

# Tips For Training

## Preparing to train:

- 🐾 A hungry dog will be more willing to work for his food
- 🐾 Use small, soft treats that are quickly swallowed
- 🐾 Use treats that are exciting, real food (chicken, steak, hot dogs, cheese)
- 🐾 Mix kibble with smelly good food (i.e. hotdogs) and store in refrigerator, after a while the kibble will soften and smell like hotdogs
- 🐾 Keep treats easily accessible
- 🐾 Have at least 3 different types of food in bag for best attention
- 🐾 Don't train when you are feeling rushed, impatient or angry
- 🐾 An especially high-energy dog will train better after some vigorous exercise (chasing a ball, Frisbee)

## Beginning training:

- 🐾 At the beginning of the first few sessions, charge the clicker
- 🐾 Deliver rewards quickly
- 🐾 Click as the dog does the behavior, timing is critical
- 🐾 Every click must get a reward... even accidental ones!
- 🐾 Lower value rewards (kibble) can be used for accidental clicks
- 🐾 Body language should be neutral
- 🐾 Make sure the click comes *before* the treat
- 🐾 Raise criteria (shaping plan steps) early in shaping, but always lower it if needed
- 🐾 A short break, tug or play between exercises keeps your dog fresher and more willing to learn
- 🐾 The clicker is **NOT** a remote control; don't use it to "get" your dog to do something
- 🐾 Always train new behaviors in a quiet, safe, distracting-free area

## Advancing training:

- 🐾 To add duration, wait a varying amount of time before clicking. Count in your head, 1 beat click, 4 beats click, 2 beats click

- 🐾 Use high value rewards (steak, cheese) for new behaviors; low value (kibble, cheerios) for established behaviors
- 🐾 Do not attempt to add a cue until the behavior is occurring 80% of the time
- 🐾 When adding a cue, say as the dog is performing the behavior
- 🐾 Once a cue is learned, only treat if the desired performance resulted when *you* asked for the behavior with the cue
- 🐾 Once your dog understands the behavior on cue, you can stop using the clicker for that behavior
- 🐾 If a behavior weakens, a few clicker sessions can be used to strengthen it again
- 🐾 As a behavior becomes reliable, add distractions to strengthen
- 🐾 Distractions = location, other dogs, children, noises, toys/treats on the ground nearby

### General tips:

- 🐾 Keep sessions short
- 🐾 The more you teach your dog, the easier it gets for your dog to learn and the better you become at teaching
- 🐾 Be consistent, your method may not be the same as someone else's but if you are consistent it will probably work
- 🐾 Keep it fun and positive
- 🐾 Train in short, frequent intervals
- 🐾 Use mealtime to train
- 🐾 Integrate training into your daily routine, walks, play, etc.
- 🐾 Exercise your dog daily
- 🐾 Involve the rest of the family in training
- 🐾 Have everyone be consistent with cues
- 🐾 For multiple dogs, work one at a time
- 🐾 Always maintain your dog in accordance with local laws
- 🐾 Use training and management to help him become a good canine citizen
- 🐾 Always have a collar and tags or ID that cannot be removed (microchip, tattoo)