Learning styles and how they affect training

How do you learn best?

Think about when you need to learn how to do something. If there is a manual, do you read and follow all the instructions, or go straight to the diagrams; ask someone; or do you just sit down and try to nut it out all by yourself?

We are all different and there is no right or wrong way to learn. It just means you need to have a flexible approach when you are training your staff.

What are learning styles?

People have three main preferences for how they learn:

- Visual. These people learn best by reading instructions, looking at diagrams or watching videos.
- Auditory. These people prefer to listen to instructions or discuss and ask questions.
- Kinaesthetic. These people learn best by hands-on doing.

Most people use a combination of these styles, but we all tend to have a preferred way of learning and it is important to remember this when you are training your staff.

Tips to make training more effective:

- Offer information and instructions in different ways. You will soon observe how each person prefers to learn. Some will listen and want to ask questions, others will take notes or want to read the instructions, and others will be itching to get in and try it.
- Always demonstrate what you want done and then give plenty of opportunities for practice.
- Give plenty of feedback, which includes acknowledgement of the things they did well and describes specifically the things that should be done differently.
- Remain aware that people learn at different speeds, and many people learn best when they have some time to think and reflect.