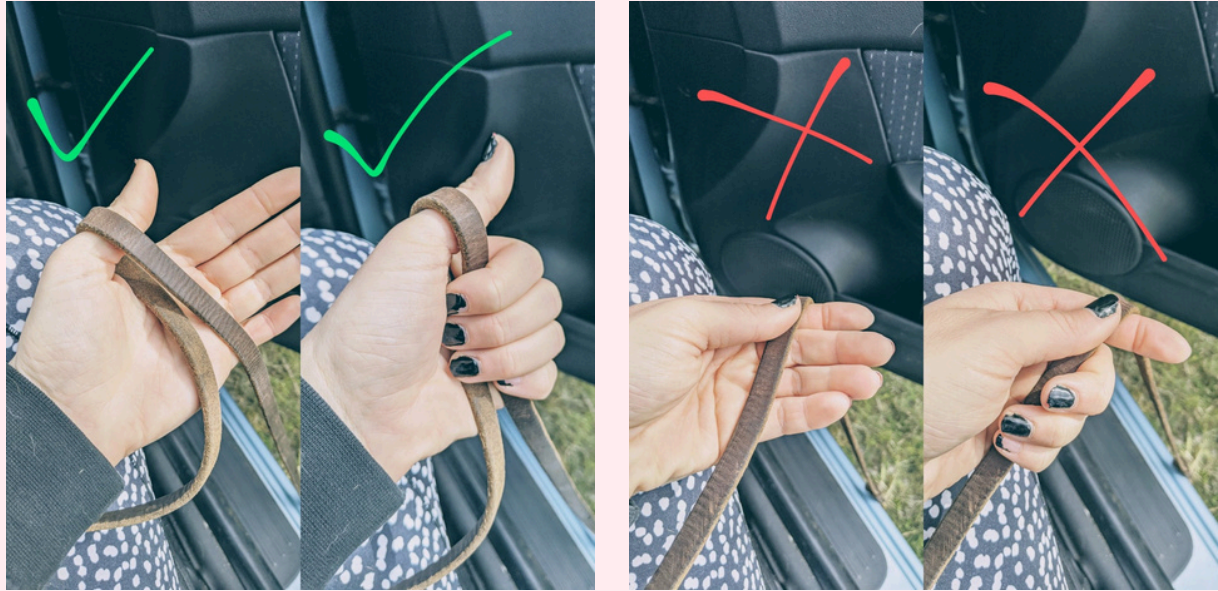
If you don't think you can physically hold onto your dog, even at a distance, you are not ready for group classes yet – please contact me prior to arriving at one.



THUMB LOCKS ONLY

I won't tolerate poor leash handling at my group classes. Getting a bunch of reactive/aggro/rude dogs together is already something that requires a high level of safety to begin with, let alone if people are being blasé about holding onto their dog.

Please ensure you practice and implement the thumb lock at class.



Also, placing the loop of the leash around your wrist and holding it that way is not ideal. I don't mind if you wrap the leash around your hand a second time after setting the thumb lock - but the thumb lock must be the foundation of your leash handling.



While my business insurance covers us for any mistakes I make, and anything that happens during an exercise that I suggest as the trainer, it will not cover you if you are shown to be handling your dog poorly and the dog gets away from you/reaches another dog and causes incident.

I will always correct your handling/technique if I see that it is unsafe - for your sake and everyone else's, but you must also follow my advice & be present and conscious of your actions with your dog.

Unfortunately, this is no different from you handling the dog poorly out on the street/in public and the dog causing incident there - you would be liable for vet costs if applicable.

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My Group Classes are designed to be workable for a range of dogs at different stages, I WILL NOT force you to be closer than is manageable for you or your dog. If working on the outside works for you, that's fine, however, if I think you and your dog could move closer or even join the class, I'll let you know. All dogs are leashed and clients understand not to allow their dogs to approach other dogs they don't know.

Group Class Rules

- **Never ever let your dog off-leash** unless I have specifically asked you to.
- **Do not let go of your leash period.** Do not let go of your leash especially if your dog is reacting; I would prefer you fall over in an attempt to hold onto that leash. I do understand accidents happen though, which is understandable. If you feel your dog may be too strong for you on the tools we have them on, please let me know and we can remedy this. If you feel like the dog will be unmanageable at close proximity to other dogs and there's a chance you may lose them, also let me know and ensure not to push yourself past what is comfortable for you.
- If somehow your dog gets away from you **you must try to grab it immediately.** If your dog is dodging away from you, get down lower on the floor and baby talk the dog until they are keen to come back to you. This will ALWAYS work better in this situation than yelling and walking angrily at the dog which will more than likely set off more chaos.
- **If you see someone trying to move away from you, allow them to,** they're probably working their dog through some issues. Be aware of how close you are to others at all times.
- If your dog is on a long line **ALWAYS BE AWARE OF HOW MUCH LEASH YOU ARE GIVING YOUR DOG** and never ever allow it to become long enough for your dog to reach another clients dog at group class.
- Your leash should ALWAYS be held in a **THUMB LOCK.** Do not hold leashes loosely, do not have them dangling off your arm. Long lines particularly should be held in a tight thumb lock.

