

# HOW TO GET YOUR DOG TO LISTEN

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THE SECRET FORMULA TO  
TEACHING YOUR DOG TO LISTEN



# ATTENTION

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- Training needs to start with your dog paying attention to you.
- You can't ask your dog to do a behaviour if she is not focusing on you. I often see dog owners asking their dog to perform a behaviour for them and then they think that their dog is being stubborn or is misbehaving but that is not the case. The dog is not doing the desired behaviour because they have not been taught to pay attention to their owner in a distracting environment.
- Every time you ask your dog to do something, you must make sure you have your dog's full attention first.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at eye contact games to play with your dog. Once you start to reward eye contact your dog will offer it much more. When they're out and about you will become much more important than the environment.

# BEHAVIOUR

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Once you have your dog's attention you can ask for a behaviour or train a new one.

Make sure your dog fully understands what behaviour you are wanting them to do before adding a verbal cue.

I often see owners can be too quick on adding a verbal cue before their dog fully understand how to perform the new behaviour.

Let's use Sit as an example. If your dog does not sit straight away give them **30 seconds** to work it out. 30 seconds is the golden rule. In that time your dog can work out for themselves what behaviour you have asked them to do. After 30 seconds if your dog has not worked out what behaviour you would like them to do then you can prompt them with a hand lure.

- Do not repeat your verbal cue! Instead lure your dog into the sit position.
- Always make training a positive experience for your dog. Repeating the cue over and over will only confuse and frustrate your dog and you.

# MARKER WORD

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A marker word such as “good” or “yes” is used to pinpoint the desired behaviour. Let's use sit as an example again. Ask your dog to sit. As soon as their bum hits the floor that's the point where you will use your marker word “good” or “yes”. Follow up by giving your dog a reward.



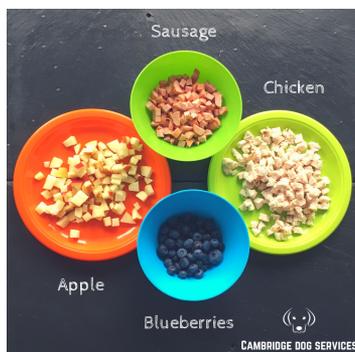
- A Marker provides information and feedback to your dog.
- It makes your dog become a more effective learner.
- Which then helps speed up your training process.
- You won't need to use a marker word forever. A marker word is faded out once your dog can reliably do the behaviour in all environments and with distractions.

# REWARDS

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We are going to be asking the dog to work quite hard as they are learning new skills, we need to make sure that we pay them appropriately. Just the same as if your boss did not pay you enough, you won't want to work as hard.

- Your food rewards should be small. Pea sized or even half a pea size would be ideal.
- Soft and chewy rewards are much better than dry hard treats as dry treats can take longer to eat.
- Use high value foods such as: chicken, sausages, beef, cheese or liver. We want to reward the dog generously and teach the dogs that all rewards come from us.



It's important to remember that the environment **will never fail to reward your dog**. The environment around your dog offers so many things that they want to have. Whether its access to:

- Other dogs
- Other people
- SmellsBirds to watch or chase
- Food on the floor

There are so many different rewards your dog can get access to from the environment. If you don't have anything to give your dog for doing a desired behaviour, such as coming back to you when you call her, your dog will quickly learn to ignore you and gain access to other rewards.

Invest some time in learning what rewards your dog likes. Try a variety of foods. Human grade food is far better and more valuable to your dog than dry shop bought dog treats. Think of your treats as the value of money. Dogs of course don't find money valuable but they do rate different types of food.

- Dry food / kibble - £5
- Shop bought treats - £20
- Cooked chicken / turkey - £50
- Beef, liver, cheese is worth £100

If your dog is very toy motivated then you can always use that. Depending on how motivated your dog is to play the value of the toy could be worth £100 to your dog.

The more you pay your dog for a job well done, the harder your dog will work for you. The environment will often be worth more to your dog but we can get creative in our food delivery and rewards. I will go into more detail on this on week 4



# DIFFERENT PLACES

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- Dogs do not generalise doing the same behaviour in different places.
- Train all new behaviours in a variety of locations.
- Keep training sessions short and low pressure.
- Training sessions should only be 3 - 5 minutes long
- Train 3 - 4 times a day if possible.

Your dog may be great at sitting on cue at home but the first time you ask them to sit outside your house or in the park she will properly not be able to do it as well. That is because you have not taught her to sit in that scenario. It is worth investing your time training your dog the same behaviours in many different environments.

- Fit your training around your day to day activities.

# RECAP

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First we need our dogs **ATTENTION** Then ask them for a **BEHAVIOUR**

Use your **MARKER WORD** as soon as your dog does the desired behaviour.

**REWARD** your dog generously

Train the same behaviour in **DIFFERENT PLACES**

- Attention
- Behaviour
- Mark
- Reward
- Train in a variety of locations