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# Dog Training 101

## Course Guidebook

Jean Donaldson
The Academy for Dog Trainers

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**Corporate Headquarters**
**4840 Westfields Boulevard, Suite 500**
**Chantilly, Virginia 20151-2299**
**Phone: 1-800-832-2412**
**Fax: 703-378-3819**
**www.thegreatcourses.com**

# Jean Donaldson

Founder and Principal Instructor
The Academy for Dog Trainers

Jean Donaldson is the founder and principal instructor of the Academy for Dog Trainers, which has trained and certified more than 700 trainers in evidence-based dog behavior, training, and private behavior counseling since 1999.

Ms. Donaldson is a four-time winner of the Dog Writers Association of America's Maxwell Medallion. Her books include *The Culture Clash*; *Mine! A Practical Guide to Resource Guarding in Dogs*; *Fight! A Practical Guide to the Treatment of Dog–Dog Aggression*; *Dogs Are from Neptune*; *Oh Behave! Dogs from Pavlov to Premack to Pinker*; and *Train Your Dog like a Pro*.

Born in Montreal, Canada, Ms. Donaldson founded the Montreal Flyball Association and Renaissance Dog Training, the first positive reinforcement–based school and counseling service in the province. Her own dogs and dogs she has trained have earned numerous titles and wins in various competitive dog sports.

While a student, Ms. Donaldson worked as an adoption counselor at the Montreal SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and later served on its board of directors. Before founding the Academy for Dog Trainers, Jean dealt exclusively with aggression cases for six years. She lives in Oakland, California, with her dog, Brian, adopted in 2015. ■

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## INTRODUCTION



## LESSON GUIDES

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

# Dog Training 101

## COURSE SCOPE

The objective of this course is to provide comprehensive instruction in basic dog training so that you will be able to:

- teach your dog the most commonly desired obedience behaviors;
- troubleshoot common behavior problems;
- understand key principles underlying modern dog training and extrapolate these to teach other behaviors not covered in the course; and
- understand and appreciate the normal—and fascinating—behavior of your dog.

The scope of the course is broad and will include both detailed how-to information on training obedience and tricks as well as information on how dog training works so that the process is demystified. By the end of the course, you will be a competent trainer, able to teach any dog—young or old, of any breed or variety—basic obedience, troubleshoot training problems, solve common behavior problems, and more accurately interpret behavior.

The course is based on the latest science about how animals learn and uses the most modern and efficient evidence-based methods.

### Topics Covered

- Translation of animal learning principles from laboratories to best practices in the messy real world

- Step-by-step field-tested plans to train the following:
  - sit, down, sit-stay, down-stay, come when called (including from distractions), leave it ("don't touch"), wait at doorways, walking nicely on leash, watch (make and maintain eye contact), stationing (stand-stay), heel, and a variety of tricks
- Proofing of basic obedience so that the dog performs reliably in a wide variety of contexts, including around common distractions
- Explanation, demonstration, and rehearsal of key technical skills and tricks of the trade, including motivation, criteria setting and criteria change, timing and physical mechanics, and the adding of cues
- Instruction of when and how to employ respondent conditioning to affect emotions rather than behavior
- Dog behavior, including how domestication has affected action patterns, breeds and behavior, the predatory behavior suite, and play
- Fear and aggression in dogs, including prevention exercises and the adaptive significance of the fight-or-flight response
- Troubleshooting of common behavior problems, such as barking, chewing, house soiling, and digging, as well as the latest environmental enrichment options
- Best practices in puppy rearing and socialization, dog development, and the behavioral wellness of senior dogs
- Teaching of husbandry behaviors so that dogs are relaxed, comfortable, and happy participants in grooming and basic veterinary care, including the vitally important toothbrushing (which can add years to a dog's life)

Lesson 1

# THE PRINCIPLES OF DOG TRAINING

This course will teach you to train your dog so that he's a more enjoyable companion. This lesson will lay some foundation by introducing you to 3 core principles of dog training, which will be woven throughout all the practices in this course. The craftier you are at leveraging these 3 principles, the faster and more effectively you will be able to train your dog.

## Principle 1: There Is No Free Lunch in Dog Training

- There is no free lunch in dog training. This principle is all about **motivation**. You're going to have to motivate your dog—and not with magical energy or a cult of personality, but concretely. All successful dog trainers motivate dogs concretely; they're just not all very transparent about it.
- All behavior has cost. And there must be offsetting benefit. This is a fundamental principle of evolution. Animals that behave willy-nilly—in animal training, it is called wasting your behavioral dollars—are outperformed on the evolutionary playing field.


Research suggests that we should employ much broader spacing than was traditionally taught to trainers—that training once a week is more efficient and produces better retention than more frequent sessions.

- Domestication has not altered this bedrock fact in dogs, despite what you may have heard about dogs having an inherent "desire to please." If your dog sits when you tell him to, it is entirely because he has some history of the carrot, the stick, or both.

- A Labradoodle named Valentino was running amok. He jumped on everybody, and at the park, it took his owner 20 minutes to collect him because he wouldn't come when called. He even played keep-away if his owner went after him.

- Valentino had been taught to sit, stay, and recall, but he wouldn't do any of these behaviors when it counted. In fact, he barely did them at all. The reason was very simple: He was never paid. And he was never paid because the owner felt entitled to his obedience. His owner expected obedience without what many people consider bribery. The owner wanted free lunch.

- Valentino had been trained in a way that is very common, but also very ineffective. There had been motivation at the beginning. The way it was framed was that food should be used to teach the behavior but that once the behavior was "learned," his owner's praise would be enough. Food or other motivation was no longer necessary. The owner could just command "sit" or "stay" or "come here" and Valentino would do it because he knew what to do and wanted his owner to be happy.

- In the jargon of animal training, Valentino's vital behaviors were on an extinction schedule. This means that when an animal does a particular behavior, he is not paid. And the more times he does the behavior without payment, the less reliable that behavior becomes. The behavior is moving toward extinction.

You may be convinced that your dog won't work for food, but every time your dog walks into the kitchen, approaches the bowl, lowers his head, and takes a bite, he's working for food.

- This type of training is one of the ways that professionals get rid of unwanted behavior. Think about this: The very behaviors that the owner most needed were on a regime that professional animal trainers employ as a dedicated strategy to kill behavior.

- This well-meaning owner's critical error was conflating what Valentino was supposed to do with why he should do it. Trainers call this the what/why distinction. In spite of the "teaching" explanation, the food that was used for the first bunch of repetitions wasn't merely instructional. It was his paycheck. And when the pay stopped, so did his behavior.

> If your dog is healthy, he is most likely motivated by food.

- When Valentino stopped performing, his owner—understandably—got upset. From his owner's perspective, he clearly "knew" because his owner had witnessed his obedience in those early repetitions. So, when he stopped obeying, his owner couldn't help but invoke the trilogy: stubborn, willful, and dominant. But Valentino wasn't any of those things. His behavior was just being governed by lawful principles. Extinction is nothing personal; it's just the law.

- Once the owner instituted paychecks, Valentino's behavior fell into line. The paycheck analogy is useful, but there are important caveats to the parallels between your motivations and those of your dog. We are all susceptible to laws governing reward and punishment, but you have motivations that your dog does not.

- You probably do all kinds of things that don't pay you immediately, directly, or tangibly. You throw behavioral dollars at achieving a sense of accomplishment or maintaining your health in the future. You contribute to the common good, and you perform work to make others happy. You do all of this without concrete or immediate compensation.

**Playing Tug**

You might have been cautioned to not play tug with your dog—or, if you did play, you should win the game, otherwise power struggles and mayhem would ensue. But research has turned up no link between playing tug and any behavior problems, including aggression directed at you.

Tug, which used to be conceived of as a competition to win the toy, is actually a cooperative behavior. The origin of tug is predation. Tug is actually not you versus the dog; it's you and the dog versus the toy, which serves as a surrogate for prey.

Choose tug toys that are big enough to give you a good grip and soft enough that there's no risk they'll damage teeth.

- Your dog does not, and he will not. He needs immediate, concrete compensation for most of the things you want him to do. He doesn't think that staying and coming when called are inherently valuable. To him, they're actually kind of dumb. They even interfere with goals that he thinks are inherently valuable, such as staying at the park, chasing a cat down the street, or licking your face when you come home.

- You might have human-specific motivations, such as philanthropy, but, like your dog, you wouldn't crank out copious behavior you think is intrinsically dumb. For example, even if you like your job, you probably wouldn't do it if your employer said, "No more paychecks. From now on, praise from your supervisor is good enough."

- Dogs require immediate positive reinforcement. The only alternative to positive reinforcement is a protection racket: If he doesn't do it, you hurt or scare him. Luckily, you don't have to resort to that. There are plenty of tools to accomplish training goals without threats or violence.

- Most dogs must be paid to do what we want, but some dogs are bred to want to do certain things. For example, border collies and many lines of sporting dog find retrieving inherently enjoyable. Some will retrieve without being rewarded for doing so. If we happen to want them to retrieve, it can look like a violation of the no-free-lunch principle. But in that case, it's a happy alignment of what the dog wants to do in the first place with what we find useful.

## Principle 2: The Dog Has to Feel Safe

- Your dog has to feel safe. If he's worried or afraid, this is going to trump everything else, and training will go nowhere. So, you must be competent at recognizing and addressing fear.

- Like principle 1, principle 2 is about motivation. Animals are not able to focus on puzzles—which is what training is—if there is a perceived safety emergency. Everything is kicked to the curb if there is any immediate threat to life or limb.

- Low-grade fear—dogs who are a little worried or a little anxious—is usually ignored. Well-meaning owners don't see it, misdiagnose it, or dismiss it. The dog is being a drama queen. This is not a helpful position to take.
- For most people, there is a gap between how well they think they read their dog's body language and how well they actually do.
- Low-grade fear is one of the most commonly missed things. It interferes with training, and owners are left puzzled and frustrated. What is the matter with this dog? He's stubborn. He's got a mind of his own. He's a big mystery. But these explanations are all incorrect. Sometimes, the dog just has bigger fish to fry.
- Before you begin training, pay close attention to your dog's perceived level of safety. If your dog doesn't feel safe, address that before doing anything else.

## Food Rewards and Other Gear You Need

- Go-to types of food reinforcement include commercial dog treats (especially ones that have short lists of whole ingredients) as well as diced chicken breast with Pecorino Romano cheese. Audition treats to see what your dog most values. Choose treats that are really small but really tasty.

- Bait bags are pouches that hold dog treats. You can line your bait bag with a sandwich or freezer bag, but most brands are washable, so you don't have to. You can also use a fanny pack or, when you don't need to store much volume, just your pockets.

- Training off leash gives you the best read on how your dog is doing and keeps both your hands free. The one exception is when you work on pulling on leash. The options for pulling on leash used to be exclusively pain-based: choke and prong collars. The use of pain as motivation carries side effects, is ethically less defensible, and is just not necessary. There are now anti-pull harnesses and head halters, which cut pulling mechanically, by attaching at the front of the chest or head. Most dogs instantly accept anti-pull harnesses, but head halters, because they have a loop on the dog's face, should undergo some desensitization and counterconditioning before being used.

- In addition to chicken, your dog probably loves walks, car rides, and going to the park. He also probably likes toys and likes to fetch, tug, or both. Stop always giving away big-ticket motivators—such as food, door-opening services, and play—for free. Almost all of the time, you're probably paying your dog without getting anything in return. It's important to recognize each of these motivators as a training opportunity.

## Principle 3: Training Is a Step-by-Step Process

- Training is a step-by-step process; it's a gradual, cumulative building of behaviors. There is no "knowing." No dog knows "sit," "stay," or "come here." And importantly, there's no knowing followed by willful disobedience. There are just shades of gray of level of difficulty and shades of gray of probability of the behavior happening when we want it to.

- Principle 1 gets at the economic reality of behavior having expense—no motivation, no training—while principle 2 gets at the trumping motivation of fear and how it renders everything else irrelevant. This means that 2/3 of the key principles in dog training are about motivation—about *why* problems. But there are also *what* problems in dog training. The dog may have plenty of motivation and feel completely safe but still gets the behavior wrong. This is where the third principle comes in: Training is a step-by-step process.

- People can struggle with this principle, and it's easy to understand why. The dog is witnessed doing exactly what the owner wants. He sits when asked. He comes when he's called. He refrains from jumping on people. And the owner then makes the following leap: The dog "knows" the behavior.

- Then, at some later time, with good motivation on board and no fear present, the dog doesn't sit or doesn't come when called. And this is chalked up to the dog knowing what he's supposed to do but refusing on principle. It's a power play. He's being dominant, or defiant, or stubborn—some variation on the theme of insubordination.

- A competent professional trainer knows that this is a partially trained behavior. And once again, it's nothing personal; it's just an unfinished project.

- The way that dogs learn "sit," "down," "stay," and "come here" is a procedural type of learning. The behavior becomes more fluent only with the accumulation of practice—lots of repetition and gradual, carefully scaled increases in level of difficulty.

- Trainers refer to this varying level of difficulty as **criteria**, which is shorthand for criteria for reinforcement. Criteria represent your contract with the dog. What exactly does he have to do to be paid?

- Good trainers break things down so that criteria are escalated gradually. This ensures that the dog will get it right often enough to keep trying. Even the most motivated dog will stop trying if the game is unwinnable.

## GLOSSARY TERMS:

**criteria** • Competent dog training is a very step-by-step process. Raising the level of difficulty on a behavior is called pushing or raising criteria. Only push when the dog is demonstrating mastery at the current level of difficulty. For example, if your dog is fluent at down-stay for up to 3 seconds at Starbucks, immediately bumping the level of difficulty up to 10 seconds in a noisy playground is an error. Criteria steps in training plans can be broken down into their parameters. So, for example, there are the 3 Ds: distraction, distance, and duration.

**motivation** • No properly functioning living organism will do something for nothing. And in spite of cinematic attempts to portray dogs as having a "desire to please," dogs are not exempt, and require concrete motivation. If you operationalize the actions of trainers who make claims to the contrary, you find that they inevitably use motivators such as choke collars, pain, harassment, or intimidation but package this in obfuscating language (e.g., "leadership," "balance," "energy," "pack"). It is much better to be transparent about motivation. And all research suggests that the use of pain, fear, and confrontation in dog training is unnecessary, unsafe, side effect–laden, and inhumane. So, before trying to get behavior, increase levels of difficulty, or get cues going, be sure that you've given your dog reason to perform. Failure to address motivation in animal training represents gross technical incompetence.

