

## How to train a Labradoodle

By Delta Riese Camden (AKA CH Stateman's Triple Crown)

On the occasion of his 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday

First, let me say to all of you Welsh owners out there, do not under any circumstances get your Welsh a Labradoodle. You are not doing your Welsh or yourselves a favor. Here is my story.

In May, 2009, my Brittany/Springer companion Holly crossed the rainbow bridge at the age of 17. She was a great girl, a lot of fun, and my best friend. My Mom and Dad, Tom and Mer, were very sad; and I was extremely depressed. I didn't want to eat or run around or even play with my extensive stuffed animal collection. My family tried in vain for several months to get another Welsh girl to live with us and be my best friend. It was finally decided that since my parent's daughter had allergies they would look into getting a Labradoodle. I can't even imagine what went through my parent's heads when they chose Barkley for me. Please, whatever you do, do not get your Welsh a Labradoodle. If allergies are a consideration, choose a nice Bichon Frise or what's wrong with a regular Poodle? Labradoodles were invented because someone had too much free dog training time on their hands.

The day they brought Barkley home she ran over me several times before soaking me with her tongue. I found out later that she had spent her two years of life in a Kennel making puppies, and she was not accustomed to living in a house. Apparently, in her kennel, it was OK to eat whatever you could find to eat. The first week, she ate an entire leather sofa. Mom and Dad weren't pleased, but they kept telling each other that she was still a puppy, and hadn't lived in a house before. To date, she has eaten two more chairs and an ottoman. She really likes leather. These two geniuses who buy my dog food and take me for runs finally realized that she needed to chew and bought her cow legs and pig's ears, so the furniture is no longer in danger. The garbage is quite another thing. My toys, which are beyond question my toys, are now her toys too. She spends most of every day carrying my squirrel, chicken, frog, loon, gorilla, mallard, and Koala outside. I spend most of every day hunting them down in the yard and bringing them back in the house. One day she decided that carrying them out one at a time was too slow, so she tried to get the toy basket through the dog door. Mom and Dad were out, and the dog door was blocked until they returned and unjammed the basket from the dog door. I couldn't go out for hours. She has her own Waldo. I don't even try to keep up with him. She takes him out and plays fetch with herself and Waldo. She throws him in the air, runs all around the yard and catches him before he hits the ground. Waldo spends most nights outside under the stars.

Now, I am a Welsh, and therefore a bit standoffish by nature. I am cautious about making new friends. The perfect playmate for me is not going to be a galloping galoot with a "what day is it" look on her face. I am intelligent and kind, but being stepped on in the car, and rolled on when I am napping on the sofa are situations I find intolerable. I have tried to explain to Barkley that we don't need to sleep in a pile, we are no longer puppies. I have my bed, and she has hers.

I have my duties in the household. They are my duties. For example, when someone comes to the door and knocks, or rings the doorbell, or walks too close to the front door, or if a doorbell goes off on TV, or if someone on TV knocks on something, it is my job to run to the front door and bark ferociously. The first two months Barkley lived with us, she didn't bark. She would run to the front door, but if there were really anyone there, she would run through the house, through the bedroom, into the bathroom, and into the shower and pee. Nowhere in any dog training manual does it say, "When someone comes to the door, run into the shower and pee." I have worked diligently on this giant fault. I now have her to the place that she barks when I bark, and sometimes she even lets the people at the front door pat her. That happens if she has met them at least 20 times, and remembers that they gave her a treat the last time they were there.

The first visit to the Vet was fun for all. She had to be fixed so that we wouldn't have any Labradoodle Welsh puppies. No one could even think of a name for a puppy like that. Dad finally carried her in because she kept escaping and running all over the parking lot. The first visit to the groomer was even weirder. Mom finally wised up, and the next time she had to take the Doodle head to the groomer, she took me along. I got a nice bath and a trim. Mom led me in, and just left the car door open with Barkley in the car. After the appropriate amount of whining and twirling around, she leaped out of the car and into the front door of the groomer. She will follow me anywhere. I get to go to the Vet even when there is nothing wrong. I just go for a ride in the car and the doctor gives me a treat. Now that I have her trained to answer the door, go to the Vet and groomer, and bark at random noises, I decided it was time to teach her to hunt.

