



Beginning/Puppy Homework • Week 1

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Verbal Marker

Using a clicker or a verbal marker tells your dog the exact moment he did what you wanted. Pick a short word like “yes” or “great” that you can say quickly, and start charging it up. Take a hand full of kibble or small treats, say “yes”, then toss a treat to your dog. Every time you say “yes”, you toss a treat. Practice this 10 times several times a day for the next few days. Your dog will quickly learn that when he hears “yes”, a treat is on the way.

Goal: My dog knows that when I say “yes” he is getting a treat.

Name Recognition

Teach your dog to look at you every time you say his name. Chances are your dog is great at responding to his name when you are in your house, but once you step outdoors he suddenly forgets who he is. Practice first in your home with little distraction. Say your dog’s name once (and only once!) and wait for him to look at you. Once he does, say “yes” and treat. If he does not immediately look at you then put a treat in front of his nose, lure him around so he does look at you, say “yes”, and treat. Once your dog is readily responding to his name indoors, start practicing in more distracting locations such as in the backyard or on your next walk.

Goal: My dog will look at me the first time I say his name in the house.

Watch

In this exercise you will ask your dog to look directly at your face. Many dogs are uneasy when asked to make eye contact with humans (eye contact between dogs usually constitutes a challenge) but we need them to look into our faces so we can communicate with them. Stand in front of your dog and show him a treat. Bring the treat up to your eyes and wait for your dog to make eye contact with you. Once he does say “yes” and give him the treat. As your dog is successful, ask him to look at you a few seconds more, each time building duration before you give him the treat. Keep your facial expression relaxed and smiling and give soft verbal praise as he is gazing at you. Don’t worry if your dog starts out looking at the treat in your hand rather than your eyes. He will transfer his gaze with some practice.

Goal: My dog will watch me using a lure.

Sit

Lure your dog into a sitting position. To do this stand in front of your dog, place a treat right on his nose, and slowly lure his head up and over his back. As soon as his backend hits the ground say “yes” and give him the treat. Practice in a few locations.

Goal: My dog can sit using a lure.

Come (Recalls)

Teaching your dog to come when called is an important safety cue and may just save his life one day. Over the course we will break up this exercise and make it increasingly harder. We will start by introducing the “back-away recall”. Practice with your dog on a short leash. Bring your hands with a treat down to his nose level and back up 3-4 steps and say “come”. As he follows you say “yes” and give him a treat. Repeat 3-5 times during a session. At this point never call your dog for anything negative (getting a bath, leaving a dog park, getting in his crate) or he will be less likely to come to you, and only say “come” if you are sure it will happen. Be exciting and fun when you practice!

Goal: My dog will come when called in the house.

Easy

Teach your dog to take treats gently. Practice with a treat in your enclosed fist and wait for your dog to lick you or stop touching you. Once he does say “yes” and give him the treat. If your dog uses his mouth at all say “OUCH” and take the treat away. Your dog should never receive a treat from you if he is using his teeth. Practice this often and be consistent. Try hand feeding him his dinner.

Goal: My dog can take a treat without using his teeth.

Bring your homework back next week with all the goals checked off and receive five extra Lucky Bones!