



Beginning Homework • Week 5

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Recall (Come)

While practicing Close and general sniffing, playing and exploring, spontaneously call your dog while running back away from him. If he's not paying any attention, give him a tiny tug to start. When your dog gets to you, really make a fuss. Play and pet him, dash around with him, make him feel good. Then continue with your walking. Call your dog often during this walk. At first when there's little distraction, then when there's more distraction. Make sure he can do it.

Reinforce your dog for good recalls for thirty seconds. Praise, smile and deliver fabulous treats, one at a time.

Sit for Guests

This is one you can call "Go say hi," or "visit," or "friend," or something else that makes sense to you. This is to help teach your dog which people to be friendly with and what the proper etiquette is.

If your dog is unsure of people you know are safe, set an example for him by verbally greeting someone, stepping forward confidently and shaking hands or patting the person on the shoulder. Let the dog hang back if he wants but have the "guest" throw him a little treat. You should seem very pleased. Keep your leash loose. Keep the guest's body language neutral {sideways with little eye contact.} Try this with lots of enthusiasm. Ignore the dog if he's acting shy, but praise him warmly when he comes forward. This may take time.

If your dog isn't shy, he will probably be mowing people over with his exuberance in greeting. In this case make sure your leash is on your dog whenever he's going to meet someone. Plan ahead. If he's leaping and pulling, stand on his leash until he settles down. You and the guest should ignore him until he stops. When he has, tell him your phrase ("Go say hi," etc.), and approach your guest. Use a treat as a lure to help him focus. You show him to Sit and Watch. Use his leash to keep his feet on the ground – maybe by standing on it.

Release him to Go Say Hi. That's when the guest could give him a treat and if he stays sitting, a pet. If at any time he leaps up, the guest should ignore him until he sits again. You can say "Whoops, too bad" and walk away to start over. (If you want your dog to have a jump up word, that's okay, but only ask for it occasionally and only after the dog has already settled into his sit.)

Stays

For Sit and Down Stay, work on building distraction and duration of time slowly and in balance with each other. We next want to add distance. When we do that, we will want to shorten the duration and distraction again to maintain a balance that the dog is capable of succeeding at. When practicing distance, return to your dog to release him, rather than releasing or calling from distance.

Stay Examples:

Duration: 10 seconds, 15, 20, 30, 45, etc.

Distraction: You move your feet, your hands, bounce ball, squeak toy;

A friend moves nearby, hops, walks, jogs, bounces ball, etc.;

Different environment, same distractions.

Distance: a step around, a step away, a step away with back turned, two steps, four steps, four steps and a hop, etc.

Leave It

Go outside without your dog and lay out a variety of "Leave it" distractions in your normal walking area. This way, you'll know where they are and can be prepared to help your dog do the right thing since you won't be caught off guard. Make at least one of them something he can have if he does a good job. Sometimes saying "leave it" will not be enough help. Ask for "close," "come," "sit and watch," etc. to give more information and help him be successful.

Random Schedule of Reinforcement

When you're working on making a behavior bigger, you reinforce often – each time it is bigger. If the behavior is just being maintained, you make the reinforcement more random. We call that "Random Schedule of Reinforcement."

This is an important step in teaching your dog. So far, we have been slowly asking the dogs to build on the behaviors we've begun. This will continue. The other part of this is letting the dog know that sometimes you won't get a "yes" and treat – just a verbal "good" and release (break, free.) Maybe a cheerful pat would be nice.

The point is to get the dog to keep trying, even if he doesn't get something each time. Once he understands he needs to gamble, the behavior gets stronger. He has to try every time to see if he can get you to give him the say "yes" and treat. This builds great attitude. If behavior drops off, he's not being reinforced enough. Keep working. Don't forget the jackpot!

Other Rewards/Life Rewards

One way of randomizing your reinforcements is by changing to a variety of rewards. Exciting games with you, access through doors, attention, toys, privileges, etc. Make sure you are doing your voice and hand signals without a cookie visible. Sometimes the reward might be a cookie, but it might be showing the keys for a car ride, pulling a tug toy out of your back pocket, a nice chest scratchy for the dog, or a dance around the back yard. Build up your life reward cues: "Go Play, Sniff, Check It Out, Say Hi, or Get It!" These are all life rewards.

Practice your trick and remember your Lucky Bones for the raffle next week. Remember your checklists too!