

HOME COMPANION

Homework Assignment - Lesson #2

Review: Sit; Down, Attention

New: Stay, Release Word, Leave-it, Positive Reinforcement, Variable Reinforcement, Grooming

Sit/Stay

- (1) Dog on lead at your left side
- (2) Tell dog "sit", then treat & quiet praise
- (3) Tell dog "stay", treat at 5 seconds, then 10 seconds, continue to encourage the stay verbally ("Good Stay")
- (4) Release Word (no treat)

Do this 4-5 times twice a day, gradually increasing length of stay to 30 seconds. Do not move away from the dog yet! It is important that you don't change both the duration and the distance at the same time.

Eventually, the length of the stay will increase, the distance you are from your dog will increase, and the use of treats will decrease. As that happens, your dog will make mistakes. Just take one step back in your training (shorter stay, stay closer to your dog), make sure he/she has it down, then proceed.

Grooming

Work on making the dog lay quietly on its side allowing for touching all over, squeezing feet, feeling inside mouth, etc.

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Handout - Lesson #2 Leave-It

The "Leave-It" command means stop what you are doing and turn your body to face me. Once a dog understands "leave-it" you can use it to stop them from pulling towards other dogs or squirrels, from picking food off the ground, or from digging up the flowers.

"Leave-It" is intended to be used when your dog sees something of great interest that he would very much like to chase, eat, or investigate. At this moment you can use the "leave-it" and your dog should turn away from the object of desire to face you instead.

In order to teach "leave-it" you will need a very yummy (high value) treat in your pocket and a lesser value treat in your hand. Begin by putting the lesser value treat in your closed fist. Hold it out in front of your dog. Your dog will probably sniff and lick your hand. Wait him out. The moment your dog stops his attempts to get the treat from your fist, label the moment by saying "leave-it", praise him, and give him a very valuable treat from your pocket. Repeat this several times until your dog starts to understand and stops sniffing and licking your closed fist when you hold it out to him. Next slowly start opening your fist. Open your fingers a bit, present your hand to your dog and say "leave-it". If your dog tries to take the treat from your hand return to using a closed fist. Repeat this until you can present your open palm with a treat on it to your dog while you say "leave-it" without having your dog take the treat. Make sure you always praise and reward your dog for obeying the "leave-it" command.

Once your dog understands the "leave-it" command it is time to make things more interesting. Try placing the treat on the floor. You will want to keep your dog on leash to make sure he isn't able to reach the treat. When your dog looks at the treat on the floor say "leave-it", remember to praise and reward him for obeying the "leave-it" command. Next add movement. Place a treat on the floor and begin to walk your dog around the treat, if your dog shows interest in the treat say "leave-it" and reward the dog for turning away from the treat and toward you. If your dog has trouble understanding "leave-it" in this context, you can encourage him to do it correctly by walking away from treat yourself. As soon as your dog turns toward you praise and reward him.

In order for your dog to understand "leave-it" in many different contexts and in many different environments you will have to practice it everywhere. Bring some treats on your walk and when your dog shows interest in a squirrel say "leave-it" and praise and reward him for turning back and looking at you.