

## Becoming Your Dog's Pack Leader

**Teaching her to mind her manners is key.**

*By September B. Morn*

Q: How do I teach a dog I am the pack leader?

A: Grow fur and a tail and learn to be an excellent hunter.

Kidding aside, the pack leader theory has been around for about the past thirty years or so, and has included such ill-advised and dangerous tactics as forcing dogs over onto their backs or even biting them. But dogs really don't think we're dogs, even if we try to act like them. We are not pack leaders in the same sense that dogs would understand that role in another dog. What we are, though, is far more impressive -- we're in charge of all important resources and every other aspect of our dogs' lives. We decide where our dogs sleep, and when and what they eat. We have the power to open and close doors, including the one on the refrigerator, and we can operate vehicles that take good dogs to fun places.

Don't bother trying to act like a bigger, tougher, smarter dog; simply teach your dog that when he wants something -- anything -- he needs to ask you for it politely. That will earn his respect and put you in a true leadership role, without trying to pretend you're some kind of two-legged uber-dog.