

hidden fences

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certain parts of a yard, create zones and can even be used indoors to keep dogs out of certain rooms.

In addition to the cost and flexibility of designing the system, Johnson was particularly impressed with the training provided by Gerlicher. Every DogWatch installation comes with training to help the dog learn the new boundaries and appropriate behaviors.

"Most owners have a lot of anxiety about how the system will work and their role in training," says Gerlicher. "My goal is to get owners to the point that they don't have any anxiety at all because they and their dogs have adapted so easily to the system."

According to Gerlicher, training most dogs takes just five 20-minute lessons, even with puppies (at least six months old) or chronically

uncontrollable dogs.

"First I figure out the personality of the animal I'm working with," says Gerlicher. "The goal is to fine tune the training to the unique temperament of each dog."

Once the wire loop and boundary flags are installed, she spends about 20 minutes a day with the dog, going through a repetitive process of walking the dog up to the boundary line, shaking the flags, saying "danger" and turning away. At the same time, the receiver on the dog's collar is giving a series of beeps that the dog begins to associate as a warning that it's getting too close to the flags.

The first lesson focuses on reinforcing the behavior with no correction, and evaluating if the dog is paying attention and understands that the flags are a boundary. Usually by the second lesson, Gerlicher does

let the dog feel a slight correction (which she likens to an intense vibration or a static shock). She watches the dog's body language to see if it understands the cause and effect of getting too close to the boundary line. She sets the correction at the lowest level the dog will recognize and continues to reinforce the boundary behavior.

The final test often becomes a family affair, when Gerlicher uses her standard poodle Madeline or her children on bikes as the trigger to see if the client's dog can be tempted to break the barrier. They rarely do.

"Basically, a hidden fence system protects your pet against getting loose. And one that works well protects you from worrying about your pet," she concludes.



If family harmony is your goal, go Nuts in the living room and Crunch the kitchen.



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