## SUGGESTED READING


- Bradshaw, *Dog Sense*.
- Demant, Ladewig, and Balsby, "The Effect of Frequency and Duration of Training Sessions on Acquisition and Long-Term Memory in Dogs."
- Herron, Shofer, and Reisner, "Survey of the Use and Outcome of Confrontational and Non-Confrontational Training Methods in Client-Owned Dogs Showing Undesired Behaviors."
- Meyer and Ladewig, "The Relationship between Number of Training Sessions per Week and Learning in Dogs."
- Todd, Companion Animal Psychology Website, https://www.companionanimalpsychology.com.

Lesson 2

# GETTING THE BEHAVIOR: TRAINING MECHANICS

Trainers find the process of training intrinsically rewarding. Most owners, by contrast, want the product. They want a trained dog, but the grind of training is usually an odious chore. The sheer amount of repetition can make an owner feel like nothing is happening or something must be wrong. A goal of this course is to get you excited to train your dog. You might even find the process intrinsically fun and interesting. But if you don't, this course will make training as painless and as fun as possible. And if you put in the legwork, you will get results.

## Operant Conditioning

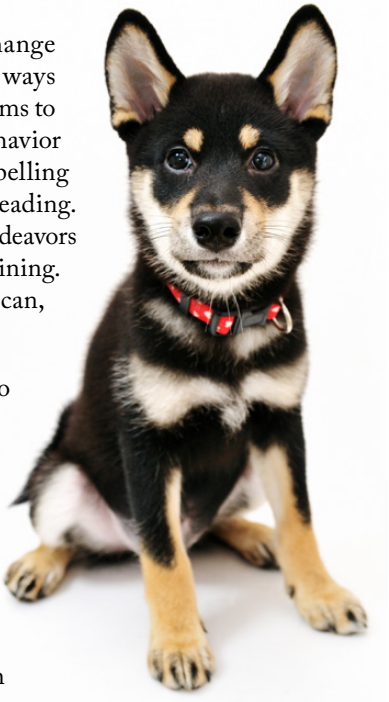
- **Operant conditioning** is the manipulation of behavior via the manipulation of consequences—the dog operating on his environment to achieve outcomes. This is a fully exploitable system, because we control most of the stuff that dogs want.

- The particular method that is used in this course draws from the rules of operant conditioning laid down by B. F. Skinner, as well as his early graduate students and intellectual descendants, Marian and Keller Breland and Bob Bailey.

- These 4 took the basic principles out of the laboratory and into applied settings—the messy and distracting real world. They trained thousands of animals of scores of species to do just about anything you can imagine, and with stunning reliability and efficiency.

- And these 4 people have a lot to tell us about dog training technique. First, know your criteria, which represent your contract with the dog: What exactly does he have to do to win? Second, use a training plan. Detailed training plans for all the behaviors in this course can be found in the Training Plans Appendix. The more faithfully you adhere to them, the better you will do.

- The next technical skill is how we change criteria. Specifically, do we do so empirically or by intuition? The answer is empirically. You will use objective measures to progress—or go backward—in the training plans. You will train in **sets** of 5 repetitions and count how many the dog gets right. If he gets 4 or 5 out of 5 correct, then you will make it harder. This is called pushing; you push to the next step in the plan. If he gets 3 right, you will repeat that step. This is called sticking. You do another set of 5 repetitions at the same level. And if he gets 2 or fewer correct, then you will go back one step. This is called dropping; you drop back one step.



- The alternative to empirical criteria change is training by feel, which is one of the ways amateurs get themselves in trouble. "He seems to understand." "I think he's got it." "The behavior looks fluent enough to me." However compelling it might feel, human intuition can be misleading. We inflate and deflate how well we think endeavors are going, and this makes for inefficient training. In fact, trainers with the very best instincts can, at best, match empirical criteria change.

- The specific thing that happens to those who train by feel is that they inevitably end up with a suboptimal **rate of reinforcement**, which is the number of reinforcement **events** per unit of time (usually per minute). Training with a vetted plan and empirical **push-drop-stick** will keep you in the rate of reinforcement Goldilocks zone for novice animals, which is 8 to 12 per minute—not too high and not too low.

- So, you will push, drop, or stick depending on the numbers. You will also sometimes do what's called splitting. A **split** is an extra step that you insert into a training plan when a dog is stuck between steps. The previous step is too easy, but the next one is too hard.

- You know that it's time to split after 2 attempted pushes. For example, you get a 5 for 5 on step 2 and a 1 for 5 on step 3, so you drop back to step 2, repeat the process, and the same thing happens: a 5 for 5 and then a 1 for 5. When you attempt any push twice and the dog can't do it, that's your indication to split—to come up with step 2.5. Sometimes it's easy to come up with what that half point will look like. If the dog is nailing a 5-second stay but twice flunks a 10-second stay, a good split would be 7 or 8 seconds.

- Other times it is more difficult and more qualitative. In the training plans you will be using, there are a few spots where a known minority of dogs typically need splits. There are alternative plans with these extra splits, and your dog might need one or more of them. But your dog might need splits at less common spots, so you might have to brainstorm on your own.
- The next technical point is when to attach **cues** to behavior. This will happen further on in the process than you're probably used to. Most of the time, you are going to build behavior—go pretty far along in a training plan—before you ever say "sit," or "down," or whatever the cue is going to be.

Why do trainers use the term "cues" rather than "commands"? Cues are just information to animals that a contingency is in effect and what specifically he can do to be reinforced. We can't command behavior the way we command a computer. Behavior is pulled by consequences, not pushed by cues. Even old-school trainers who use a ton of coercion can't command behavior. They can only cue their contingency: Do it, or else.

- How do you make the behavior happen in the first place so that you can reinforce it and make it stronger? There are 3 ways:

  - Prompting. You help and coach the dog to do the action you want. For example, if you want to train him to spin in a circle, you can get him to follow a toy. Once he does the behavior, you pay him, maybe with that same toy or maybe with a **treat** in your pocket. After several repetitions, you can start to reduce that prompt so that the dog performs more and more on his own. This is called **fading** a prompt.

  - **Capturing**. This means being observant and paying the dog whenever he happens to do the behavior spontaneously. Over time, it increases in frequency. For example, some small dogs spin in circles at times all by themselves. If, whenever he spins, you praise him or give him a tidbit, he'll spin more and more over time. This is lawful. When the spinning is at a sufficiently elevated frequency, you can attach a cue to it.

  - **Shaping**. This means paying an approximation, a partial version of the target behavior. For example, if a dog never spins in a circle, you could pay him for turning just a little to his right. He starts turning to his right more often. Because behavior is always variable, some of those turns to the right go a little farther while others go a little less far. You selectively pay those slightly farther turns to the right, and they increase in frequency. Then, you select the turns that are even a little farther than that. You do this until eventually the dog is spinning in a circle.

- In actual practice, these 3 methods are not mutually exclusive. For example, you will very often prompt approximations of target behaviors. And you will prompt behavior in sessions, but you might also capture it if it occurs spontaneously between sessions.

One habit you need to break is that of chanting cues—of saying "sit" or "down" more than once. The cue isn't "sit-sit-sit." It's "sit." Cueing behavior is like tennis. Once you've given a cue, you've volleyed the ball to the dog. It's his turn. He either does the behavior or he doesn't. Then, it's your turn again. You pay or you don't. This whole process is made muddy by stuttering cues over and over.

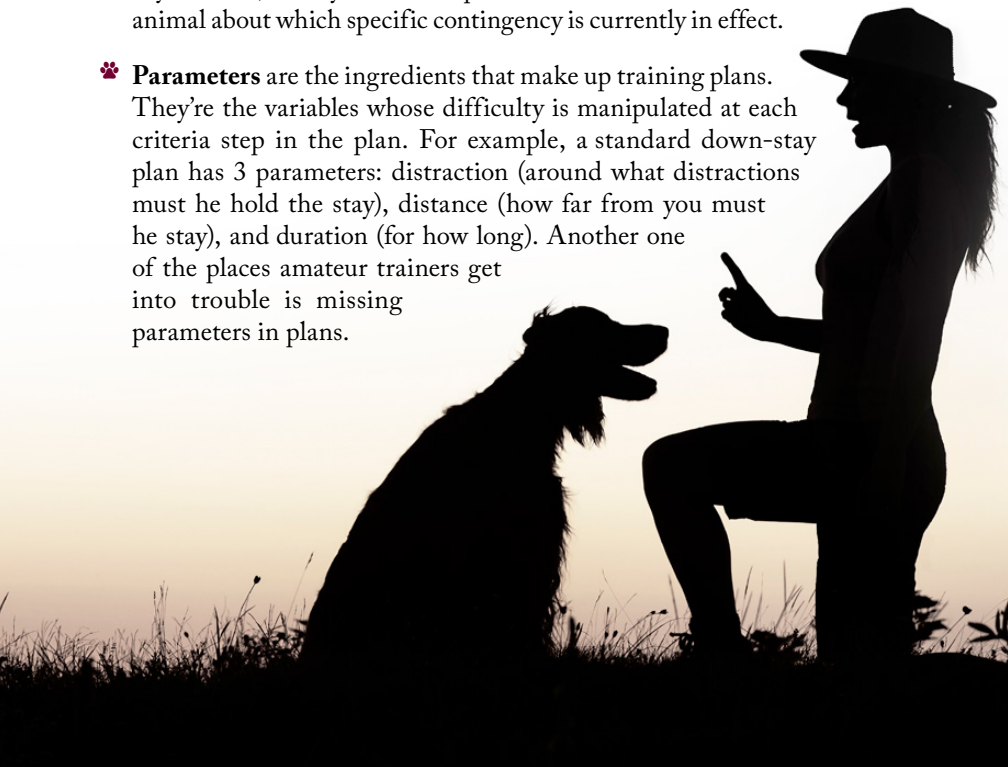
## Animal Jargon

- **Trials** and reps are the same thing. Any instance of you asking in some way for a behavior, the dog doing the behavior (or not), and you paying (or not) is a rep or a trial.

- Events are the smallest unit. They are the atoms that make up the molecules of trials or reps. For example, a cue, such as "sit," is an event. A prompt is an event. The dog sitting is an event. You paying him is an event.

- In operant conditioning, there are 3 events: an antecedent, which will be a prompt, hand signal, or verbal cue; a behavior, or a behavior fail; and a consequence, which might be the dog getting paid or the dog not getting paid. The latter 2 events are a contingency: If you sit, then you are paid; if you don't, then you are not paid. The cue is information to the animal about which specific contingency is currently in effect.

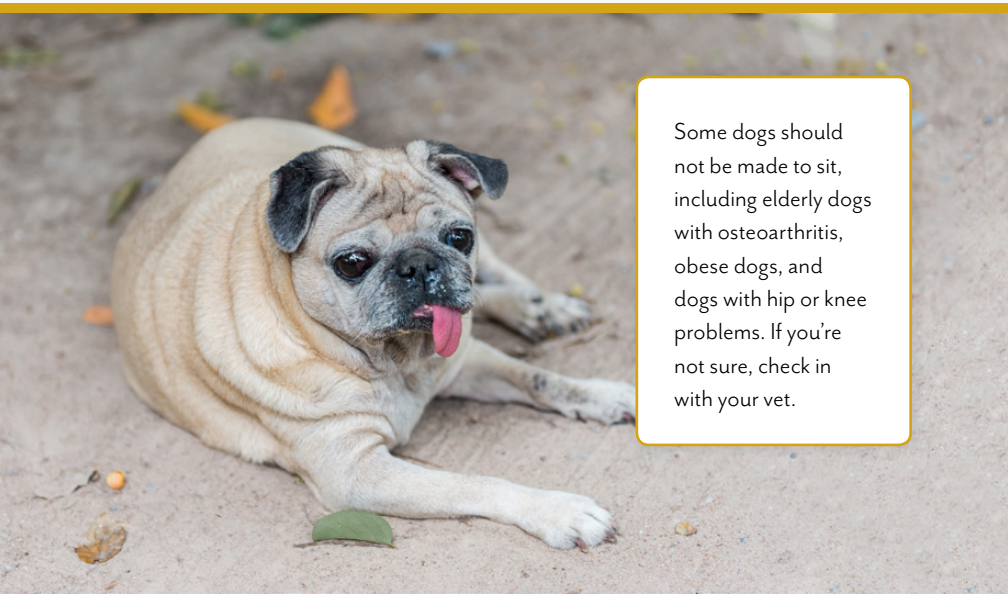
- **Parameters** are the ingredients that make up training plans. They're the variables whose difficulty is manipulated at each criteria step in the plan. For example, a standard down-stay plan has 3 parameters: distraction (around what distractions must he hold the stay), distance (how far from you must he stay), and duration (for how long). Another one of the places amateur trainers get into trouble is missing parameters in plans.



## Your First Training Session

- In your first training session, go easy on yourself and on your dog.
- What are the priorities? What technical pieces should you care about?
  - Paying. When your dog gets it right, pay him with something he really values. Pay every time until you are told otherwise.
  - **Feeding for position**. Pay a sit while the dog is in a sit. Pay a down while the dog is in a down.
  - Adhering to plan and criteria change discipline. Use the plans and do your best to count. Push on 4 or 5, stick on 3, and drop on 2 or fewer. Don't go rogue.
- What should you not care about?
  - Keeping perfect count. Do your best. This doesn't mean don't count at all; just don't sweat losing count. Everybody does.
  - Clumsy **mechanics**. You'll get better at not dropping bait with practice.
  - Your dog's pace of learning. He may need many, many criteria drops and splits, or very few, or it might change depending on the task. He'll get better at learning the more you train him.
- The first behavior is sit from a standing position, which is not the same as sit from a down. Sit is a Swiss Army knife for greeting, jumping up, requesting services, and saying please.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 2 and **Sit from Stand: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.



Some dogs should not be made to sit, including elderly dogs with osteoarthritis, obese dogs, and dogs with hip or knee problems. If you're not sure, check in with your vet.

