



Beginning Homework • Week 5

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Stay – Distance

In a low-distraction environment, put your dog into a “sit” or “down,” then give the “stay” command and hand signal. Take a quick half step back, return to your dog, say “yes” and treat and then release word. If they do not remain in position, practice “stay” a few times without moving away from your dog. Gradually build up the distance you can move from your dog while they are in position. Always return to your dog to release them, as doing this helps them to have a solid stay.

Leave it

Toss a treat out of your dog's leash length. Brace your arms against your body, and say “leave it” one time. Wait until your dog backs up from the treat or turns towards you, say “yes” and treat. If your dog is struggling take a few steps backwards away from the treat to help them get it right. Practice approaching the treat from different angles. Your ultimate goal is to be able to say “leave it” and have your dog stop and turn towards you before their leash gets tight.

Wait

Teaching our dogs to hold themselves back when we say “wait” is an important safety measure. To teach this, have your dog on leash and approach an open doorway. Get to the doorway before your dog and step in front of them, using your body to block the way. When they pause, say “yes” and then continue along by using their release word. Once you have practiced this successfully a few times, say “wait” as you step in front of your dog and then “yes” when they hold themselves back. Slowly work on blocking the doorway with your body less and less until you can say “wait” without having to step in front of your dog. Practice this at all of your important doorways and street corners. You can also practice this using a closed door by slowly opening the door. If your dog tries to go through the door as it is opening simply shut it. Play this “Red Light/Green Light” game with them until they hold themselves back and then quickly open the door all the way and release them to go out into the yard.

Sit for Guests

Find a willing participant that wants to help you work on polite greetings with your dog. Start about 10 feet away with your dog on a short leash next to you. If your dog is super excited to greet this person help them keep a loose leash as you approach by holding a treat at nose level and using it to guide them until you are a few feet away from your human helper. Ask your dog to sit, say “yes” and treat when they do. If you think your dog is likely to jump up at this point, step on their leash and then say their release word and “go say hi.” If your dog tries to jump up, use your leash to turn them off to the side, say “uh oh” and then try again. Practice this with as many people as you can.

Tricks

We would love it if you can prepare a trick to show off for graduation. This can be something new or a behavior that they learned in class.