



Teaching Your Dog the Basics

Every dog should know the basic commands to increase her mental stimulation, ensure her safety and so you can show her off to your friends! Start the training by:

1. Keeping training sessions short and fun. No longer than 5 minutes at a time.
2. Choose a reward that your dog finds reinforcing. Food usually does the trick, but some will work just as hard for toys, play or praise.
3. Reward the behaviors you like and ignore the behaviors you do not like. Remember, behaviors that are reinforced will be repeated, those that are not will go away.

Training should always be a positive experience for you and your dog. Never punish your dog for doing behaviors you do not like, just simply ignore them.

Sit

- Get your dog's reinforcement (treat).
- Stand in front of your dog and place your fist full of treats to her nose.
- When she starts sniffing for the treat, move your hand slowly towards the back of her head.
- This will cause her to lift her head towards the treat and her butt will automatically go down.
- As soon as she sits, say "YES" and give her the treat.
- Repeat this several times with the treats as a lure, but as quickly as possible, put the treats in your pocket and only use your hand motions to direct her to sit. **We do not want to bribe her, we want to teach her that sitting brings rewards.**
- Now it is time to add the command "sit". When you first start adding the verbal command you must do it **AS** the dog is engaging in the behavior. This way she learns to associate the word with the action.
- Stand in front of your dog and wait for her to sit. When you see that she is about to sit, say the command you have chosen for "sit" as she moves into the position. Say "yes" when her butt hits the floor and give her the treat.
- Repeat several times to ensure association.

Down

- When your dog is sitting in front of you, hold your fist full of treats to her nose and slowly lower straight to the ground between her front legs.
- Do not push on her back. If she stands up, tell her to sit and try again – **do not reprimand her.**
- When she lies down, say "yes" and give her a treat.
- Some dogs will not go all the way down the first time. For these dogs, at first reward any lowering of the body towards the floor. Then require her to go lower each time before a treat is given.

- Once your dog is going down for the lure, fade the lure and only use your hand motion to get her to go down. Then wait for her to offer the behavior, and then add the cue word you have chosen for “down”, at first **AS** she goes down, later as a command.

Stay

- To teach a dog stay, ask her to sit and then wait a few seconds before you say “yes” and offer a treat. Your dog is not really doing a separate behavior, she is simply sitting until you tell her that she has done what you wanted – sitting for two seconds.
- It is very important when teaching “stay” that you go slowly. Add time in second increments. This is how you build a strong stay.
- Once your dog can sit and stay for thirty seconds without moving, step backwards after saying “stay.” Repeat and add a step each time, until you can take ten steps away and your dog will stay.
- Do not expect too much too soon, especially with puppies. Just remember to be patient.

Come

- Teaching a dog to come when called is very important. Make it a fun game – “doggie in the middle.”
- Starting in the house where there are few distractions, two people should stand about six feet apart and take turns saying, “come,” having the dog run back and forth between you. When she gets to you say “yes” and give her the treat.
- Slowly add distance until you are at the opposite ends of the house and your dog is running back and forth to the command “come.” Once you have a strong recall in the house go outside and teach your dog that “come” means the same thing in the yard.
- Start over, about six feet apart because there are now a lot of distractions vying for her attention. Once she is able to come when you are on opposite ends of the yard, now it’s time to try the park.
- The park has even more distractions than the yard. Again, start six feet apart.
- Reinforce the recall by calling your dog to you at all different times. Reward her for coming to the word “come” with a special treat.
- **Never ask your dog to come and then do something scary like cut her nails or punish her for running out the front door.**
- Coming to the word “come” should ALWAYS be positive.
- **Be patient – this command is one of the most important commands you will teach your dog.**