- The next behavior is down from a sitting position, which is not the same as down from a standing position. With this behavior, make sure to immediately cancel reps for "popping," or standing. There are 3 types of down: sphinx down, rolled-on-hip down, and "bang" (lateral recumbency) down.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 2 and **Down from Sit: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- As you start to train, it's going to feel contrived and clunky, even if you've trained a dog before. This course prompts you to work in a very specific way, and it's going to take practice. Do your best to follow the big-ticket rules: Pay. Pay in position. Stick to the plan. Keep count as best you can, and change criteria—push, drop, or stick—based on those numbers. You'll get better as you go along.

- And notice how much fun your dog is having. For him, it's mental stimulation, interaction with you, and winning prizes all rolled into one.

## GLOSSARY TERMS:

**capturing** • This is one way to get the behavior in order to reinforce it. Rather than coaching the dog to do the desired action (prompting) or reinforcing a partial version of it (shaping), the trainer waits and monitors and, when the dog *happens to* do the desired behavior, pays him. For example, if every time your dog yawned you paid him, yawning would increase in frequency. Eventually, he would yawn often enough that you would be able to wager that he's about to do it, so you could give a cue ("are you bored?") right before he does and then reward as usual. After a while on this regime, you could safely switch to only paying when he yawned after the cue.

**cue** • This is a signal to the animal about what behavior to perform. Dog training uses mostly verbal cues (such as "sit") and hand signals. The most common error in novice trainers is prematurely attempting to cue behavior that has not yet been built. For example, even if you clearly and forcefully tell your dog to "sit" when he really hasn't mastered that behavior, no amount of cueing will make him able to comply. This doesn't mean that he's stubborn; it means that you're trying to cue weak behavior. Good training technique is very thoughtful about when a cue is brought into the picture. It's counterproductive to do so prematurely.

**event** • This is any instance of a stimulus or response. Events are the units that make up trials. Operant conditioning needs 3 events to occur: an antecedent (a cue or a prompt, including a trainer just standing there waiting for behavior in a shaping session, which counts as a prompt for the dog to "try something"), the behavior, and a consequence. Classical conditioning needs 2 events: a conditioned stimulus ("here it comes…") and an unconditioned stimulus ("it").

**fading** • This is the systematic reduction and then elimination of a prompt. For example, after prompting sits by raising the dog's head with a food target in her hand, the trainer then fades this to a similar hand gesture, but without food, and then a more stylized gesture, and then, if desired, a verbal cue is brought in to replace the hand signal (the gesture). Competent trainers know how and when to fade prompts. A common novice error is to reduce rewards

as prompts are faded. The novice then either blames the dog for being a show-me-the-money type or else blames the technique of prompting for "creating dependency." Effective trainers teach dogs that faded or no-prompt versions of behaviors are as likely—or even more likely—to be paid as prompted versions. In other words, you can train your dog to perform better when he doesn't see rewards up front.

**feeding for position** • The physical delivery of pay is an opportunity to position an animal strategically. This is why it's good practice to pay down-stays while the dog is still in the down, rather than releasing the dog from the down-stay and then feeding. Anticipation of getting up to collect payment would result in a shakier down-stay, even if a conditioned reinforcer is used. Trainers also feed strategically to set up the next repetition in the set. And although the expression is *feed* for position, it refers to the strategic delivery of any type of reinforcer. For example, flyball racing trainers use tug toys to pay their dogs for fast return over the hurdles. Because a huge part of the desired behavior is speed, the toy is thrown in the direction of travel, so the dog must chase after it to collect it. The dog accelerates in anticipation, which helps the cause.

**mechanics** • A trainer's hands-on fluency, speed, and coordination are her mechanics. You may have encyclopedic knowledge of learning theory, all motivational ducks in a row, and a genius dog, but if your mechanics are not good, training will be less efficient. Because it is a procedural skill, the only way to improve mechanics is to train a lot.

**operant conditioning (OC)** • This is learning through consequences. Animals learn what behaviors get them rewards and what behaviors get them painful or scary stuff, as well as what behaviors terminate rewards and what behaviors result in relief from painful or scary stuff. The laws governing all of this were worked out decades ago. While this kind of hard-core behaviorism has fallen (rightly) out of favor in human psychology circles, it is a virtual gold mine for animal trainers.

**parameters** • These are the pieces of the puzzle that make up a level of difficulty (or criteria) on an exercise. For example, if you're practicing a 30-second down-stay while you go pretend to answer the door 10 feet from your dog, your parameters are distance (10 feet), duration (30 seconds), and distraction (door being opened). A good trainer is an organized trainer—very aware of her parameters. Pushing, dropping, and sticking involves playing with parameters, usually one at a time and in small increments so that the dog is successful most of the time. *See also* **criteria**.

**push-drop-stick** • Push means progress to the next level of difficulty in a training plan. Stick means train another set at the current level of difficulty. Drop means go back to the previous level of difficulty in the plan for the next set. A good trainer is highly systematic, having a set push standard, such as 5 out of 5; a set stick standard, such as 3 or 4 out of 5; and a set drop standard, such as 2 or fewer out of 5. Without this, you're really flailing around. Some trainers—usually newbies—think their instincts are so incredible that they can subjectively decide when to push, drop, or stick, but for maximum efficiency, the strong recommendation is to train in a disciplined way, with objective push-drop-stick standards and a good incremental plan.

**rate of reinforcement** • This refers to the raw number of reinforcers delivered to the dog per unit of time. Trainers typically calculate rate by the minute. So, if a trainer does a few sets and her coach says "your rate is 9," it means that the dog is being paid 9 times per minute. Rate has nothing to do with the 4 for 5 or 5 for 5 stuff. Rate is on the clock. Factors that influence rate are how incremental the training plan is, the trainer's push-drop-stick standards, the inter-trial latency, and how long it takes the dog to perform the behavior. By definition, a 2-minute down-stay has a maximum possible rate of 1/2 per minute (1 reinforcer every 2 minutes if the dog gets it right and all the other factors affecting rate are maxed out). Beginner animals are very rate-sensitive. A very common mistake that beginner trainers and pet owners make is a rate that is too low. Whether it's puritanical stinginess, poor mechanics, pushing prematurely, or a plan that's not gradual enough, the resulting low rate will inevitably result in an

unmotivated, distractible, or quitting-prone dog. A lot of novice-handled dogs get labeled stubborn, stupid, distractible, or dominant for this very reason. For beginner animals, the target rate is 10 per minute. Intermediate and advanced animals (who are hooked on training) can tolerate much lower rates. But you'll never get your dog hooked if you train badly.

**set** • This is a specific number of repetitions—usually 3, 5, or 10—of an exercise. For example, a trainer will do a set of five 2-second down-stays and then take stock: How many of the 5 did the dog get right? The number in the set is the denominator, and the number the dog got right and was reinforced for is the numerator. This fraction is then used to decide whether to push, drop, or stick: to raise criteria, stick at the current criteria for another set, or drop to the previous criteria in the training plan. It is strongly recommended that you train in sets of 5, or even 10.

**shaping** • This refers to building behaviors by rewarding a series of approximations of an action. It is the best—actually, only—way to get behavior the animal never does (and therefore can't be captured) and can't be prompted to do. For example, you reward your dog for brief instances of a behavior. When your dog becomes fluent at the behavior, you will probably start to see some very good instances of the behavior some of the time, and you now reinforce the dog for these. If you had held out for perfection—or even very good instances of the behavior—in those early sessions, your dog would never (or nearly never) have been reinforced, and it would have taken much longer for him to acquire the behavior you were after. A good trainer always, without exception, sets criteria at a level the subject is already achieving with a frequency that supports the desired rate of reinforcement. In this respect, all good training involves shaping principles.

**split** • This is a fourth option at the end of any set—aside from the usual push, drop, or stick options. It means finding a criteria level between the last fluent level and the level the dog is having trouble with. For example, let's say that you're teaching heeling. The dog can do 6 steps in perfect position with no visible lure in your driveway. You do 5 repetitions of this 6-step exercise and pay every time—a clear push. You move to the sidewalk and do the same 6-step exercise and the dog gets 1 out of 5—a clear drop. So, you go back

to the driveway: 5 out of 5. Then, you go to the street: 0 out of 5 this time. You need something in between: a split. There are a lot of split options here. You could reduce the number of steps your dog has to do on the sidewalk. You could bring back a partial lure. You could move more gradually down the driveway toward the sidewalk. Or you could do a combination of these. If you find yourself splitting all the time, it's a sign that your plans aren't incremental enough.

**treat** • This is a food reward. Most of the professionals call this "bait" or "pay," possibly because the word "treat" implies an extra or something rare and special, whereas in most animal training, food rewards are used very extensively.

**trial** • This is one instance of a behavior and consequence. You prompt a recall. The dog comes. You pay. That's 1 trial. You prompt another recall. The dog doesn't come. You don't pay. That's another trial. Now he's 1 for 2 in your set of 5—and so on.

Lesson 3

# GETTING THE BEHAVIOR: SIT AND DOWN

In this lesson, you will continue working with the behaviors sit and down, and add some more behaviors. You might have blasted through the first two steps of sit and down without much issue, or you might have gotten stuck. And that's particular to sit and down at this stage. Specifically, you might have been unable to prompt your dog into position. And your dog might have gone belly-up once the food was out of your hand. This lesson will take you through the standard splits—intermediate steps—for these 2 fairly common issues.

## Sit and Down

- Plan B for sit and down is for dogs who are not readily prompted. Dogs who often need plan B include dogs with greyhound-like builds, for whom sit is awkward, and some small dogs who can readily target a down prompt with minimal crouching.

- When you try to **lure** your dog into a sit, he might rear up onto his hind legs, especially if he is small and possibly worried about the lure. This is the type of dog that needs plan B for sit, where you gradually shape the dog to sit rather than just prompting him outright.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Sit from Stand: Plan B** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Once your dog has been shaped to sit, you can shape a down using plan B for down.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Down from Sit: Plan B** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Plan C for sit and down is for dogs who get stuck between steps 1 and 2 of plan A.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Sit from Stand: Plan C** and **Down from Sit: Plan C** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Even though the end result is the same, sit from down is not the same as sit from stand. Different actions and muscles are involved. Sit from stand involves a motor pattern of the dog rocking back; sit from down involves the dog pushing himself up. Humans can conceptualize the destination of sit being something that you do regardless of where you were previously, but dogs learn the actual muscle movements. Luckily, though, we can eventually call them both sit, because dogs can learn that when they're already in a down and hear "sit," that's the one where they push up.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Sit from Down** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Stationing

- Stationing means to hold position while something else is being done. This sets up later veterinary care and husbandry, such as having your dog's teeth brushed, being groomed, and having his mouth and ears examined.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Stationing Muzzle Hold** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- The brief form of stationing is called targeting. If duration is added, it is referred to as stationing.

- If your dog is very fearful of the muzzle hold, do the chin rest alternative.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Stationing (Hand Targeting) Alternative Plan: Chin Rest** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Watch

- Watch means to make and maintain eye contact. This is useful if your dog tends to lunge toward or go after something he sees on walks, or just if you want your dog to attend to you.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Watch** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- With a **Premack watch**, you give your dog a choice between food and eye contact, and he will choose the wrong one. David Premack was a psychologist who reframed the concept of positive reinforcement from involving a thing—food—to a behavior—eating. **Premack's principle** states that any high-probability behavior, such as eating, can be used to boost a lower-probability behavior in frequency.

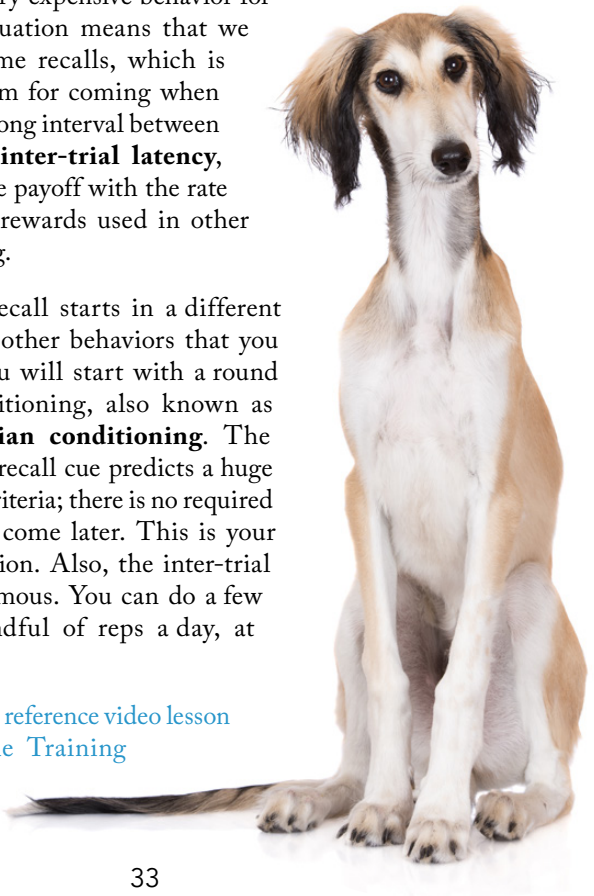
- With a Premack watch, the low-probability behavior is looking away from the food in one of your hands. The high-probability behavior is eating. You can increase the behavior of looking away from the food and toward your

eyes by prompting your dog with your voice and reinforcing the behavior of looking away from the food and making eye contact with you by paying as soon as he does this. This behavior is very counterintuitive for dogs. Their whole lives teach them that the way to get things is to move toward them, not to turn away from them.

## Recall

- Coming when called is vitally important for people. It is also a very expensive behavior for most dogs. This equation means that we don't nickel-and-dime recalls, which is the dog training term for coming when called. Contrast the long interval between repetitions, called **inter-trial latency**, along with handsome payoff with the rate sensitivity and tiny rewards used in other tasks you are training.

- Training a dog to recall starts in a different way than all of the other behaviors that you will be training. You will start with a round of respondent conditioning, also known as classical or **Pavlovian conditioning**. The exercise is that your recall cue predicts a huge party. There are no criteria; there is no required behavior. That will come later. This is your secret sauce foundation. Also, the inter-trial latency will be enormous. You can do a few reps or a small handful of reps a day, at random times.



