

Sit for Everything (everything exciting, that is!)

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Do you have an enthusiastic dog who is sometimes a little too excited about the world? Or perhaps a nervous pup that is uncertain and insecure? Sit for Everything is a training exercise that can help dogs on both ends of the spectrum. It is a fun, easy, and effective way to build confidence, teach good manners, and reduce overexcitement. Plus, Sit for Everything helps the **human** half of the team learn to consistently reinforce the behaviors you want—a critical training skill.

What exactly is Sit for Everything?

With Sit for Everything, you choose certain things that your dog is happy or excited about, and you ask him to sit each time, before he does them. But wait! There is a little more to it than that.

Specifically: You have your dog sit and look at you for a few seconds. When she sits, enthusiastically and affectionately let your dog know she did a great job. For example say, “What a wonderful dog you are—awesome job!” Then release your dog to do that exciting thing. You might have your dog sit for:

- meals, treats and other types of food
- play, ball tosses, and tug games
- going out the door to run around the yard
- putting on the leash for a walk or taking off the leash to run free

Why sit?

Sit is easy to teach, practice, and reinforce. It is also the hallmark of a polite dog. Most dogs can learn to sit just about anywhere and at any time. Most of us enjoy it when a dog sits upon greeting, for example, instead of jumping up to lick our faces.

How does it help your dog?

- Dogs who sit for exciting things learn that polite behavior is the fastest way to get what they want. This helps increase impulse control.
- It can become a default behavior—something a dog can do when she is unsure of what she is supposed to do. This can be very empowering for some dogs.
- Asking your dog for a trained behavior such as sit, keeps him in the thinking part of the brain rather than the emotional or reactive part of the brain. When a dog is thinking rather than reacting, he will learn to be calmer in the face of excitement.
- Sit for Everything shows your dog that you will provide access to those things he values. This can be trust building.

What Sit for Everything is NOT

Sit for Everything is not intended to take away choices or to make your dog “earn” access to things he needs for survival or happiness. Our dogs need to have choices in life, just as we all do for our mental health.