



Beginning Homework • Week 5

Jackie Blake, CPDT-KA

Stay – Distance

Last week, we introduced the first two steps of stay, **duration** and **distraction**. It's important that your dog has a solid understanding of each separate exercise before combining them.

Once your dog has solid duration (remaining in position until released) with some distractions in both a sit and down “stay” position, you are ready to introduce **distance**. The goal is to release your dog before they release themselves. Remember to say “stay” once and use your release word.

- From a “sit” or “down” put your dog in a “stay” with the verbal followed by the visual signal. Then, rock back a step, immediately return to your dog, “yes” treat and release.
- If you have success, repeat with a half- step back. Then, try a full step. Gradually increase the distance in small increments as long as your dog remains in position and waits to be released.
- If your dog breaks position, take a step forward to encourage them to fall back into the sit/down position. Try again, but this time, decrease your distance and build from there.

Tips:

- Always return to your dog to release them, this helps to develop a solid stay.
- If your dog tends to scoot toward you when you walk away, try on their bed/rug or an elevated surface. (Make sure they cannot fall off this surface!) Providing them with a stationary spot can be helpful.
- Have a partner hold your dog on leash. When your dog is at the end of the leash, cue your dog to sit or down “stay” and walk a few steps away from your dog, return to your dog to release them. Continue practicing the above steps with this tip. They are associating the word “stay” without moving toward you.

Leave it – Step 3

Your goal is to say “leave it” and have your dog stop and turn towards you before their leash gets tight.

- Give your dog a set length of leash, brace your leash hand at your waist and toss a treat onto the floor just out of your dog's reach. Say “leave it” ONE time.
- As soon as there is slack in the leash or your dog takes their nose off the treat, “yes” and treat.
- Once your dog is consistent with this, expect more and wait for them to back off and eventually turn their head towards you, “yes” and treat.

Tips:

- If your dog is struggling, you may be too close to the treat. Take a few steps backwards- away from the treat and try again
- Practice approaching the treat from different angles.

Waiting at doorways

The command “wait” is slightly different from using the command “stay”. With stay, we release our dogs from a stationary position (sit or down). With wait, we are asking our dogs to pause momentarily until cued to move forward.

Closed doorway

- Stand in front of your dog near a closed door.
- Slowly begin to open the door just a crack and keep your hand on the doorknob.
- If your dog moves forward, quickly and carefully close the door or use your body to block.
- Repeat these steps several times
- Once your dog waits while you open the door, use your release word and allow them to go through the door (this is the reward)
- As your dog starts to understand the exercise, add the verbal "wait" and open the door a bit wider, followed by their release word before they go through.
- The goal is to open the door wide and have your dog wait for permission to go through.

Open doorway

- With your dog on leash, approach an open doorway.
- Get to the doorway before your dog, step in front of them, using your body to block.
- When they pause, say "yes" followed by their release word (going through the doorway is the reward)
- Slowly work on blocking the doorway with your body less and less.
- When your dog begins pausing without you stepping in front of them, add the verbal "wait."
- Once you have success, say "wait" as you step in front of your dog, followed by their release word as you allow them to go through the door

Tips:

- When practicing "wait" at doors to the outside, always have your dog on leash for safety.
- Practice this at all of your important doorways and street corners
- Try also using this command for waiting for their food bowl or to jump out of the car.

Grooming/First Aid

Even if your dog is a fairly new family member or you leave the grooming and first aid up to the professionals, it is a good idea to introduce and desensitize them to the objects they may encounter. You can teach your dog to accept (and even like!) them by developing a positive association. We don't want our dog's first experience with these items to be when they are injured or sick.

- Begin by examining your dog's ears and paws as you offer them a long treat or a bully stick.
- Once they are comfortable being handled, slowly introduce objects (nail trimmers, brushes, droppers, syringes bandages) and offer treats.
- Gradually allow the objects to touch your dog while you treat them.
- If your dog shies away or disengages from the treat, you may be moving too fast.
- Try placing the object on the floor and place treats on or near it.

Tips:

- Figure out if your dog is more comfortable in a sit, down or stand position while being handled.
- Use lots of treats! (i.e. touching toe = treat, brush = treat, etc.)
- Trim toenails on a regular basis (every couple/few weeks). Just take off the tips. If your dog's nails accidentally bleed, distract your dog by giving lots of treats and apply styptic powder.
- Play dress-up! Put a t-shirt/ace bandage on your dog. Be sure to give your dog treats.
- Play veterinarian! Examine your dog as a vet would. Remember to give treats!

Tricks

Teach your dog a new command or fun trick dog outside of the training homework (spin, roll over, etc.) and demonstrate for the rest of the class before graduation! This can be something new or a behavior that they learned in class.

Recalls

- Work on increasing the speed of your dog's recalls. An excited dog will be more likely to come and to come quickly. Be exciting for your dog! Use a high pitched voice, run quickly away from your dog as you call them, use hot dog or a favorite toy...be creative!
- Continue increasing distance &/distraction into your recalls while out on walks.
- Continue playing recall games for extra practice and to tire out your dog.