For proper technique, reference video lesson 3 and **Recall** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Choose a novel recall cue or sound, something that will roll off your tongue easily when you're flustered and need your dog to come to you in an emergency. If you've already put some mileage on a preexposed word, such as "come," and still want to use it, you can, but you do get a nice advantage if you use a novel cue.

- It's critically important to not wait for or expect behavior. Don't dilute your contingency (the sound). There are a few ways to do this that will help your cause:

  - Bait bag fashion shows. Load your bait pouch and wear it around the house but don't dispense any to your dog.

  - Bridge and fridge. Utter the cue, wait a few seconds, and then invite your dog to the fridge for the preprepared party.

- Your goal is to have a dog who dreams of these spectacular parties and specifically knows what tells him one is about to occur. Dogs have long learning histories of our prepping of treats, the smell of treats, us wearing bait pouches, and so on, predicting the good stuff—because it usually does.

- But you don't want a dog who's going to have a stellar recall when these items are present. You want just the recall cue itself to get "loaded." Note that you are front-loading the cue. The competing stimuli of bait prep, and so on, don't matter as much for sit, down, and other behaviors. But for the recall, which is expensive for the dog, you can really help yourself with fastidious attention to this detail.

- Do a variety of behaviors—such as bait bag fashion shows, bridge and fridge, and caching (hiding food)—and alternate them. You want the one common denominator to be your recall cue.

- Finally, protect this delicate, fledgling recall. Don't try to use it yet. Build it first. If you actually need your dog to come to you at the park or from the yard, do whatever you've been doing up until now. Don't conflate building with using; you're just starting to build.

## GLOSSARY TERMS:

**inter-trial latency (ITL)** • In training, any instance of behavior-consequence is called a trial, or a repetition (rep). The interval between repetitions is the inter-trial latency. For example, let's say that you're practicing sit. You prompt the sit and then pay the dog when he does it. There's your trial or rep. You then get the dog back onto his feet somehow for the next rep. How long it takes you to do this—to muck around before the next rep—is your ITL. The best trainers have very short ITLs. They don't take coffee breaks, chitchat, or flounder around between reps. They do another one, and another one, and another one. An efficient trainer can do a dozen rewarded repetitions of sit in the time it takes a novice to do 2 or 3 because the novice is fumbling mechanically (or editorializing about the dog's stubbornness or personality). ITL is one of the factors that determines rate of reinforcement.

**lure** • This is a particular type of prompt, one that is attractive and the dog follows, usually with his nose. Food lures are the most common kind. It is very efficient to move a dog through space and, by so doing, "get the behavior" by having him follow a food lure. Luring well takes a bit of practice. This same lure can then be used as a reward, or something else can be used as the reward, depending on your strategy.

**Pavlovian conditioning** • In Pavlovian conditioning, an animal learns about predictive relationships in the environment. Animals learn patterns: what leads to what. Leashes coming out of the closet leads to walks, 5 p.m.

consistently predicts dinner, picking up your briefcase predicts you leaving for a long time, and so on. This is very different from operant conditioning, where the animal can affect the consequences with his behavior. In Pavlovian (or classical) conditioning, the animal can't do anything about what's going to happen, except get ready for it. Dog trainers typically use Pavlovian conditioning to teach dogs to like new people; to like being handled, groomed, or examined; to like having their food taken away, etc., by having these things predict other, fabulous things. Trainers will often refer to dogs having a "great CER" (conditioned emotional response) to something.

**Premack's principle** • This is a different way of framing reinforcement. Rather than saying "fetch games are a reinforcer" for a dog, David Premack might say "playing fetch is a high-probability behavior." In other words, dogs (and all animals) vote with their feet. If there's a choice of playing fetch, sniffing around, drinking water, rolling in the grass, etc., and a dog elects to play fetch, it's the high-probability behavior. Here's the neat part: The lower-probability behaviors—the sniffing, etc.—can be boosted in probability by making the fetch-playing contingent on them. The dog can play some fetch as soon as he does some sniffing. You may recognize this as grandma's rule: *If* you first eat your broccoli, *then* you can have ice cream. "If-then" is what a contingency is—the core of good dog training.

**Premack watch** • This has "look away from a tasty morsel or interesting toy and toward my face" as the "broccoli" and "get clicked and given some" as the "ice cream." The clicker helps here because the dog's first deviations from staring longingly at the reward may be very brief, and if you're late with the reward, you might reward him for looking back at the morsel or toy. So, to improve your timing, have your thumb on the button of the clicker. You must click the instant he glances—however briefly or tentatively—away from your outstretched reward-filled hand to your face. Then, supply the reward.

Lesson 4

# GETTING THE BEHAVIOR: PROMPTING AND PREMACK

In this lesson, you will start to fade the prompts you've been using—from broad, very helpful gestures (what dog trainers call literal) to more stylized hand signals. One of the beauties of prompt fading as a way of getting the behavior is its elegance. You will always have, in your back pocket, a hand signal that is a reminder to your dog of the original training process. So, if you elect to not do the extra labor involved in getting him to respond reliably to verbal cues, you can still get him to sit, lie down, or move through space using your hand signals.

## Sit from Stand

- Starting from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 3—using an empty hand but a broad, literal signal—now you will use a smaller, less literal signal.
- It can be tempting to use a big signal or a small one depending on how the dog does rep to rep within your set, but that's a bad practice. You want to be making your push, drop, and stick decisions based on how well the dog does over the set of 5, so standardize the signal within the set.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Sit from Stand: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down from Sit

- Again, start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 3, which is with an empty hand but a broad, literal signal that goes all the way to the floor. Next, use a slightly faded signal that only goes halfway to the floor, not all the way down, and keep it standardized within the set. Then, use a small hand signal, making sure not to bend at the waist.

- You'd think that down from sit would be easy for dogs because down is less expensive than sitting up or standing, especially for a large dog. But down from sit is more expensive for most dogs in spite of the gravity assist. Down is slightly farther from the treats, so there is somewhat of a Premack effect for the dog to go down for a small signal.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Down from Sit: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit from Down

- Once again, start where you left off with this behavior in lesson 3, which is with a full lure. Then, see if the dog will do the behavior for a hand signal, but without the food. Here, he has infinite latency—as much time as he needs to do the behavior. Do not repeat, or chant, the signal; just hold in position. As long as the dog is still working the problem, the rep is still alive.

- If your dog has difficulty with sit from down, there are a few splits that you can use. First, rather than going from a very apparent lure to nothing, tuck the lure in your hand, then do the signal, and give infinite latency. Another split you can try is to go half the height by starting with down from sit but only going halfway down and then have the dog rise. The final split that can work if the dog is very dug into his down—rolled onto one hip or looking comfortable—is doing some staccato tapping with your hand to get him moving.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Sit from Down** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down from Stand

- For this behavior, as has been the case for other behaviors, first prompt the behavior—in this case, using a full food lure to the floor. Then, fade the prompt in such a way that initially you do the same motion but without the food visible and then you gradually start to stylize.

- Recall that sit from down is different from sit from stand. In the case of down from stand, it is a little informed by down from sit, so sometimes you can get lucky early on in training down from stand because your dog is familiar with down from sit.

- If you have American Kennel Club (AKC) Obedience trial aspirations down the road, insist that your dog go down front end first so that there is no forward movement. If you don't have these aspirations, then it's fine if your dog does an intervening sit, because it will come out in the wash. In other words, he will more and more quickly cut to the chase and do the down because he's in more of a rush to get to the reinforcement part.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Down from Stand** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Stationing

- Start where you left off with this behavior in lesson 3, which is doing reps. Gently place one hand over your dog's muzzle and then immediately pay with the other hand before removing both hands. Do 10 reps before pushing. Then, grasp the muzzle a little more firmly and do another 10 reps. Next, offer the muzzle "tunnel" and wait.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Stationing Muzzle Hold** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Watch

- Start where you left off with this behavior in lesson 3, which is just starting to do Premack. First, practice doing the finger-to-eyes signal, which doesn't use a lure but is prompted with a signal. Wait for eye contact and feed high.

- Then, move onto your first Premack, where it is legal to verbally prompt the dog. Next, do the identical exercise but with no verbal prompting and infinite latency.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Watch** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Recall

- Start where you left off with this behavior in lesson 3, which is calling the dog or using a sound at a few random times during the day and giving him a big party. Don't be in a rush to push past step 1. Lay a Pavlovian foundation. When the dog visibly brightens up and/or salivates on the cue, push to step 2—which involves calling the dog or using the sound from another room and then prompting him to you.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 4 and **Recall** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Practicing **Premack recalls** is a challenging exercise for most people. The very dogs who benefit the most can be extremely slow to respond initially, which will make you feel defeated. You'll prompt and prompt your heart out, and it's as though your dog is deaf. It will feel like he will just never do it. Or he'll finally do one and then you'll have a dry spell—he doesn't do another one.

- Persevere. He will get it. And not only will he get it, but in his post-training data processing, when he's sleeping, he will go over and over the weird physics of it—how the world is not as he thought. The way to get stuff he wants is via obedience. Even if it means moving away from an apparent bird in the hand. This is calculus for dogs, and a vital learning watershed. You're changing his brain; don't give up.

## GLOSSARY TERM:

**Premack recall** • This has "leaving an attractive distraction and going to your owner" as the "broccoli" and "getting some of that same attractive distraction" as the "ice cream." It is very counterintuitive—weird physics, in fact—to move away from something in order to acquire it. The dog's entire life experience has taught him the opposite. But skillful training can teach the dog that the way to get goodies—even the goodies out there that are not on the person of your owner—is to be obedient, even if obedience means moving away from the goody. A well-trained Premack-proofed dog responds just as well (sometimes better) around distractions than a non-Premack-proofed dog because the Premack-proofed dog has learned that the best strategy to actually get some of the distraction is to respond to cues. The distraction has been brought under stop-start trainer control and thus turned into a reinforcer.

Lesson 5

# GETTING THE BEHAVIOR: VERBAL CUES

You have learned about the difference between building behavior and cueing behavior. You are now going to start attaching verbal cues to your nicely built positions. And how you do that is through a very specific order of events: First you give the verbal cue, pause for a full second or 2, and then signal the behavior as before—not verbal and hand signal at the same time, and not signal first.

## Sit from Stand

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 4, which is with a small hand signal. The order of events is extremely important for the next stage: Give the verbal cue, wait a few seconds, and then signal. If the dog sits on the signal, then pay.

- You're shopping for a response to the verbal. Jumping the prompt—in this case, a hand signal—means that the dog sits on the verbal before you've had a chance to deliver the hand signal.

- If your dog is new to this behavior, he may take a while to get it. In fact, lots of stick sets are normal here. You'll be in a holding pattern on stick sets—where you'll say "sit," wait a few beats, deliver your signal, and then pay—keeping track of how often he jumps the prompt and sits on the verbal. You're going to pay every time on the signal, but you're going to count only the ones that the dog jumps the prompt. When the count is 3 out of 5, push and require him to sit on the verbal.

- This process of the dog going on the verbal without needing the signal varies greatly among dogs. Some dogs will do it pretty readily within a session or 2, but sometimes it takes multiple sessions.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 5 and **Sit from Stand: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down from Sit

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 4, which is with a small hand signal and not bending at the waist. For the next stage, add the verbal cue and follow the same order as the previous behavior: Give the verbal cue, wait a few seconds, and then signal. Pay all reps as you shop for a response to the verbal.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 5 and **Down from Sit: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Stationing

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 4, which is offering the hand tunnel and waiting for the dog to put his nose in voluntarily. If that goes well, add the verbal cue "station" before presenting the tunnel and pay him after he stations for 2 seconds. Use a praise bridge: Praise him during the 2 seconds he's in the tunnel.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 5 and **Stationing Muzzle Hold** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Watch

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 4, which is a Premack watch with no verbal prompting. Then, have an accomplice distract the dog from the side—first by talking, then by squeaking a toy, and finally by offering a treat—and once the dog looks back at you, in spite of the distraction, he gets paid.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 5 and **Watch** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit from Down

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 4, which is with a broad, literal signal. Next, try a small signal. Once that is looking solid, add the verbal cue "sit," maintaining the same order of events as previous behaviors: Give the verbal cue, wait a few seconds, and then signal. Pay all reps as you shop for a response to the verbal.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 5 and **Sit from Down** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down from Stand

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 4, which is with a full lure and a signal down to the floor. Then, do the same signal but with an empty hand and pay with your other hand. Fade the signal by going only halfway to the floor.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 5 and **Down from Stand** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Toggling

- Dogs have biases and preferred behaviors. You have to constantly push back against this, and you are going to start now by mixing up sit from stand (verbal cue followed by a small signal) and down from stand (signal). This is called toggling. Be careful to not follow a pattern—such as 1 sit and then 1 down—because the dog will learn that pattern. Later, you will practice verbal discrimination. Toggling gives the dog a choice, so he has to start attending more to your prompts and verbal cues.

Lesson 6

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOR

Up until now, you've been learning about behavior change, which depends on the sensitivity of behavior to contingencies in the environment. However, your dog is not a tabula rasa. He has a long and rich evolutionary history, where there has been selection pressure not only for the flexibility that is exploited in training, but for specific action patterns that do not require learning. And layered on top of that, more recently, has been selective breeding by humans. In this lesson, you will learn about the big-ticket action patterns dogs tend to inherit, dog social organization, and play.

## Inherited Behaviors

- It used to be thought in animal behavior that "lower" animals had a lot of preprogramming and limited flexibility and that "higher" animals had less preprogramming and more flexibility. As it turns out, these 2 categories are much less mutually exclusive and are usually intertwined.

- Dogs are a prime example: They are veritable learning machines *and* have inherited action patterns that helped their ancestors make a living in the world.

- The following 4 categories of inherited behavior software solve important tasks of daily living: fight, flight, feeding (which, in the case of dogs, means both predatory behavior and scavenging), and reproductive behavior. Animals that fail to solve these problems of daily living—getting enough to eat, protecting themselves from becoming food for someone else, protecting themselves from injury and disease, and producing viable offspring—are outcompeted on the evolutionary playing field.

- Dogs are descended from an unbroken line of ancestors, every last one of whom passed this test. And having key behavior preinstalled, so that an animal doesn't have to reinvent the wheel and learn it all from scratch, is advantageous.

