



Beginning Homework • Week 4

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Introducing Stay – The Three D’s

Duration – The amount of **time** your dog can hold a position.

Distance – How **far away** you are from your dog while they hold a position.

Distraction – What can be **happening** while your dog is holding a position.

When working on “stay” it is important to slowly build up using the three D’s (duration, distraction, distance). If you proceed too quickly, your dog will have a flighty stay, or may not understand what you are asking. Focus this week entirely on **duration**. Your dog must understand the meaning of the verbal command “stay” before moving on to the next steps.

- Put your dog into a “sit” or “down.” Introduce the verbal command, “stay” (one time), followed by the hand signal “yes” and treat if they remain in position, followed by their release word.
- If they break position before you release them or offer a different behavior, say “uh oh,” reset and try again.
- Once they understand the verbal cue you can begin increasing duration and adding in distractions.

Tips:

- Pay attention to surface changes. It may help to utilize a rug or carpet instead of hardwood.
- Say “stay” only once. Use the hand signal again if you're tempted to repeat the verbal.
- Use friendly facial expressions, verbal feedback and calm praise.
- If your dog isn't succeeding, you're asking too much. Back up to a shorter duration.

Leave It - Step Two

When your dog is completely turning away from the leave it item, you are ready to begin slowly exposing the leave it item. Remember to say “leave it” only ONE time.

- Hold the treat in your hand slightly above your dog’s eye level when they are in a sit position.
- Slowly expose the treat by opening your hand so they can see the treat and say “leave it.”
- If they disengage (take their nose off) the treat, “yes” and treat from the opposite hand.
- If they try to go for the treat, immediately close your fist. Then, slowly open it again.
- Continue to open and close your hand until your dog can resist while the treat hand is open.

Tips:

- Don't forget to give them the leave it item at least once during the activity!
- You can also practice this by placing the treat on a chair or the floor and covering it with your hand. The same rules apply- once your dog resists, “yes” and treat.

Drop (release something once in mouth)

When your dog already has something in their mouth, we want them to relinquish it when we ask.

- Offer your dog a long toy as you say “take it” -keep hold of one end of the toy.
- Put a treat right up to your dog’s nose, say “drop” as they relinquish the toy to eat the treat “yes” and return the item to your dog.

Tips:

- Your treat should be more exciting than the toy.
- If your dog won't relinquish the toy, practice with a less exciting one.
- If your dog has something inappropriate in their mouth, do not chase them! As long as it is something not dangerous, you want to act as if whatever they have is super boring. You can toss some treats on the ground and then sneakily grab whatever it is.
- The majority of the time give the relinquished object back to your dog. If your dog believes every time you say "drop" they will never get the object back again, they will be more likely to guard the toy and/or run away with it.
- If your dog enjoys "chase me" games, try to avoid this trap. If they get something they shouldn't, do NOT chase them. Instead: teach them to retrieve as a game; ignore them so as not to reward; or try to redirect their attention to an appropriate toy/treat.
- Until your dog is trained, dog-proof your house (pick up socks, remote controls, etc.)

Polite Greetings

Practice polite approaches by cueing your dog to sit as a person approaches.

- Have a guest approach your dog.
- Ask your dog to sit, "yes" and treat.
- Say, "go say hi" to indicate your dog is allowed to interact with your guest.
- If your dog doesn't sit, have your guest turn and walk away. Wait a few seconds and try again.

Tips:

- Consistency is key; make sure to supervise all meetings and introductions with your dog.
- Inform greeters that your dog is in training and needs to sit before they provide attention.
- If your dog is super excited to greet this person, keep a loose leash as you approach by holding a treat at nose level and using it to guide them until you're close to your guest.
- If you think your dog is likely to jump up on your guest, use the management technique of stepping on their leash so they have just enough slack to comfortably stand or sit.
- If your dog tries to jump up, use your leash to turn them to the side, say "uh oh" and try again.
- Keep a leash near the front door.
- Exercise your dog before company comes over or offer a stuffed Kong to keep them busy.
- Do not step on the leash if your dog is fearful of strangers. This will likely increase their fear. Allow your dog to approach at their own speed when ready.

Recall Practice

Try adding minimal distractions to your recall. During class, your biggest distraction may be the other dogs. At home, you can utilize another family member as a distraction. Create an obstacle or minimal distraction in your dog's path before you call them to you. If they reach you with success make sure to let them play with the item they avoided!

To encourage your dog to check in with you, play a game by hiding from your dog. This teaches them to check in periodically. Wait until your dog is a bit distracted and then hide. Peek out and as soon as your dog starts looking for you, call your dog to come. Help them out, if needed, by stepping out from your hiding spot. When they find you, reward them with a treat/toy.