



Beginning Homework • Week 3

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Life Rewards

We here at Happy-Go-Lucky use a food lure/reward based training system when teaching new behaviors because it's fast, it's easy, and it works. However, when your dog has begun to master basic commands, it's time to remove that food reward for every interaction. Think about things your dog likes. Toys? Going outside? Getting in the car? Coming out of their crate? Going for a walk? Eating their dinner? Think about just a simple sit before each of these joyful moments. The reward? Throw the toy! Open the door! Hop in the car! Exit the crate! So these "life rewards" are not treat moments, so they're not "YES" moments. When working on actions with life rewards, you'll want to use different words to acknowledge you liked your dog's behavior. "Good pup!" "Thank you!" "So nice!" Remember "YES" is a promise a treat is coming. The reward in itself lies in the action for these – not a bit of food. Start asking your dog for simple behaviors before allowing all these joyful life rewards. They are perfect training opportunities that you may not have been noticing before.

Gambling for Grub

As your dog improves with their grasp of basic requests, it's time to start encouraging your dog to "gamble". We don't want to be carrying hot dogs on our person for the next 15 years just to guarantee manners and obedience, so you'll want to start rewarding your dog sporadically for good behavior. If your dog got one treat for five sits, the thought process implies that your dog will continue to work for you, knowing that occasionally you will reward them with a tasty treat. Also, when your dog does something exceptional, make sure you DO reward with what we like to call a jackpot. Lots and lots of tiny morsels fed rapidly while praising and celebrating. Did your dog just run passed a squirrel on a recall? Jackpot! Those golden moments are not time for gambling, but your dog no longer needs a goody for every single sit.

Four on the Floor

Your dog needs to learn how to greet strangers, friends and family with four paws on the floor. We will practice this several different ways throughout class, but one of the best ways to keep an excited dog from jumping up begins with the simple act of ignoring them. I know when you've been gone for a while, and you get home to that happy furry face, it's difficult not to wish to return the enthusiasm. You'll want to come in stoic and calm and avoid unnecessary commands and conversation. A boring return home is the first step in a calm and polite welcome. Your dog will settle after a short bit of time, and you'll be able to calmly and happily say hello.

If your dog does jump up on you, try to avoid shoving them off or making additional physical contact. The act in itself is self-rewarding to your dog, add a bit of physical connection from you, and your dog just had the best time being very naughty. Turn your back and offer a firm "off". When your dog removes their paws from you, attempt to turn towards them again and request a "sit". If they do, reward them with a short, calm greeting. If they hop up again, repeat turning your back and asking for an "off". It can take a few tries for your dog to realize they are not to jump on you, but consistency will really pay off here. Make sure the entire family is on board and following the rules. It will be very difficult for your dog to learn to stay off of humans if half the humans in their life encourage jumping up.

Loose Leash Walking

We've put the treat on the nose and lured your dogs around and practiced stopping and changing direction so by now your dog is learning you don't go forward unless you go together. You can place a toy or other interesting object on the ground and practice approaching it. If the leash goes tight, stop immediately and back away with a few penalty yards. Attempt to re-approach. If the leash goes tight again, repeat the correction. Once your dog has managed to approach the item together, let him check it out, or play with the toy together. This method can work walking towards a myriad of "goals". The car? Grandma's house? The park? Dog class? Sniffing a fire hydrant? Anything your dog wants to experience can be approached in this stop and go fashion.

Stay, Part 1: Duration

Stay is a fun and useful command that can be very rewarding. Make sure your household has chosen a release word for your dog, and that you are using it appropriately. Some fun examples are "break", "free", "release", "all done", "that'll do", and "party". The command stay is broken down into three parts referred to as the "three D's"; Duration, Distraction and Distance. I find most people wish to begin with the distance aspect of stay, but we want to start with duration. All a duration stay really means is you have asked your dog to do something, and they must continue to do it until released. Start with a sit directly in front of you, and ask for a "stay". Smile and give positive feedback like "good dog!" then "YES" reward & release. Continue these duration sits with varying time intervals. Some longer, some shorter. Practice down stays as well. Like all things dog, practice in lots of different places, lots of different ways.

Leave-It, Part 1

"Leave-it" is an excellent training tool that can be used on anything from something gross you've discovered on a walk, to the neighbor's cat. Simply put, "leave-it" means your dog is to avert their attention from something and look at you for further instruction. To begin, have a treat in your hand in a closed fist, and another one in your hand behind your back. Brace the arm with the treat in the fist firmly against your body and show it to your dog to sniff, etc. Say "Leave-it" one time and wait. As soon as your dog stops all physical contact with your fist, say "yes!" and reward with the treat from behind your back.

Timing is important. If your dog stops attempting to get the treat for just one brief instance, make sure you "yes!" and reward. Repeat this activity many times and occasionally allow your dog to eat the forbidden treat in the "leave-it" fist. Offer it up with the dog's release word, or a "take-it" command. If you're having success, you can attempt gradually exposing the "leave-it" treat in your hand. Have fun with this one and keep the training sessions short and sweet.

Tricks

Tricks are a terrific way to bond with your dog, give them mental stimulation, and have a fun time! There's no more crowd pleasing or entertaining ways to show off your training and hard work. The lure and reward method can teach your dog to roll over, sit pretty, crawl, wave and many more! In order to graduate, you'll have to show us a trick at our final class. Thinking of something you want to learn, and we'll help you!