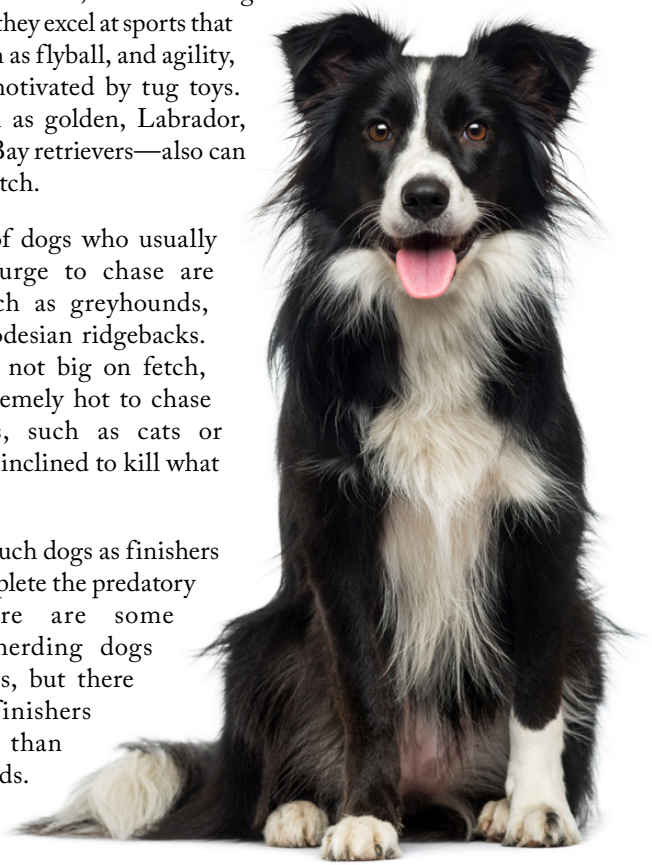
- Then, superimposed on these original selection pressures is domestication, which has eased the pressure for certain traits while magnifying others.

- The first category is fight-or-flight behaviors, and in dogs, these shake out into 2 buckets: defense of self and defense of resources. An entire future lesson (11) will be devoted to fear and aggression, but for now, just know that it is not pathology when a dog growls a person away from his food or is fearful of strangers.

## Feeding Action Patterns

- A compelling metaphor for thinking about breeds and predatory behavior is that of a magnifying glass being put on the action patterns of wolves—or, more accurately, the wolflike animal that was the common ancestor of wolves and dogs. The predatory sequence of wolves is as follows:
  - Search. This is usually an olfactory search that might involve trailing a prey item for hours or even days.
  - Stalk. This is defined as a stealthy approach as close as possible to a prey item in order to increase the likelihood of acquiring and reduce the energy expenditure of chasing.
  - Rushing and biting. In the case of group-hunting canids, there is not usually the lethal hold you see in, for example, big cats. Whereas a cheetah or jaguar will clamp down on an airway or artery of a prey item, group-hunting canids wear large prey animals down. There is often a somewhat fluid segue from chase-chase-chase-bite-bite-bite to the animal tiring and going into shock, at which point the next part of the sequence commences.
  - Killing and eating. There is not a massive distinction, at least from the point of view of wolves or African wild dogs, between commencing of feeding and the animal dying. As soon as the animal is no longer fleeing or fighting, eating begins, and somewhere in that process, the animal dies. For small prey items, there will be a clean dispatching via pressure or via a grab and shake.
- The original function of many breeds of dog derives from isolation and exaggeration of these elements. For example, scent hounds—such as beagles, bloodhounds, harriers, foxhounds, and coonhounds—live for their noses. They are driven to find trails of critters and follow them. Their role in the predatory sequence is to search.

- By contrast, the role of pointers, setters, and some spaniels is a stalk that is so exaggerated they freeze in position. This is called pointing.
- Stalking is also the foundation for the showing of eye you see in herding breeds, such as border collies. Although the utility to us of moving livestock is different than that of indicating where birds are hiding, the underlying action pattern is the same.
- Many herding dogs, whether or not they have stalking software, have chasing software. It's why they excel at sports that involve fetch, such as flyball, and agility, which is often motivated by tug toys. Retrievers—such as golden, Labrador, and Chesapeake Bay retrievers—also can be very keen to fetch.
- Another group of dogs who usually have a massive urge to chase are sighthounds, such as greyhounds, borzois, and Rhodesian ridgebacks. Sighthounds are not big on fetch, but they are extremely hot to chase running critters, such as cats or squirrels, and are inclined to kill what they catch.
- Trainers refer to such dogs as finishers because they complete the predatory sequence. There are some retrievers and herding dogs who are finishers, but there are more non-finishers in these groups than among sighthounds.



- Another behavior that stems from the constellation of feeding action patterns is burying. With burying in dogs, very often the process in play is not, as you've seen up until now, human selective breeding operating on original behavior sequences, but instead is the accumulation of bugs in the software due to the lifting of selection pressure.

- In some wild animals, there is an advantage to storing and hiding food leftovers, called caching. In dogs, the full sequence would be digging a hole, inserting an incompletely consumed food item, burying it, and then coming back to it later to consume.

- In domestic dogs who are kept as pets, there has not been selective breeding for burying or to reduce or eradicate burying. And because the fitness—the likelihood of a dog surviving to reproductive age and then reproducing—is not impacted by whether the dog has an intact burying sequence, it has been free to drift around, be triggered at the wrong time by inane items, and collect software bugs.

- When the trigger is not adaptive, it is referred to as a misfire: The dog is firing an action pattern at the wrong target. An example of this is burying inedible toys instead of food. When the form of the action pattern is incomplete, odd, or stuck, it is referred to as buggy.

- There has been a lot of selection pressure on dogs for opportunistic scavenging: finding and consuming anything edible rather than hunting. This is a huge part of the reason most dogs eat virtually anything they encounter.

## Social Organization

- In dog training, the thinking used to be that dogs are hierarchical and that our dominance over the dog was the key to training and avoiding behavior problems. It turns out that this information trickled down from interpretations of captive wolves.

- A wolf pack is a nuclear family made up of a bonded breeding pair and their offspring. When the offspring reach maturity, they disperse to avoid inbreeding depression, pair up, and start their own packs. The breeding pair are dominant over their offspring insofar as parents are dominant over their children.

- This means that there is no such thing as a dominant character trait. It is meaningless to describe a wolf—or a dog—as dominant. It can only describe a relationship wherein there is a predictable asymmetrical win-loss record in scarce resource contexts. And among wild wolves, all individuals are destined to be so-called alphas, if they disperse and successfully breed.

- Because of dissemination of more nuanced and accurate information, combined with much more sophisticated training technology, nobody credible in applied dog behavior believes anymore that dominance has any bearing on how successfully we live with our dogs. It's just not relevant to training or behavior problem resolution.

- But there is still division regarding whether dogs are hierarchical. One problem is that when dogs are free-roaming, they rarely form packs. There are substantial populations of free-roaming dogs in various parts of Asia and the Indian subcontinent, on the Cook Islands, and in some urban environments, including Moscow and parts of Romania.

- What is observed, again and again, are much looser and more transitory associations among dogs. For one thing, there is rampant promiscuity. There is not a bonded breeding pair. Males do not participate in rearing of offspring, which is completely unlike wolves.

- Groups of dogs may spend time together and then drift apart, and dogs often will congregate around food sources and males will congregate around estrus females. There are disputes over food and over females, which are won by larger, stronger, more confident, and more motivated individuals. But there isn't actually a need to invoke the construct of dominance to explain any of this. It adds no useful information.

## Courtship and Reproductive Behavior

- Because dogs do not form parental pair bonds, an estrus female is—from an evolutionary standpoint—arguably the most important resource that there is. And unlike most mammals, female dogs have an extended period of attractiveness before ovulation and before they are receptive.

- The upshot of this is that, in free-roaming situations, females have a 2-week period where they accumulate suiters but reject them if they attempt to copulate. Once a female is receptive, she might mate with more than one male. And she will be selective.

- This has produced selection pressure on males for perseverance. Males who leave when they are rejected are not then present when the female eventually becomes receptive. Males who keep trying are more successful, and they pass on their tenacity.

- This is partly why we see an abundance of courtship and reproductive behavior in our dogs, including neutered dogs, which tells us that reproductive behavior is not exclusively hormonally mediated. We also see misfiring, where dogs direct copulatory behavior at everything from stuffed animals to our legs. There is not enough downside, and plenty to be gained, from drop-of-hat readiness and slightly scattergun attempts at romance.

## Play

- Why do animals in general—and dogs in particular—play? The proximal cause is easy: It's enjoyable and fun. But the adaptive significance is a puzzle in animal behavior. Play carries a lot of expense. It consumes energy and takes time from other critical pursuits, such as finding food. Playing animals risk injury and are more conspicuous to predators when compared to relaxing vigilance. Those are hefty costs. There must therefore be offsetting benefits; otherwise, natural selection would phase it out.

The content of play is going to be the 4 action patterns: fight, flight, feeding, and courtship. So, it is normal and expected that dogs will play-fight and play-flee, for example. Not all dogs favor all of these, and there are stylistic differences.

- The prevailing hypothesis on the function of play is rehearsal of key action patterns. For example, predatory species, such as dogs, play-chase and play-bite a lot. But the jury is still out on this hypothesis. Play is nevertheless important for our pet dogs. It is a welfare barometer, especially in young dogs. Stressed, painful, or anxious young dogs don't play; relaxed, healthy, behaviorally well young dogs do.

- But play is also fraught for many people. It can get too rough. It can break down and become a squabble. How do owners evaluate whether things are okay when their dogs are playing?

  - The first feature you always want in dog play is self-handicapping. If a dog body slams, he does so not with his full strength. And, most importantly, when he play-bites, he does so with greatly attenuated force.

  - The next most important feature is consent. Without bilateral consent, even self-handicapped play is pretty much hazing and harassment. If you have any doubts about whether both dogs are consenting, you do a consent test: Physically pull off and restrain the presumed perpetrator and let the presumed victim vote with his feet. Does he come back for more, or does he take the opportunity to get away and regroup?

  - The next feature of play is the presence of meta-signals, or communications that say, "Yes, I'm biting, chasing, mounting, and slamming you, but my intention is play." The one that is most easily spotted by people is the play-bow: front end down and rear end up. Another is play-face, which is a slightly crazy-looking grinning expression.

What if the play is not going well, or it is technically going well but one or more humans finds it objectionable? Some people don't want their dogs to wrestle, or to mount or be mounted. If you're not comfortable, intervene. If you're really worried, get a competent professional to help you modify your dog's behavior.

Is it okay for you to roughhouse with your dog? It's harmless provided that the dog is self-handicapping (he's not hurting you) and provided that you're consenting. One way to ensure this is to give the invitation yourself—that is, to disallow roughhousing that the dog initiates.

- The final feature of play is role reversals and activity shifts. Play is rarely a full predation sequence or full copulation sequence from start to finish. It tends to be a jumble. They wrestle, then they chase, then they copulate, and then they bite each other's faces. They also take turns being on the top and bottom while wrestling.

## SUGGESTED READING


- Goodenough, McGuire, and Jakob, *Perspectives on Animal Behavior.*
- Mech, "Alpha Status, Dominance, and Division of Labor in Wolf Packs."
- National Geographic Live! "Face-to-Face with a Leopard Seal," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmVWGvO8Yhk.
- Parker, Dreger, Rimbault, Davis, Mullen, Carpintero-Ramirez, and Ostrander, "Genomic Analyses Reveal the Influence of Geographic Origin, Migration and Hybridization on Modern Dog Breed Development."
- "Sexual Selection & Evolution," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j7GSu99LmY.

Lesson 7

# IMPULSE CONTROL: LEAVE IT, WAIT, LEASH WALKING

Dogs are relatively impulsive animals. Because this flies in the face of our cultural norms and can pose safety concerns, we need to actively teach dogs to cool their jets. For this reason, this course will devote 4 lessons to building your dog's impulse control musculature. This set of behaviors is cumulative, so even if you like to skip around, do these 4 lessons on impulse control in order. Your dog will learn down-stay and sit-stay, leave it (to not touch food or junk he finds), wait at doorways, and walk without pulling on leash.

## Down-Stay and Sit-Stay

- The first 2 behaviors are down-stay and sit-stay. The big-ticket parameters are distraction, distance, and duration. Distraction is first, and duration is last. The reason for this parameter order is important. It supports the best and most efficient rate of reinforcement.

- Duration is, by definition, the rate killer. Think about it: If you do a modest 15-second stay, your maximum rate of reinforcement is 4 per minute. And this assumes that the dog gets every trial right and there is no latency between trials. By contrast, you can punch out 10, 12, or 15 close-up, brief distraction reps in a minute. You can also cover modest distances quickly.

- Put it this way: You have to do distraction and distance anyway, so you might as well punch out the quick-to-recycle reps early on and leave the rate-eating parameter for the more intermediate dog. That's smart, strategic training.

- When you do a down-stay on a mat, it gives you what's called a prop cue, with no additional labor. At the end of training, not only do you have a down-stay that can be done anywhere, but you can put the mat down and the dog will gun for it, perform an automatic down, and then stay. And you can send him from a distance. Plus, it's more comfortable for him.

- To teach your dog to down-stay, start by dangling a treat 1 foot in front of him in a down. Be ready to cancel quickly when he goes for it. Then, do the same thing for 3 seconds; be fast with your cancels. Next, put the food on the ground 1 foot away for 1 second.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 7 and **Down-Stay** and **Stay Duration Increments: Down-Stay Step 13** in the Training Plans Appendix.

