

## Tips On Training Sheltie Ears – Yankee Shelties

Personally, my goal is to breed for tipped Sheltie ears so I eventually produce them naturally. I'd just as soon not have to go through the trouble of all this gluing and taping and weighting. But if I want them in the show ring, they need the proper ears to win.

And since tipped ears is strictly a cosmetic issue not a health issue, it is lower on my wish list than other things I consider more important. So if I find a lovely dog with a good pedigree but prick ears, I do what I can to train the ear properly.

Usually, one starts as early as possible, but I like to wait to see what the ears are doing naturally before positioning them. I like to keep an eye on how many of my dogs are coming close to the natural ear.

In addition, when the puppy begins teething the ears do all sorts of wacky, wonky things. They can go up, they can go sideways, one can go up, while the other goes down or any variation of these is possible.

Sometimes the ears go back to normal afterwards, sometimes not. There is no way of knowing for sure.

Most sheltie ears unfortunately, still need help. In order for any of these methods to work, the ears need to be correctly positioned immediately upon noticing they are prick and kept that way 24/7 until they tip consistently.

Some never do. The smaller, thicker ears are the toughest.

The longest I have glued ears is up to two years of age and it never fixed them. In that case, you are going to have to just love them the way they are. Which isn't too tough 😊 So here are a few methods you may like to try:

### Gluing Sheltie Ears

Using the fabric glue of your choice, the gluing is of fur to fur, never skin to skin.

This is Callie, who graciously volunteered to let me demonstrate on her.

Nevertheless gluing sheltie ears is not a neat process. Anticipate getting extra glue on fur you hadn't planned on unless you have help holding the puppy.

Most breeders will glue the ears together on top of the head in order to pull them up. A high set ear is desirable. Quite frankly I'm not sure how doing this will change where the ear sits in the future. Is it supposed to allow the muscles on top of the head to shrink and therefore the ears stay higher? I doubt it, but I do it just in case...

In order to pull the ears up, take them both, back to back to see about where you will be able to glue them together. If the ears are naturally very low, you may not be able to pull the ears up very close to the base but only be able to glue halfway up the ears.

When you figure out where you can put the glue, release and put a dab of glue on fur on each ear. Let it set for about 15-30 seconds. Then pull the ears gently together back to back again and pinch the glued fur together.

Add more glue if needed. Hold it for a few minutes. (Which is an eternity in puppy-time). If the fur is particularly long, you can fold the glued area over to further stabilize it.

After a few minutes let go of the sheltie ears.





Then put a dab of glue on the outside tip of one ear and a dab of glue on the underside of the fur just in front of the ear. (You could put the second dab on the outside of the top side of the fur in front of the ear, but I think it doesn't look as nice.) Wait a few seconds to let the glue set a little then press together.

Repeat this with the other ear.

The puppy will look like she has curlers in her head when done.



**This can last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks.** Then you have to re-do them. You can use adhesive remover to get the old glue off, then wash out the remover, dry and start over. Sometimes it's just easier to snip off the old glue.

## Taping Sheltie Ears

I find taping sheltie ears easier once the dog has grown a little and the ear is big enough to handle with tape. Most use moleskin.

I find using Leukotape P Sports Tape to be thinner, handle a little easier and doesn't need additional glue to stick to the ear.

Wash the inside of the ear to get any wax or grease off the inside so the tape will stick. Trim the fur on the inside of the ear as well.

You can glue the ears to each other on the top of the head as with the gluing method above.

Then place a piece of tape at the base of the inside of the ear, with the top margin just a little below where you want the fold. Usually you want the top  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the ear to tip.



Place another strip of tape on the top  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the ear, leaving a gap between the two pieces of tape and trimming the excess. Press the tape firmly to the ear for a few minutes.

Apply a dab of glue to both pieces of tape, fold the ear along the gap and hold until the glue sets well.

Again, it will hold anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Be prepared to repeat this many times.



This is Little Bit, with her ears folded and then glued up to the center of her skull

## Weighting Sheltie Ears

This is the easiest way to get the ears to tip. Many breeders feel it just makes the ear muscles stronger and when the weights are removed the ears will snap up.

The reason I don't believe that is because, while I see shelties move ears laterally or pressed down again the skull, I have never seen a tipped ear shoot up voluntarily by the dog, so I don't think there are muscles that are involved, just cartilage that needs bending.

What you will need is the fabric glue and some tungsten powder.



So just take the fabric glue put a glob of it on a clean surface and mix in some tungsten powder. Add as much tungsten as can be coated by the glue.

Put a dab of glue on the tip of the ear and stick the tungsten mix (pretty much solid and non sticky in a minute or two) to the tip of the inside of the ear. More weight on one edge or the other will make them tip sideways or towards the center. Add more as needed to get the right dip in the ear.



This is Annie, finished with her beauty treatment.

