



Beginning Homework • Week 1

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Charge the Yes!

It's time to make that word "YES!" have a wonderful and positive meaning! Using treats (or even better, your dog's dinner!) drop the food on the floor near your dog, one piece at a time. Just before the food enters their mouth say "YES!". Repeat, repeat, repeat. This is super easy and fun for your dog, welcome to positive training!

Sit

Lure your dog into a sit by putting a treat in your hand directly in front of his nose, then moving your hand slowly up over his head. Your dog's head will follow the treat, rocking back onto his haunches into a sit. The very moment his rear hits the floor, you say "YES!" and reward. You do not want to speak the verbal command of "Sit" until the dog is reliably following the lure, and you're nearly certain that if you say "Sit" you will be able to lure the sit and make it happen. Keep practicing! See if you can sit in all the rooms in your house. How about the front porch? What about the driveway? Can your dog sit in the car?

Down

With your dog beginning in a sit, lure with a treat from his nose to his toes – nice and slow. When you see your dog's elbows hit the floor it's "YES!" time, and reward with the treat. If your dog's bum pops up as you lower the treat, just reset the sit and begin the nose to toes lure again. Just like with sit, we are not using a verbal cue until you are certain you can follow up the command with the appropriate action. Also, as difficult as it can be, try to avoid repeating yourself. Say "down" one time, then help guide your dog with the lure.

Name Recognition

Chances are your dog knows their name when you're in the kitchen preparing their dinner. Out in the back yard stalking a squirrel, they're pretty sure you've got to be talking to someone else. Practice name recognition so your dog knows you're talking to him every time you say their name. With your dog only mildly distracted, say your their name one time and when they turn and look at you, say "YES!" and reward. If your dog doesn't turn immediately, get that treat, reach all the way out to their nose, and lure them to you, then "YES!" and reward. Remember, if you repeat yourself, your dog is inadvertently learning to ignore you the first couple times. Have fun with this and practice all over. You want a dog that whips his little head around towards you the moment he hears his name.

Come

Teaching your dog to come when called, regardless of distractions or situations, is one of the most important and valuable lessons your puppy can learn. A rock-solid recall starts small and simple.

Practice what we call "back-away recalls". With your dog on a leash, and a treat in your hand, say your dog's name once. When they turn to look at you say "Come!" in a clear, loud voice. Lure them toward you with your treat, and take a couple steps backwards. When they catch up "YES!" and reward. Repeat!

Training a solid recall is all about success. You want to begin with it being something simple and easily understood. Try to only say come when you're 95% positive your dog will come. If you need your dog, and you don't think they'll come – go collect them vs. using the word when you won't be successful. When teaching come, it should be the most fun thing ever! Come! Have a cookie! Come! Let's play! Come! Who's the best puppy ever!

You want to avoid calling your dog for something negative. For example, collect your dog when you want to trim toenails, give a bath, go back inside from playing, or anything else you think your dog won't love. We'll teach you new ways to practice this every week, but for now, keep it simple and successful!

Watch

When you ask your puppy to "watch" you are looking for some sustained eye-contact. In the canine world, staring can be a bit rude and off-putting, so working with your dog to maintain some eye contact may take a little training. With a treat in your hand, start down near your dog's nose, then bring the treat up beside your face – at eye level. Your dog will be staring at the treat at first, but watch their eyes closely. The moment you see their eyes flick away from the treat to you, it's "YES!" and reward with that treat. Practice, practice, practice! As your dog gets better, start requiring the gaze to maintain for a longer period of time before rewarding.

Tell me you read your homework next week, and I'll give you five lucky bones.