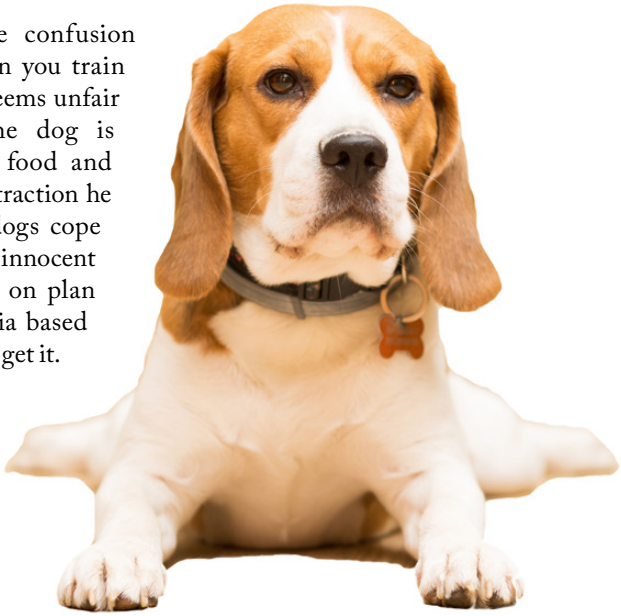
- Sit-stay is for briefer and greeting-type stay applications. For this reason, you don't need to throw a lot of energy at building duration, although you can do so if you like, using the identical duration-building plan as for down-stay.

- To teach your dog to sit-stay, start by dangling a treat 1 foot in front of him. Be ready to cancel quickly when he goes for it. Then, do the same thing for 3 seconds; be fast with your cancels. Next, put the food on the ground 1 foot away for 1 second.

- Use thought police timing, where you preempt what you think would have been an error. You don't want to reward your dog's intention to break his stay, so it's better to be on the strict side when giving treats. It's going to pay off in the long run if you don't try to manufacture winner trials. If he goes down, position-feed, but don't cancel for now.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 7 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- There is inevitable confusion and conflation when you train multiple things. It seems unfair that sometimes the dog is supposed to target food and other times it's a distraction he should resist. But dogs cope just fine. He'll make innocent errors, but if you're on plan and changing criteria based on the numbers, he'll get it. Don't agonize; just keep training.



## Leave It

- Leave it—or don't touch—is a behavior that unpacks as the dog refrains from picking up or eating something he comes across. This includes a food accident in the kitchen, a piece of garbage on the street, or your cell phone on the ottoman. This is very against the grain for dogs.

- Note that leave it is not the same thing as dropping something he's already picked up. It's not touching something in the first place.

- The method you're going to use is largely based on capturing. It requires you to notice him refraining—to notice his cessation of trying to get the treat—initially for just a split second.

- To teach your dog to leave it, start with a high-value food in your closed hand. Wait for him to stop bugging you for 1 second and pay from your other hand. Then, place a high-value food in your closed hand and reward him for a 1-second pause when your hand opens. Close your hand when he goes for it. Next, place a high-value food in your closed hand and reward him for a 3-second pause when your hand opens. Again, close your hand when he goes for it. Position-feed from your other hand to develop bias.

> Dogs have significant selection history as opportunistic scavengers. They have a ready regurgitation reflex, which you likely have been treated to if you've had dogs for any length of time. They can afford an eat-first-regurgitate-later philosophy of life. They are much less penalized by dietary indiscretion than cats, for example.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 7 and **Leave It** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Wait

- The next behavior is wait, which means not charging through an open door. Practice on a safe door first: to the yard or other enclosed area. Then, when you get to doors to the street, the dog will have some initial training under his belt and your mechanics will be more fluent. It's better to practice this off leash, using the door to prevent mistakes.

- One feature of wait training is that, although you will attach a verbal cue—"wait"—to the behavior, you also want the behavior to be a default—to happen even if you don't issue the cue. In other words, there are actually 2 cues: the word and the context itself. Any open door means wait to be released. There are not circumstances where you want your pets charging through doors and out of cars. You'll need a release cue that means "okay, you can go through now." There's no reason to not use something simple, such as "okay."

- The big-ticket parameter in wait training is warm-up. Once you have the door fully open and a bit of duration on board, your work becomes getting the dog to perform the behavior without needing warm-up reps, or reminders. This is because it's a behavior you want the dog to do perfectly stone-cold, on the very first rep of the day. So, warm-up will deliberately be incorporated as a parameter in the training plan.

- To teach your dog to wait, start by rewarding him after he waits for 1 second with the door half open. Then, reward him after he waits for 1 second with the door fully open. Next, reward him after he waits for 3 seconds with the door fully open.

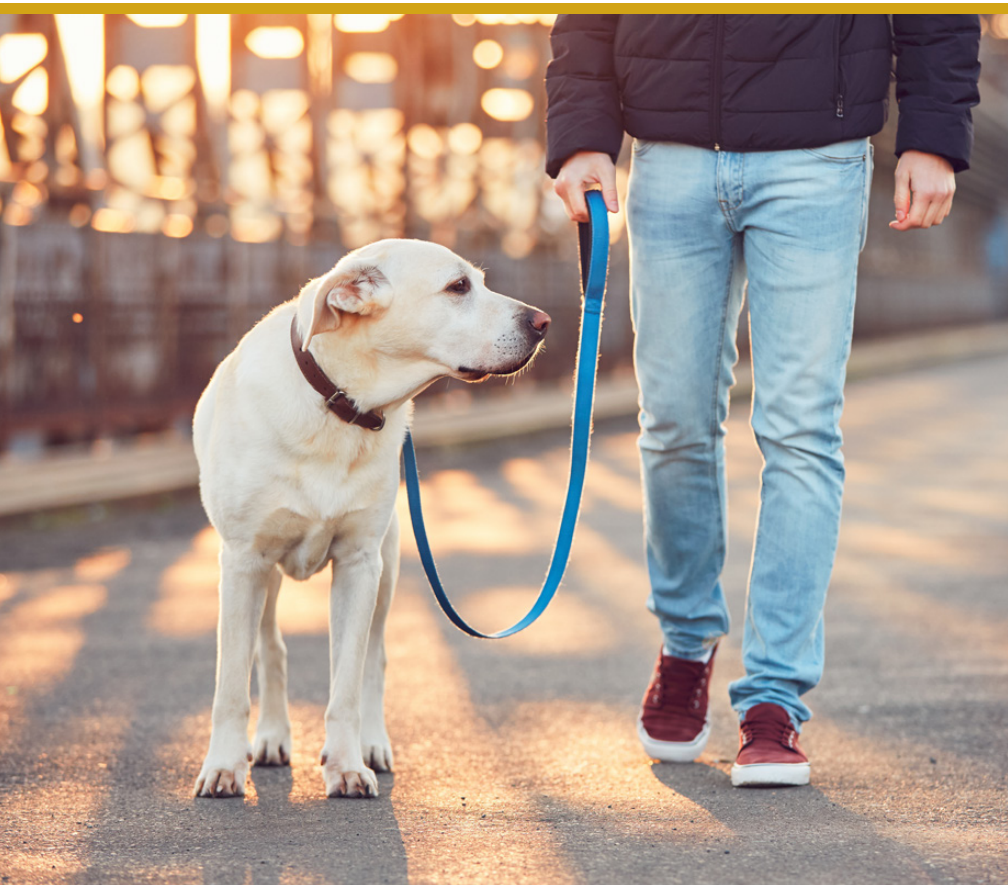
For proper technique, reference video lesson 7 and **Wait at Doorways and while Walking** in the Training Plans Appendix.

Because the impulse control behaviors are related, they inform each other. We get to capitalize on what in animal learning theory is called learning set. This is kind of meta-learning, or learning to learn similar tasks—in this case, that circumspection, holding back, waiting, and not succumbing to impulse is a strategy that really works.

## Loose Leash Walking

- Note that loose lease walking is not the same as heeling. For the purposes of this course, heeling is considered a trick. This is because for companion dogs, heeling has no utility. What most people need is for their dog to have reasonable leash manners—to stay in your vicinity and not pull.

- In fact, from a modern welfare and enrichment perspective, the point of walks is not marching along, but what trainers call going on "sniffari." The dog gets to check out sights and smells along the way. Heeling, by definition, preempts this important sniffari function of walks.



- You're going to start by practicing your loose leash walking toward a defined goal. This way, you control when your dog is reinforced and when he is not. If you practice without this clear directional goal, he could very well collect sniffari prizes willy-nilly. This could mean reinforcement for pulling and absence of reinforcement for loose leash. And that's an uncontrolled contingency situation that gives dog trainers nightmares.

- You're going to set things up so that he learns what you want. In addition, you're going to impose high fines. If he pulls, not only does he not go forward, but you also start all over again. This is a clear enough contingency and you have control, so you can afford this black-and-white regime.

- This exercise is very much about your cause-and-effect timing. As soon as the leash is taut, don't fudge it just because you wanted your dog to win one. It can feel mean, but go back to the start if you're in doubt. Only keep going if the dog is keeping the leash loose.

- Standardize the leash length by holding onto it at a specific point on the leash as well as close to your body so that you're not tempted to change the rules on your dog. Don't try to walk quickly to help him win; he learns just as much from not winning.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 7 and **Loose Leash Walking to Clear Directional Goal** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- These impulse control exercises are mechanically difficult. There's the noticing of brief flashes of "yes, that's it" and the cancelation of rewards that, the faster you are, the faster your dog learns. You might feel that your mechanics are a limiting factor.

- But don't worry. There are no lethal mistakes here, provided that you're not practicing wait at the front door. The majority of the time, he's learning that the impulsive speed game doesn't work, but the hold back, resist temptation, counterintuitive strategy of impulse control does work.

Lesson 8

# IMPULSE CONTROL: INCREASING GENERALIZATION

This lesson continues the impulse control learning set. You're going to pick up where you left off, starting with down-stay and ending with loose leash walking. Note that you don't have to do a lot of backpedaling when you are reviewing what you've already taught your dog. Unless it's warranted by the numbers, you can generally pick up very close to where you left off from session to session.

## Down-Stay

- Start this second down-stay session with 1 second of food on the ground and see how the dog does cold. If this goes well, switch to standing on the opposite side of him. Note the generalization challenge of simply changing sides. Then, push to walking around the dog in 1-step increments. Keep in mind that dogs who struggle with stay are usually the ones who benefit the most in the end.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 8 and **Down-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit-Stay

- Repeat the same process with sit-stay, starting with 1 second of food on the ground and working up to walking around the dog in 1-step increments. Be very strict. If he rotates his head to look at you as you're walking around, that's fine, but rotating his front feet or any attempts to follow you or get up are errors. Start canceling if he goes down.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 8 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Leave It

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 7, which is 3 seconds with a high-value food in an open hand. Next, place a high-value food on the floor; be ready to cover it if the dog goes for it. Reward after he resists for 1 second. Always feed him from your hand. Then, reward him if he resists a high-value food on the floor for 3 seconds. Next, pretend to "accidentally" drop the high-value food; be sure to use no-roll and no-bounce treats. Reward after he resists for 3 seconds.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 8 and **Leave It** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Wait

- Start with a cold trial of waiting at the door; make sure this is at least several hours after your previous session. Be ready to block the dog because he is probably going to charge. It is very normal for dogs to flunk cold trials, especially early on in training. Follow up with warm reps and then cool him off again.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 8 and **Wait at Doorways and while Walking** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Loose Leash Walking

- Start with a cold trial, with a high-value food several feet away on the ground. Success is not tightening the leash. If the dog keeps a loose leash, you keep going; if he tightens the leash, go back to the starting position. If the dog makes it to the food, he gets paid in position. And if he ever happens to look at you, pay him.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 8 and **Loose Leash Walking to Clear Directional Goal** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- The reason you do the all-or-nothing directional goal before adding the position-feed is because the latter makes it easier. The reason is that it's good for your skill development to have a real crack at the exercise without any position-feeding, with just the goal itself as motivation.
- It's Premackian insofar as the slower your dog goes, the faster he gets there. Also, mechanically, the cause and effect of forward and backward movement is valuable for the development of your **timing**.
- By now, you'll have an idea of whether you really relish this exercise. If you hate it, even with the differential reinforcement part—the position-feeding addition—there is a punt. And that is to change gear to an **anti-pull harness**. For many dogs, just that is ample to cut pulling. Your dog has plenty of other exercises in this group to develop a well-generalized philosophy of impulse control, so it's perfectly honorable to try this and not like it.

## GLOSSARY TERMS:

**anti-pull harness** • This is a body harness that attaches at the front and, by so doing, reduces the strength with which a dog can pull on leash. It is a much more humane alternative to neck collars (that strangle or dig pins). There are a variety of brands on the market that go on and fit slightly differently.

**timing** • This is how close to the behavior the reward comes. If your dog lies down on signal and then stands up again and you reward him, you've rewarded him for standing up. If your intention was to reward him for lying down, you've blown it pretty severely. Or if you're trying to reward eye contact and you click just as he looks away, it's no good. Timing matters for punishments, too. If a dog urinates on the rug and then walks over and starts drinking and the owner then reprimands him, drinking got punished. Timing is a mechanical skill—practice, practice, practice.

Lesson 9

# IMPULSE CONTROL: DEEPENING OBEDIENCE

You are now halfway through impulse control, and you may be starting to see faster progress. Every time your dog sleeps, he processes not only the specific behaviors, but the theme underlying all of these exercises: Good things come to those who wait. This lesson's exercises will provide increasing challenges for your dog in the realm of impulse control.

If your dog is an object guarder—if he growls or snarls or snaps or bites when you try to take nasty stuff away from him—omit the generalization pieces in this lesson and consider getting professional help. It's a fixable problem.

## Leave It

- In the previous lesson, you started increasing realism in this behavior by "accidentally" dropping temptations, such as a high-value food. You're going to check in on this cold; then, once your dog is warmed up a bit, you will start generalizing this behavior to different kinds of items.
- First, do an accidental drop cold; do it warmed up if your dog flunks (which is normal). Next, use a different object, such as a greasy paper plate that once had a sandwich in it, for generalization. Drop it, making sure that you are prepared to use your body to block the dog from getting the paper plate or to step on it. Do anything you need to do to make sure that the dog doesn't win the speed game.
- Omit this exercise if your dog is an object guarder and seek competent professional help.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 9 and **Leave It** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down-Stay

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 8, which is a full walk-around. Next, do a walk-around in the other direction. For many dogs, the different direction is a whole new ballgame. Then, do a double walk-around in each direction, which doubles the duration each time.