SQUIRREL! But I digress. Anyway, we go to Riverplace and walk every morning. Mom and Dad walk, and we run for 20 minutes. There is a huge field, and on a good day, one can find rabbits, Killdeer, Doves, Armadillos, and my personal favorite, the gopher tortoise. A giant gopher tortoise is a lot of laughs. You can stand and bark at it for hours, and it will just stand there and look at you like you are nuts. When it tires of your barking, it will just wander off. Armadillos roll up in a ball sort of like the tortoise; you can roll it around with your paw and bark at it. So I take my Labradoodle to the field for the first time, and try to show her a proper hunting pattern. I am working my pattern like a professional hunting dog, and every now and then this brown blur flies by on her way to who know where. There is no rhyme or reason to the way she hunts a field. It is sort of like: oh look over there, no over there, no over there, mud puddle, crash into Delta. IT is very much like watching a ride at the Fair. It is like a rat in a maze. I can't teach her to hunt. She is so disorganized, and she is afraid of everything. I must admit that I give the Sand hill Cranes a wide birth. They are big, and you can't be too careful. The Killdeer have her completely buffaloed. They stop in front of her and run around to lure her away from their nests, and she falls for it every time. Mom and Dad and I get quite a laugh out of watching her gallop through the field after a bird that is flying. They lead her all over the place, and she runs until she is worn out. She hasn't caught on yet that she will never catch one, and I'm not going to try to explain it to her because it does seem to wear her out so that she doesn't spend the rest of the day carrying my toys outside.

Training your Labradoodle to sleep at night: You probably think that it goes without saying that your dog will sleep at night. We are, after all, not considered nocturnal animals. We are not cats who prowl at night and expect to have their ears scratched at 2AM. We are dogs. We can sleep all day and still put in a good eight hours of snoozing at night. Not true of a Labradoodle. She can run until her tongue is hanging out, and by that night, she is ready to take off again. It has taken me almost a year to teach her that our parents don't want to see her at night. She will not be popular if she yanks the blanket off of the bed and tries to pull it out the dog door. Night time is not the time to see how far you can pull the toilet paper off of the roll and down the hall. Parents don't like to get up in the morning to find the family room papered with garbage. No one will laugh. They will get that mean look they save just for shredded paper and half eaten sofas. They will say the dreaded, "bad dog". I never get the "bad dog" because I am never bad. I am, after all, a Welsh Springer. Barkley gets the "bad dog" at least five times a day. A day without "bad dog" is like a day without sunshine. I really like it when she gets a "bad dog". I wag my tail and smile. I have tried to explain to her why she gets the "bad dog" so often, but she just gives me her "what day is it" look, twirls around a couple of times, and goes in search of some unprotected garbage. My parents close the office door when they go out, but I can open doors, so I open the door and then she can get into the garbage and get another "bad dog".

Training your Labradoodle to share: When my Mom and Dad cook a steak, hamburger, or chicken, they cook one for us, and we are supposed to share it. Holly and I had an unwritten rule. One for me, one for you, one for me, one for you. That is how it always went. We would stand back and wait for the other one to take a turn. Barkley does not get "one for me, one for you". It is One for me, one more for me, and on and on. The first time we had to share a hamburger, she tried to eat the whole thing. My Mom explained to her that she only got one bite, and then I got one bite. She tried to force her big brown wooly head between my Mom and me and eat my bite of hamburger. So, ha ha. She didn't get any. I got it all. She has actually caught on to the fact that if she acts like Miss Piggy, she doesn't get any. She stands beside me and dances until it is her turn again, and then she grabs her bite and starts dancing again. I am so laid back, that I usually don't even get up. I just lie there and wait for my bite because I know Mom will make her share.

I hope I have made my point with you Welsh owners. Please, please don't get your Welsh Springer a Labradoodle, but if you do accidently find one in your doorstep, or your daughter comes home from school and says, "Please may I keep it." Take my advice, and let your Welsh Springer train the thing, and you might just end up with a dog you can stand. We are getting kind of attached to ours.

Happy Birthday to all of my litter mates this July 6<sup>th</sup>. We are pretty awesome for 13.

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