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Group Class Rules

- **Your e-collar remote should be in your HAND, not around your neck**, and you must either have a high level ready to stop any explosions should they happen, or know which way to turn the dial quickly if you need it.
- **Ensure your prong collar is done up CORRECTLY.** Not fastening the links securely could result in the prong coming loose and your dog getting away from you and becoming a risk. Similarly, if using a flat collar or Halti, ensure it is fastened securely and the tool itself is safe and secure.
- **If your dog has EVER displayed redirection towards a human (turning around and snapping at/biting you when frustrated)** – even if it's only minor, **you MUST let me know** prior to coming to a group class.
- **Do NOT approach a dog you don't know, and do NOT allow your dog to meet other dogs at group class without my guidance.** Many dogs here have issues like reactivity, aggression, over-arousal, fear... etc. and allowing them to meet could cause an incident.
- If a dog breaks out in an episode of reactivity during group class, **immediately remove yourself from the class and walk away from the reacting dog.** Similarly, if your dog starts to react, create distance and move away immediately.
- **Please don't try to jump into any incidents to offer extra help** - I don't want anyone else getting hurt - I will always be the first one to jump in and I have the safety equipment to break things up as quickly as I possibly can. If your dog is involved, all I need you to do is help restrain your dog, that's it.
- **If your dog is a bite risk to humans or dogs they should be muzzled** for an extra layer of safety. If you are unsure, ask me.
- **If you are uncomfortable with any of the exercises in a group class, you have the right to say no!** Please keep me posted with how you're feeling and don't do anything you aren't comfortable with or that you think your dog may not be able to handle - I know all my clients well and I try to keep up to date with exactly where everyone is at, but no one knows your dog better than you - if you think what I am asking is a risk, TELL ME and I will implement extra safety or skip the exercise altogether. If you're unsure about realistic expectations here, just ask.

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SOCIALISATION/REAL WORLD SESSIONS

(Dog Park, Dog Beach)

Socialisation sessions/real world sessions refer to sessions where we are particularly work through social interactions with other dogs or work at dog beaches/dog parks. Socialisation Sessions are set up as safely as humanly and dogly possible with many precautions taken, and I know the dogs we are working with well, I know who will work well with others, and who won't. Often I will start with fence work to suss dogs out before even moving to socialisation. Muzzles will often be used here too.

Real World Sessions are a bit different, we cannot control other people's dogs, so there is more risk here (no more than when you yourself take your dog to these places, though), but I am there to intercept anything if need be. Please ensure you have read and signed the disclaimer you received with your quote and understand that this risk is present in these locations and when socialising dogs. The most important thing to me is the safety of every dog in my care at all times & I am insured..

When you first arrive, have a walk around and let your dog become familiar with the area, have a sniff and go to the toilet. Ensure you bring poo bags to clean up after your dog. I always have water on me, and many locations do too, but you could bring that also.

Bring ALL your tools, ensure e-collars are charged, put on correctly and switched on, ensure slip leashes/prong collars are on correctly/safe and bring food.



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All of the group class rules apply here too so please refer to the above and read every point.

- If we are unsure of your dog's behaviour around other dogs and/or are unsure whether the e-collar will stop them in a high-drive situation, **they must be muzzled** prior to interacting with other dogs. They will not be let off-leash until they have progressed as necessary. As above, any dog who is a bite risk must be muzzled. These dogs should also be on a leash (slip leash or regular leash connected to a flat collar at the top of the neck) for back up, even if it is dragging on the ground or tucked under a collar.
- **Prong Collars should NOT be used or on a dog during a group social.** Leaving this tool on could result in bad tangles - this could either make an incident much worse, or cause an incident where it wouldn't have happened otherwise. Slip leashes, Halti's or regular leash connected to a flat collar at the top of the neck should be used here.
- **If your dog isn't proofed on recall, they must be on a long line.** Long lines must be used correctly and ensure you as a handler are paying full attention. Failure to do so may result in your dog reaching a dog they shouldn't, getting tangled with a person or dog, giving you rope burn and ultimately causing an incident.



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- **You must watch the distance you give your dog on a long line** and not allow your dog to get too close to other dogs unless I have given you guidance to do so.
- **If a scuffle breaks out, recall your own dog immediately and remove them** from the group as far as is needed for everyone to be safe.
- **You must have a clear plan in your mind of what you will do if things don't go to plan**, if you don't know what that is, or you need clarification, ensure you ask me.
- **If a fight/scuffle breaks out, your first go-to is your e-collar. USE THIS FIRST, and USE IT AT 100** - do not mess around with lower levels in an emergency - not only could this not work, it could make the situation much worse. ONLY step in to help stop the fight/grab a leash if the e-collar has not worked at all. The e-collar is the safest option we have for stopping a fight. I will always be there and the first one to help/jump in.
- Have a read of and understand the information given in "Socialisation Tips" via the online client portal. Go to my website, hover over Services, click HH Client Portal (you must have an account), scroll down and click on Facebook Group Content, then click on Socialisation with e-collars.