- The next step is a bungee stay, which involves adding a little distance between you and the dog without adding any duration. With a bungee stay, walk 2 paces, which for most people is roughly 6 feet, away from the dog, but go right back to him as if you are connected by an elastic bungee cord.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 9 and **Down-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit-Stay

- Use the same process for a sit-stay, starting with a full walk-around. When trying to do a walk-around in the other direction, if you get stuck at the rear of the dog, a split you can try involves giving the dog a point of focus. Needing this on the new direction is normal. All dogs have a good side and a bad side, and it could be that you hit your dog's good side first.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 9 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Loose Leash Walking

- With this behavior, instead of using a pile of high-value food as the directional goal—which is where you left off in the previous lesson—use a novel toy as the goal.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 9 and **Loose Leash Walking to Clear Directional Goal** in the Training Plans Appendix.

You're probably getting mechanically smoother by now. You are faster, your timing is better, your inter-trial latency is brisk, you feel less clumsy when you pay, and you are better at protecting the stash when you have to. You will continue to get better, and it will become second nature. Just keep going.

## Wait

- While doing loose leash walking, occasionally deliver the "wait" cue and stop walking. When your dog stops and attends to you, pay him in position—even a little back from where he is. Your dog will begin the process of translating "wait" from the doorway context to the outdoor walks context. Later, when you are outside, you will further generalize this to waiting to leave the hatch or door of the car.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 9 and **Wait at Doorways and while Walking** in the Training Plans Appendix.

Lesson 10

# IMPULSE CONTROL: COLD TRIALS AND FINISHING

By now, if you've been practicing all the impulse control exercises, you may be starting to see what can only be described as greater overall circumspection in your dog. The multi-context single rule—good things come to those who wait—is starting to generalize. For most young dogs in human society, this is glorious. It's what we usually mean when we talk about a dog having manners. And having manners means access.

## Leave It

- Do a cold trial with a novel object, such as a greasy paper plate. Without practicing for this behavior previously today, let a greasy paper plate fall off the table, making sure that you're ready to protect it if your dog guns for it. You don't need to do a bunch of repetitions if the dog does well on his cold trial. At this point, all you can do is change objects. So, in the next session, do an even more tempting accidental drop and see how he does stone-cold.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Leave It** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down-Stay

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 9, which is doing a double walk-around. Do this cold. Drop, stick, or split if you have to. Next, do bungee stays, in which you walk away from your dog 2 paces, or about 6 feet, and then bounce right back toward him as if you are connected by an elastic bungee cord. If your dog is not able to do this but is really good on the walk-around stay, your split is walking only 1 step away from your dog.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Down-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit-Stay

- Start from where you left off with this behavior in lesson 9, which is doing a single walk-around in the first direction. Next, do a walk-around in the other direction. Then, do a double walk-around.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Moving Wait

- Even if you haven't done a ton of directional goal work, you can still do this exercise using anti-pull gear alone.

- For a moving wait, the order of events is you give the verbal cue "wait," and if your dog stops on the verbal cue, pay him. If he doesn't stop, then you stop moving—and that's the prompt, which will necessarily stop him—and then you wait for him to turn around and make eye contact. When he does that, pay him in position. Do repetitions, with the eventual goal that when you say "wait" and he is walking, he ceases all forward movement. And, if you're lucky, he will turn around and make eye contact with you.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Wait at Doorways and while Walking** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Moving Drop (Down from Stand)

- Next, practice a moving drop, which is a down from stand. In fact, it's going to be cold when eventually you do it on outdoor walks or when the dog is moving at liberty. The goal is that when you say "down," the dog hits the dirt, regardless of what else is going on.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Down from Stand** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Leave It: Obstacle Course

- In this exercise, you will preplant in your home some typical things that dogs go after, such as laundry and kitchen items, and simulate coming upon them on walks. As you walk past the items with your dog on leash, if he refrains from checking them out, pay him. This exercise will prepare you for when you do this on outdoor walks.

- Once you have proofed this indoors under control conditions, do a cold trial in the next session. After that, go outdoors and preplant some items and see if your dog can proof the behavior in real-world conditions.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Leave It** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Recall

- This exercise involves a few variations on Premack recall: the straight line and the triangle.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 10 and **Recall** in the Training Plans Appendix.

Lesson 11

# FEAR AND AGGRESSION PREVENTION

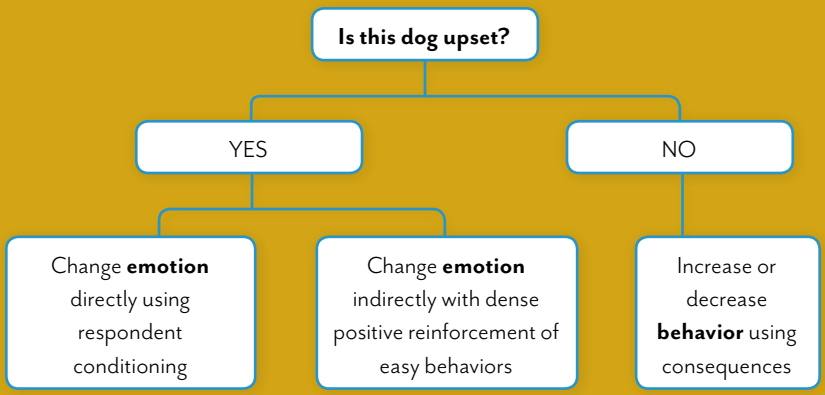
You've done a significant amount of training, and it's almost time to step up distractions and then take your dog's new skills out into the world. But before you do, you must learn about the fight-or-flight action patterns that manifest in dogs as fear and aggression. In this lesson, will discover the various types of fear and aggression as well as broad strategies you can implement to keep your dog emotionally healthy.

## Assessing Your Dog's Emotional State

- One of the first things taught to aspiring behavior counselors at the Academy for Dog Trainers is a diagnostic watershed. Any time a dog is presented with a behavior problem, consider whether the dog is upset. The reason this is so critical is that the approach to dogs who are upset is different from the approach to dogs who are not upset. An upset dog is worried, anxious, uncomfortable, or afraid. This can be manifested in a few ways: fight, flight, or freezing.

- The dog might be frankly fearful, in which case he might cower or flee. If he's prevented from fleeing, he attempts to flee. He might yelp, whine, scream, or be silent. An upset dog might also be aggressive. He might growl, snarl, snap, and bite. He might do so as his first plan, or he might do so if his first plan was flight and that is preempted by a leash, walls, or restraint.

**Diagnostic Flowchart**



- A dog who is upset might also do none of these things. He might freeze, which can be misinterpreted as "fine." But if you look, he's likely got a tight body and tight face. His ears might be plastered back, and his body might be slightly shrunken. He might hang back but not be in open flight. He won't be interested in treats.
- The goal in diagnosing whether dogs are upset is not to catch it when it's frank fear or aggression. It is much better to notice it early, so that the dog can be removed from the situation so the problem is not exacerbated and his fear, anxiety, or aggression is competently addressed.
- For a long time, upset dogs and non-upset dogs were usually lumped together as either "good" or "bad" dogs, with that diagnosis based solely on whether the dog was doing a behavior that inconvenienced or aggravated the handler. In the case of an upset dog, this was the equivalent of a person who is afraid of spiders being choked or electrically shocked if they attempted to get away from one.

If your dog is suffering from fear or aggression, get competent professional help. It can be made better, but you need one-on-one professional guidance.

- Now we know that this is not only inhumane, but also doesn't get at the root of the problem, which is the emotion. This is the crux of the diagnostic watershed: Do we want to get at emotion, or is the dog truly fine emotionally but just guessing wrong with his behavior?

- We have the technology to change emotion if we're crafty enough. There are 2 ways. One is to train a competing response with very conservative criteria so that the dog develops the side effect of loving the problem—people or dogs, whatever it is that upsets him—because that problem is never too intense and it means that he gets to play an easy game for prizes. The other way to change emotion is more direct: to employ respondent conditioning, also known as classical or Pavlovian conditioning, which will be covered in a future lesson (17).

## Addressing Fear

- The big 4 action pattern categories—fight, flight, feeding, and courtship—help animals solve vital problems of daily living. Notice that 2 of the 4 address self-defense and defense of resources: fight and flight. Fear and aggression is big business in the animal world. Any immediate threat of death, bodily injury, or loss of critical resources is basically an emergency.

- In the natural world, fear is good. A helpful way to think about fear is which side animals want to make their errors on. We all make errors, and some of us err on the side of caution while others are risk-takers. The big question that faces animals when deciding whether to invoke fight-or-flight behaviors is this: Is it dangerous?

- This question can be answered in 2 ways: yes or no. Animals will come up with their answer and then will either be right or wrong. Scientists recognize these types of errors as false positives and false negatives. From the perspective of the animal, true positives and true negatives, where the animal answers the question correctly, are ideal. If it's dangerous, the animal kicks on the fight/flight, and their best possible chance of survival ensues. If it's not dangerous, the animal doesn't spend the energy and time from other pursuits on useless fight/flight behaviors.

- But nobody gets it right all the time. And—especially in this case, with animals—there are costs both ways to wrong answers. A false positive will waste energy and suck time from other endeavors. If the animal spooks at a butterfly, it's not optimal. But a false negative—failing to respond to a threat—is very often a death sentence.

- Animals usually make that error once. And all extant animals are descended from an unbroken line of ancestors who didn't mess that one up. So, unless there has been a big evolutionary stretch without significant threat, there is going to be strong conservation of hair-trigger fight/flight defaults. The cost of false negatives is just that high.

- If we stop exerting pressure to keep fight/flight at bay, dogs—just like animals in general—spook at novelty, are suspicious of strangers, freak out if their limbs are touched or restrained, and protect scarce resources. So, how do we keep the pressure on? There are 2 ways: genetics and rearing practices.

- Many people think that if a dog is fearful or aggressive, it means that the dog has had a bad experience, some sort of abuse. Most of the time, however, fear and aggression in dogs results from failures of *omission* rather *commission*. We have to actively push back against fight/flight, because there are multiple mechanisms, any one of which is sufficient to make dogs fearful.

- The first of these, chronologically, is genetics. There is no question among applied behavior scientists that genes influence behavior. It's complex, there are many genes working in concert with one another, and their turning on and off is sensitive to the environment, but that in no way means that genes don't matter. And this jibes with what we see in clinical practice. In fact, research has shown that genetics alone can produce fearful behavior in dogs.

**Sound Sensitivity**

Specific kinds of fear—notably sound sensitivity, which manifests as fear of thunderstorms and fireworks—are strongly suspected of being genetic.

There are a few kinds of sound sensitivity onset. One is fast and early, in which the dog is terrified of sudden loud noises from first exposure. The other onset type is more gradual and requires multiple exposures. Such dogs may seem okay the first few times and then get worse.

The technology to help sound-sensitive dogs has not been great. The current gold standard is a combination of a safe room—a bunker with as much noise blocked out as possible, via white noise generation or dog ear muffs—and medication.

- The next fear mechanism is intrauterine environment, also known as gestational stress. This has not been studied in dogs, but it has been extensively studied in rats and mice, and the mechanism is common to all mammals, so there is no reason we can't confidently extrapolate the findings to dogs. Retrospective studies of humans have found the same thing. In a nutshell, if you stress a dam during pregnancy, her offspring will be more anxious and more fearful—and have other deficits, including learning deficits—than genetically identical controls, gestated in the uterus of an unstressed dam.

Because socializing a puppy is so much easier than desensitizing a fearful adult, it is tremendously important that a puppy meet, interact with, and have great experiences with a huge volume and variety of people.

- The third fear transmission mechanism is maternal behavior. Rodent studies and the examination of effects on humans in difficult circumstances have found that this is a mechanism—epigenetic transmission—that is shared by dogs. Pups that are gestated in a normal (not fearful) mom's uterus but are reared (nursed, groomed, and tended) by a fearful mom grow up to be more fearful than controls. And there is evidence that they pass this on to their own pups.

- The next culprit in the fear sweepstakes is early socialization—or, rather, its absence. There is evidence, in dogs, that failure to socialize puppies (grant them sufficient early exposure to people) results in dogs who are more likely to be fearful or aggressive to people as adults. We do not know what the cutoff age is, when the socialization window closes, and whether it is the same for all breeds. We also don't know how much socialization is enough.

- Finally, bad experiences can produce fear. Until fairly recently, 2 classes of professionals—dog trainers and veterinarians—deliberately orchestrated bad experiences for dogs. They would pin them down to do procedures on them or yank them on special collars designed to choke them. Now we know that these carry side effects, most notably fear and aggression.

- Trading a nuisance behavior or simple disobedience for fear or aggression is malpractice. It is impossible to know in advance which dogs will be most susceptible to these side effects and end up with the most recalcitrant fear or aggression, so the only prudent course of action is to avoid aversive stimuli. Plus, we can get the job done entirely by manipulating the stuff the dog likes.

- Fear is the hardest thing to get rid of. It's also the easiest thing to install. But if you go about it right, you can often make big gains. This means patience. If you try to go faster than the dog can manage, you end up stalling. You have to go slowly and gradually, at the dog's pace, whatever that might be. And it really helps to countercondition. For this, you'll need a good behavior professional, and possibly a veterinarian to handle the medication side.

## Addressing Aggression

- Aggression is the fight side of the fight/flight coin. There are 2 adaptive contexts where we repeatedly see aggression in animals: self-defense and conflict over resources. These 2 contexts are not pathological. Dogs who bite when body handled, or growl strangers away, or snap when you approach their food dish are not ill or deranged. They are expressing species-normal behavior, but it is behavior that we find absolutely unacceptable.

- The 3 meaningful diagnostic categories for aggressive behavior in dogs are aggression to strangers, resource guarding, and intolerance of body handling.

Note that predation, which in dogs manifests as chasing and possibly killing squirrels and other small animals, is not aggression. It's feeding behavior. The function of aggression is making someone get farther away from you, or farther away from your stuff. The function of feeding is acquiring. The underlying motivations are very different. They sometimes are conflated because they both might involve biting.

- Aggression to strangers may be global—anybody not in the dog's inner circle—or specific, such as men only or young children.
- Resource guarding may be food and food bowl; objects, such as bones, toys, and stolen laundry; or locations, such as the dog's bed or your bed. Occasionally, a dog might guard a lap, and very rarely a dog might guard water.
- There are great field-tested protocols for body handling, food and object guarding, and stranger aggression. If you have an aggressive adult dog, get a competent professional to help. If your dog is safe or if you have a puppy and you're after prevention, there are some exercises in the video lesson that will help with food bowl guarding, taking away objects you don't want your dog to have, and furniture guarding.

