

TEACHING A DOG TO SIT

Why train sit?

Every dog should have one command she can do anywhere, anytime. Sit is a great contender for that job. It gives your dog a way to say, "Please," and can become her default greeting, which stops her from jumping on people.

How to train it.

Step 1. *Say it.* Tell your dog, "Sit" in a cheerful tone of voice.

Step 2. *Show it.* Pause a second (one-one thousand), then lure your dog into a sit by putting the treat up to her nose and slowly moving the treat backwards and up. Keep the treat lure close to your dog's nose – if you move your hand up too quickly or too far away from her mouth, she may give up and lose interest.

Step 3. *Pay it.* As soon as your dog's hindquarters hit the ground say "yes" or click and treat. Repeat as many times as you can, so long as you and your dog are still enjoying yourselves. Click and treat every sit.

Step 4. *Repeat it.* Repeat the exercise several times over a few days. When your dog sits reliably, it is time to take the treat out of your hand and use the verbal cue alone. If your dog 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, pause, then lure.

Troubleshooting: If you have trouble with this exercise, try practicing with your dog standing in front of a wall or fence. This way, when you move her back, she has nowhere to go but into a sit. Then break the exercise into small steps. First click and treat your dog for putting her nose in the air. Then wait until she lowers her hindquarters and click and treat for that. Finally click and treat generously when your dog's bottom touches the ground.

When to practice.

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

Before giving your dog 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.

Before allowing your dog onto the couch with you.