

Leave it

This crucial Impulse Control game is a foundational tool that quickly teaches dogs to slow down, take a second and with advanced practice – pull away from a trigger.

1. Start by having a tasty treat in one hand and a piece of the same treat in the other hand. Put one hand in front of the dog's nose with the tasty treat enclosed in your fist. Tell him/her to Leave it one time and wait. Don't move your hand, or in any way react to your dog investigating the treat or your hand.
2. As soon as they look away or in any way take their attention off of your hand (even for a second), say Yes! and give them the treat from your other hand (tossing it on the ground is often easiest here). It typically takes less than 60 seconds for dogs to get off the hand but one dog made me wait as long as three minutes.
3. Repeat (you may need to put your 2nd hand behind your back)
4. Switch the treats to the opposite hands and repeat (expect the dog to be pushy again at first)
5. Repeat
6. Switch hands and repeat once more in each hand – for a minimum of 3x per hand (5 for some pushy or hyper-focused dogs). At this point most dogs have the game down so it's time to increase the challenge.
7. Place the tasty morsel on the ground and cup your hand over top. Let them investigate (again they'll be pushy at first, be patient) but as soon as they take their attention off of it, toss them a treat from their other hand. Repeat 3-5 times.
8. At this point, most dogs have the game down so increase the challenge again and
 - 🐾 wait for them to sit to give them the other treat
 - 🐾 wait 5 seconds to give them the treat – as they get better and better, wait 10 seconds
 - 🐾 Wait for them to pull away from the Leave it treat, before marking and treating them

If you repeat yourself or give your dog hints, it's like doing your kids homework....the problem gets solved but the activity isn't learned.....be patient and let them figure it out

The goal here is that once you say Leave it (one time), your dog takes their attention off of whatever it is: your dinner, a dog, a cat, anything, at any time.

Remember to always practice where your dog is most relaxed and anytime you practice some place new, make it easy again.

Look

Look is a game to create focus, help dogs who get nervous or give excited dogs something to anchor on.

Method #1

Put a treat in one hand, take it from your dogs nose up to your face. I typically have my index finger up. Move your hand slowly so your dog follows it with his/her gaze. Say yes! and give a treat, repeat. You're looking for short, quick glances at this point.



To extend the time they look at you, say Yes, quietly anytime they look toward your face – to encourage them to continue. Treat your dog from the hand that's not near your face.

To test them, put a treat in both hands and see if they look toward your face or your other hand

Test from a seated position, standing position, while your dog is on your left, right, in all locations and positions relative to you. This is how dogs become

superstars, is that we practice over and over and over again in all sorts of settings.

Once your dog is performing the behavior when you give the hand signal 80% of the time, it's time to add the verbal cue: Look, watch, eyes, whatever you'd like to say.

Method #2

Start with two types of treats, a low-value one like kibble and a high-value one like liver, cheese or hotdogs. Have some in each hand.

- 🐾 Sit on the floor with your dog. Toss a piece of kibble a couple of feet from you.
- 🐾 Wait till your dog comes back to you (don't worry they will on their own, if not only to investigate if you have any more treats!) and give them a piece of liver
- 🐾 Repeat, over and over again. The low value treat is tossed away from you and the high value treat is given to the dog when they approach you. Note – I want close, strong focus, so I encourage the dogs to get really close to me for the tasty treat.
- 🐾 As you continue practicing this game, get on your knees, sit in a chair, stand. Then take a step away from your dog and have them follow you – then give them the tasty morsel.
- 🐾 As your dog learns the game, add a hand signal and the word you'd like to use. Then begin practicing in different locations in different settings, under different circumstances, etc.