

Chapter 9 – *Virtual Home Manners*

Training classes are wonderful, but there are times when you just can't get to a class. When you want to train your dog at home, AKC's Virtual Home Manners (VHM) program is for you! Virtual Home Manners can get you started on teaching your dog practical skills before you go to a training class and VHM is the perfect lead-in for AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy and Canine Good Citizen (CGC) in-person training.



*The two **Virtual Home Manners** tests each assess ten skills that well-mannered pet dogs need in the home setting. The skills relate to the dog owner having control over the dog, being able to walk the dog (which is one of the most frequently cited activities that owners want to do with their dogs) and developing a bond with the dog during playtime.*

Virtual Home Manners has two levels that include Puppy and Adult. By training your dog at home and submitting a video to an approved evaluator, you can earn the official VHM titles at home. 4-H leaders who are CGC Evaluators may evaluate VHM videos. Evaluators will provide you with the forms to apply for the AKC titles for Virtual Home Manners Puppy (VHMP) and Virtual Home Manners Adult (VHMA).

4-H Dog Project Manual

How Virtual Home Manners Works

To earn the Virtual Home Manners titles, all you have to do is follow these five easy steps:

1. Train your dog on the VHM skills. Your 4-H Dog Project Leader can guide you through the training process. There are also instructional videos online that provide instruction on how to train basic skills.

2. When your dog can perform the 10 skills on the test, video your dog performing the required skills on the VHM checklist. A family member can help you by taking your video with a smart phone.

3. Send the link to your video to an Approved AKC CGC Evaluator. This can be your 4-H Dog Project Leader. Zoom and other live formats may also be used for evaluating Virtual Home Manners. Another option is to have your video viewed by AKC. To do this, email cgc@akc.org. AKC can also provide you with a list of CGC Evaluators who do virtual evaluations.

4. After watching the video, if your dog passes, the Evaluator will send the forms to you that are needed for the title. The Evaluator will also send a copy of the form to AKC.

5. As a final step, you should send to AKC:

- 1) the Checklist/Video Verification, and
- 2) the Virtual Home Manners Title Application form.



One of the most frequently cited activities that owners want to do with their dogs is taking the dog for a walk.



In the VHM tests, owners will demonstrate they have a good relationship with their dogs.



Test For the Puppy Title

Puppy Title (3 months [12 weeks] to 1 year)

Food may be used as a reward during the test unless otherwise specified (#8, #10). For more details on how each of the test items for Puppy and Adult should be administered by the evaluator, see: www.akc.org and type “Virtual Home Manners” in the search box.

1. Allows owner to pet the puppy

The puppy will allow the owner to pet its head/chin, shoulders and back.

2. Grooming

The puppy will tolerate brushing (*of the back and chest*) by the owner.

3. Sit on cue – can use lure

The puppy will respond to the owner’s cue (*verbal, hand signal, or both*) to “sit.”

4. Down on cue – can use lure

The puppy will respond to the owner’s cue (*verbal, hand signal, or both*) to “down.”

5. Comes when called

The puppy will come when called from 10 ft. This skill is tested in the house.

6. Go to place

The puppy will go to his or her ‘place’ and will stay for 15 seconds.

7. House-trained

The owner will attest that the puppy is house-trained (*or for young puppies, has a house training plan in place*).

8. Demonstrates relationship – no food rewards in this exercise

The owner (*or a family member*) and puppy will demonstrate that they have a good relationship by playing together. The puppy will play indoors with the owner or family member.

9. Out for a walk

The puppy will walk on a leash (*outside*) for at least 20 ft. two times.

10. Exercise outside – no food rewards in this exercise

The owner or a family member will provide the puppy with structured (*owner facilitated*) outdoor exercise.



Test For the Adult Title

Adult Title (4 months - on)

Food may be used as a reward during the test unless otherwise specified (#8, #10). For more details on how each of the test items for Puppy and Adult should be administered by the evaluator, see: www.akc.org and type “Virtual Home Manners” in the search box.

1. Allows owner to pet and groom the dog

2. Sit on cue – no lure

The dog will respond to the owner’s cue (*verbal, hand signal, or both*) to “sit.”

3. Down on cue – no lure

The dog will respond to the owner’s cue (*verbal, hand signal, or both*) to “down.”

4. Comes when called

The dog will come when called from 20 ft. or another room. This skill is tested in the house.

5. Manners related to food

Will demonstrate good manners in the presence of food. This exercise is done indoors.

6. Doorbell or knock on door – Dog behaves appropriately

The dog will behave appropriately when the doorbell rings or there is a knock on the door.

7. Go to place/crate – Stay 1 minute

The dog will go to his or her ‘place’ or crate and will stay for 1 minute.

8. Demonstrates relationship – no food rewards in this exercise

The owner (*or a family member*) and dog will demonstrate that they have a good relationship by playing together. The dog will play indoors with the owner or family member.

9. Out for a walk

The dog will walk on a leash (*outside*).

10. Exercise outside

The owner or a family member will provide the dog with structured (*owner facilitated*) outdoor exercise.

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More Virtual Programs

Once you have completed the Virtual Home Manners titles, there is *virtually* no limit to what you can do to train your dog. For training at home, now there are virtual options for agility, rally, and obedience. For more information, go to akc.org and type, for example, “virtual agility” in the search box.



From going to their beds or place when told or walking nicely on a leash, dogs with home manners are wonderful companions.

Summary

In Virtual Home Manners, (VHM) you can teach your dog and earn a title before you go to an in-person class. After training at home, your dog’s skills can be evaluated by video

Reference

Virtual Home Manners. American Kennel Club.

<https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/akc-family-dog-program/virtual-home-manners/> Retrieved December 2020.