pranaDOGS

Helping to build a better relationship
between you and your best friend!

Treats!

Why? Let's face it we're impatient people and we want our dogs to learn quickly, that's why we use treats – because of their high value to dogs. Treats cause a reaction in dogs; they get excited, they start to drool – by creating this feeling in a dog and pairing it continuously with the word Yes! We are able to create an association which we can use in our favor.

What kind? It depends. If you're working at home or at a place you walk at a lot, you can probably get away with using your dog's kibble. If you're some place new or less well-known to your dog you'll need higher value treats like hotdogs, cheese, natural balance, cooked chicken, whatever it is your dog really loves – and if you have a Shepherd or other non-treat motivated dog, you may need to replace the treats with a tennis ball or toy. You'll need these same treats high-value treats for class sessions since your dog will be working in close proximity to other dogs.

Note….treats are a good indicator of a dog's stress level. If your dog won't eat a high-value treat, chances are he/she is too excited/overwhelmed or stressed.

How often? In the beginning you should be giving a treat for every correct response (and if your dog is really struggling for every almost correct response). Once your dog knows the behavior and is responding quickly put the treats behind your back, on the counter or somewhere else that is easy to get to but not within sight of your dog and start giving them randomly. R*emember randomly doesn't mean once in a great while, it means you should still be giving out a good amount of treats but requiring more behaviors from your dog for each of them.*

When? Timing is everything in dog training and behavior! It is very important that you mark the behavior as soon as it happens (as soon as your dog's butt touches the ground or as they're learning to stay or look at you). The easiest way to mark the behavior is to say Yes! as soon as it happens….even if it takes you a moment to give them a treat….be sure the Yes! is on time.

Associations

Dogs make Associations all the time. If you pick up their food bowl they know it's time to eat….they Associated you picking up their food bowl with eating. If you touch their leash or collar they think it's time to go for a walk; they made an Association between their leash and a walk.

We use that same philosophy when working with dogs. By pairing up a treat and the word Yes! we are able to have dogs form an Association. By pairing the word Yes! and giving a treat a lot in the beginning – and over and over again, when we do take out the treats, our word Yes! can have just as much value.

Shape the Behavior

Lure the dog into position using an object valued highly by the dog (treat, toy, affection)

After the dog is happily following your hand (with or without a treat) add the hand signal

Hand signals should be very large at first

Add the Cue

Add the word(s) you want to use to ask for the behavior:

- When dog is offering behavior on his/her own
- When behavior is consistent and reliable
- When the dog is going into position 80% of the time on a hand signal

Training Cycle

Dogs already know most of the behaviors we're 'teaching' them

Consider instead that we're just finding a common language that puts these behaviors on demand

Add Distance

- Ask dog for behavior from 2' away
- Repeat until dog is comfortable at distance
- Add 2 feet
- Repeat until dog is comfortable at distance
- Repeat

Add Duration

Mark the dog as soon as he/she goes into position with a Yes! and count to 5 then give them a treat

Repeat this a handful of times until the dog is comfortably waiting 5 seconds

Then Mark the dog once they go into position with a Yes! and repeat at 5 seconds, at 10 seconds give them a treat

Repeat over and over until dog is comfortably staying in position for 10 seconds

Add Distraction

Practice

- in different locations
- in different weather conditions
- with dogs around
- with kids around
- in stores
- with different noise present
- Weather conditions

Practice Duration, Distance and Distraction together!

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Building Better Relationships betweeen Dogs and their People

Key to Success

Notice and acknowledge 100% of time during the Training Cycle