

## DOWN

### Why train down?

Down is a great command for puppies that need to learn to relax in one place for long periods of time. It is also excellent for jumpy puppies because jumping up from a down is harder than from a sit. And lying down can be helpful for big puppies by making them less intimidating when meeting children or people nervous around puppies.

### How to train it.

**Step 1. Say it.** Hold a treat in your hand. Tell your puppy, “Down” in a cheerful tone of voice.

**Step 2. Show it.** Pause a second (one-one thousand), then lure your puppy into a down by putting the treat up to his nose and slowly moving the treat down to the ground. Keep the treat close to your puppy’s nose—if you move your hand down too quickly and too far away from his mouth he may give up and lose interest.

**Step 3. Pay it.** As soon as your puppy’s knees and elbows hit the ground, praise and treat. Keep treating him to thank him for staying in the down. After a few seconds tell him, “Okay!” and encourage him to get up. Keep practicing to work up to longer downs.

**Step 4. Repeat it.** Repeat steps 1-3 many times. When your puppy gets into the down quickly, it is time to take the treat out of your hand and use the verbal cue alone. If your puppy makes a mistake, first try luring without the treat. Only put the treat back in your hand if all else fails.

**Training Tip:** Only say the command once. Say it, then pause, then lure.

**Troubleshooting:** If you can’t quite get your puppy to lie down, break the exercise into smaller steps. First treat him for following the treat to the ground, then for bending an elbow, then for bending both elbows. Make sure you treat and praise liberally when you get a full down.

**Troubleshooting:** A good rule of thumb is to reward your puppy whenever he naturally does something you are working on teaching him. So if you find him lying down, tell him, “Good dog” and treat or pet him.

### When to practice.

Before throwing a ball, Frisbee, rope-toy, etc.

Before giving him a toy.

Before putting the food bowl down.

Before handing over a treat or chewie.

Before opening a door.

Before putting on a leash to go for a walk.

Before taking off a leash at the park or beach.

Before dishing out a belly rub or good ear scratch.

Before hopping into or out of the car.