## SUGGESTED READING


- DeMartini-Price, *Treating Separation Anxiety in Dogs.*
- Dugatkin and Trut, *How to Tame a Fox (and Build a Dog).*
- Goldman, "Man's New Best Friend?"
- Jacobs, *A Guide to Living with and Training a Fearful Dog.*
- LeDoux, *Anxious.*
- Mills, Braem Dube, and Zulch, *Stress and Pheromonatherapy in Small Animal Clinical Behaviour.*
- Weinstock, "Prenatal Stressors in Rodents."

Lesson 12

# PROOFING BEHAVIOR ACROSS CONTEXTS

This lesson will commence a proofing campaign. Proofing is a term from traditional dog training that means "prove to me, dog, that you really have this down—that you can do this if I change the conditions." Once a basic behavior is installed, certain challenges can make that behavior fall apart, such as distractions, competing motivations, and context changes. A new context might actually be less distracting than the familiar context in which the behavior was originally trained, but its newness alone causes the breakdown of behavior. Dogs, unlike humans, are not good generalizers. They can become better generalizers, but to hone that basic skill, they must practice context change.

## Manipulating Motivation

- What's the difference between a competing motivation, a distraction, and a generalization problem?
  - Let's say that you attend a martial arts class and memorize via practice a form—a set series of movements. And let's say that you practice this always facing the same direction in the training studio. Then, one day, you turn 90 degrees, and when you attempt to do the previously fluent form, you have some stutters, some memory lapses. This would be a generalization problem.
  - Now let's say that on another occasion, you attend class and make errors because there's an ongoing, troubling issue at work or at home that you can't get out of your head. That's a distraction.
  - Finally, you might discover that there's a dance class that has just started in your neighborhood, but it's at exactly the same time as your martial arts class, and you sign up for the dance class. That's competing motivation. In this example, it doesn't matter how well you have memorized the form or what direction you're oriented—you're not even showing up to class.
- Similarly, in dog training, before anything else—clarifying what we want the dog to do and proofing it for different contexts so that it's well generalized—we have to get the dog to show up. If there's no motivation, there's no training.
- There are 2 broad strategies for manipulating motivation: establishing operations and abolishing operations. An establishing operation is just the basic measure of making sure that the motivator you want to dispense to manipulate behavior is effective. When you're hungry, food is established as a usable reinforcer. The other side of the coin is being saturated on a motivator. That motivator is then said to be abolished. Right after a huge Thanksgiving feast, food is abolished.

- With some dogs, it doesn't take much to establish food. They might have just had dinner, but they'll train for an hour for little treats. And that might include small, dry, unpalatable treats. Other dogs need to skip a meal and be offered roast chicken. It's all fine. Your job as a competent trainer is to not leave any of this to chance; just do what it takes to get the job done.

- This means that you establish motivators you want to use and, when appropriate, abolish your competition. You'll see this later when you strategically manipulate how much sniffing and socializing your dog has done before you try out your come-when-called at the park. Note that this strategy of saturating your competition is diametrically opposed to old-school arguments, where it was thought that if you let a dog sniff or play, he'll become untrainable. First, that's not humane, and second, that's not how it works. These motivators are hydraulic; they wax and wane depending on how recently the dog has had some.

## Down-Stay Distractions

- To start proofing your dog's down-stay, try this behavior with a dropped object, such as a plate that once held meat, and be ready to protect the object. Then, try this with a thrown object, such as a ball. If your dog breaks and goes for the object, don't panic. Even if he acquires the object, it's not the end of the world; just make sure that a great game does not ensue, because you don't want to reinforce him from breaking his stay.

- Next, try this behavior with social distractions. Have a few people walk past your dog—from forward to backward, and vice versa—to see if your dog can tolerate that distraction while remaining in his down-stay. Reward at the point where your dog should have broken but didn't. Then, have a few people walk by your dog while also conversing with each other. Finally, have a passer-by address the dog in different ways, such as saying "hi" or calling your dog a "good dog."

For proper technique, reference video lesson 12 and **Down-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

There is an interesting but startling truth here: Dogs never actually "know" sit, or any other behavior you train. There are only varying degrees of fluency. The probability of a dog sitting on cue can be high or low or something in the middle. Your dog's probability of sitting on cue is much higher now, but he doesn't "know" sit the way you know who the first U.S. president was.

All we can do is stack the probability deck. You can be the best trainer in the world with the cleverest dog, and all you can do is greatly increase the probability that he will sit when you ask him to. Applied behavior is a humbling business. But if you practice, the reliability of your dog's performance soars, and this opens up a wider world to your dog.

## Sit-Stay Distractions

- To proof your dog's sit-stay, the process is very similar to proofing down-stay. Start with dropped and thrown objects. Then, move on to patting. If your dog does not like strangers, practice this with yourself and family members, or other people the dog likes, but don't have a stranger pat him. If your dog is sensitive about having his head pat, try patting him on his chest or under his chin. Once the dog is warmed up and can tolerate a pat from a person who is familiar to him but not too familiar, you can try cold trials with strangers.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 12 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Generalization Games

- Allow the dog to cool off while doing some generalization games, which are fun and really get the idea in the dog's head that no matter what condition changes, the hand signal and cue for sit mean sit, and the hand signal and cue for down mean down. It's very important to get the order of events right: Make sure to issue a verbal cue to the dog no matter what you're doing—such as turning your back to him, sitting in a chair, or lying on the floor—wait a few seconds, and then issue whatever his current level of hand signal is. Mix up sit and down as you change conditions.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 12.

## Sit-Stay Distractions, Cooled Off

- Finally, see if your dog can do a slightly cooled off sit-stay for a novel person patting him.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 12 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

Lesson 13

# ON THE ROAD: TRAINING IN PUBLIC SPACES

You've installed and proofed behaviors at home by adding distractions and playing some generalization games. Now you're going to proof out in the world using the ambient distractions there. You have less control than with your deliberate proofing exercises, but your dog is ready if you've been following the plans faithfully. Also, you can help yourself by choosing your moment carefully for expensive behaviors, such as recalls away from other dogs in the park.

## Wait before Exiting Car

- The first thing you're going to practice is wait to exit the car. The first trial will be cold, so be ready for your dog to try and muscle his way out. Try to block him with your body, use the leash as a last resort, and if he still gets out, pop him right back in the car for more reps until he gives you a good 1- to 2-second wait. His reward for that will be a walk and then some training.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 13 and **Wait at Doorways and while Walking** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Leave It: Outdoor Obstacle Course

- You're going to proof leave it out in the real world by placing some garbage—such as a doughnut, some toast with jam, an old pizza box, a chicken leg, and a sausage—on the street in a row as an obstacle course. As you happen upon them with your dog on leash, he'll hopefully "leave it" when you give the command, and you might even get a bit of eye contact.

- Your dog needs to learn that the garbage is an illusion that he's never going to get—but that you will give him a treat if he looks at you. This is a cold trial, so it's not surprising if your dog goes for the incredibly tempting garbage. But no dog tries anything forever. This is a test in impulse control that is aced when your dog goes past an item.

- After the cold trial, do another pass at the obstacle course with your dog warmed up. Be ready at any moment to prevent him from accessing any of the items, either with your body or, if necessary, with the leash (not jerking or hurting).

- Then, do a third trial at the obstacle course. By this point, your dog might start to figure out that there is a way to win in life, and that is to resist temptation, not grab stuff off the ground, and look at his handler while keeping a loose leash.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 13 and **Leave It** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit-Stay: Outdoors with Distractions

- At a park, or somewhere else that has people frequently walking by, do several trials of sit while your dog watches as distractions—such as people talking as they walk and people walking dogs—pass by. If people ask if they can pat your dog, let them, saying "sit" before they do.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 13 and **Sit-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

When you first take behavior that you've trained at home to new locations, remember to exploit your establishing and abolishing operations. Skip a meal or 2, and bring tasty treats. It's a great time for an upgrade.

Let particularly interesting sights, sounds, and smells—and dogs—get a bit old before you start asking for behaviors.

And when you practice wait before exiting the car, don't despair if the cold trial is a dud. Do extra reps until you get a few good ones. After a few visits, your dog will be nailing it cold.

## Recall Practice: Outdoors

- A great place to practice recall in the real world is at a dog park. When you enter the park, let your dog meet the dogs and play a little bit to get it out of his system—use that abolishing operation—before you attempt your first recall.

- Once you've been at the park for a little while, your dog should be somewhat saturated on the smells and on the dogs. At this point, try a not-too-far-away recall. Make sure to pay if he comes when called. If this goes well, attempt a more difficult recall—one at a much greater distance from your dog.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 13 and **Recall** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Wait before Exiting Car: Cooled Off

- Once you're back at the car after your time at the dog park, practice some cooled-off waits with lower urge to exit—because your dog has had some saturation on this location—before you go home.

- Load your dog into the car and practice another wait trial. He is a bit cooled off for this behavior. He's not allowed to exit the car until he gives you a very good pause.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 13 and **Wait at Doorways and while Walking** in the Training Plans Appendix.

Lesson 14

# VERBAL CUES: DEVELOPING DISCRIMINATION

Previously, when you were training sit and down, you started shopping for performance on verbal cues. In this lesson, you will work on perfecting those skills and start chipping away at a true verbal discrimination. This can be calculus for some dogs, but it's very illuminating to teach. We are such verbal creatures that it can astound us how much less so dogs are. We are convinced that dogs understand every word that we say, when in fact they catch occasional slim slices of relevant sounds.

## Sit from Stand

- For this behavior and each of the following ones (down from sit, sit from down, and down from stand), remember to add a verbal cue once you have performance for a faded signal—the small hand signals. Always precede the signal with the verbal, and put a good 2 beats in between. Then, shop to see at what rate your dog is jumping the prompt, or doing the behavior before you have the chance to deliver the signal. Once your dog is spontaneously doing so at around 60% (a 3 for 5) you can start to require him to do so by making it costlier for him when he doesn't jump the prompt.
- Look for flinching or intention behaviors. Keep in mind that it's good when your dog jumps the prompt, but it's not okay if he jumps the cue.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 14 and **Sit from Stand: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down from Sit

For proper technique, reference video lesson 14 and **Down from Sit: Plan A** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit from Down

For proper technique, reference video lesson 14 and **Sit from Down** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Down from Stand

For proper technique, reference video lesson 14 and **Down from Stand** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Discrimination

- Next, practice discrimination, where instead of doing a series of the same behavior—in this case, either sit from stand or down from stand—you mix up sit from stand with down from stand, for a verbal only. Don't always do a pattern of 1 sit, 1 down, 1 sit, 1 down, because dogs will learn that pattern. Instead, do a short series of downs and then throw in a sit, for example.

- Then, try mixing in sit-stay, walk-around stay, double walk-around stay, and down-stay, with a ball thrown in as a distraction.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 14 and **Sit-Stay** and **Down-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- It is very difficult for dogs to get their heads around the specific content of verbal cues. There is the occasional dog with specific aptitude for this, but it's a minority of dogs. Most dogs guess until we escalate the cost to the point that they are compelled to utilize the verbal cue.
- When they guess, they are not guessing randomly. Their guesses—or biases—are based on a few different things:
  - Aggregate or cumulative reinforcement. If a dog has had a lifetime history of 200 reinforcers for sit and 150 for down, he goes with sit.
  - Recency. If he has had those 200 reinforcers for sit and 150 for down but the last 80 in a row were for down, he goes with down. This is also called latest trick syndrome: No matter what you cue, he coughs up the latest trick you taught.
  - Order of events. Dogs are really good at orders of events, which will be exploited later in a lesson on respondent conditioning (17), but it's a confound in verbal discrimination. You may have seen or had a dog where you say "sit" and the dog cycles through, sit, give a paw, down, and roll over because that's the sequence the behaviors are always in. Once we shake up that sequence, the dog gets a headache. It's a big mess.
  - Preferred behaviors. It might be that some behaviors are less expensive. For example, some dogs are more susceptible to gravity than others; they love down-stay and hate getting up from down-stay. For others—athletic, impulsive puppies—such movement is cheap, and non-movement is more difficult. And it could be that some dogs just get a kick out of some behaviors.
- If you practice verbal discrimination, you'll get insight into your dog's particular biases—what he is basing his guesses on. You may, for example, find out that your dog is like Pavlov's dog and reliably trots out orders of events—or not. Either way, you'll be gaining insight into what makes him tick.

Lesson 15

# TRICKS: WAVE, TAKE A BOW, SPIN, HEEL

What do you think of when you think of a trained dog? It might be reliable obedience, good manners, or a minimum of nuisance in a human environment. Or it might be breadth of repertoire, which brings us to tricks. For most people, the difference between a trick and an obedience behavior is utility. Obedience behaviors have everyday application, whereas tricks have less application. From your dog's perspective, there is no difference—it's all tricks. Tricks provide enrichment for your dog, increase your skill, and allow you to keep training after the basics are down and proofed. Plus, they're fun.

## Types of Tricks

- There are 3 types of tricks:
  - Non-transitive, or simple, actions. Spin in a circle, play dead, and sit pretty are examples.
  - Transitive actions. These are tricks that involve object manipulation or interaction with props, such as put your hands up against the wall and be frisked.
  - Behavior chains. Chains are multiple behaviors that are strung together and performed in sequence. Dogs are really good at orders of events, and this is one time where it works to your advantage. You teach the tricks separately and then practice them always in the same order. Over time, each trick becomes the cue for the next one, and the dog performs it all for one cue.
- With tricks, good technique does not go out the window. You are, as always, concerned with the usual suspects: rate of reinforcement, clear criteria with criteria change done empirically, timing, strategic position-feeding, and adherence to an incremental training plan.
- If you want to perform tricks at a distance, for audiences, or in new locations, these all must be proofed once you've got the behavior.
- Artful cueing adds to wow factor. In the Training Plans Appendix, there is a plan for crawling called **Commando Crawl**, and when you cue it, it evokes very different things in your audience if you call it "grovel" versus "Special Forces," so be creative with cues.

The tricks in this lesson are doable by most dogs, including older dogs.

- Chains can be narratives. You can string together some relatively easy tricks with some narration and a costume to create a cute performance.
- Also, think about capitalizing on the terrain. What might your dog be good at? What will he look good doing? What is he built for? Is he athletic or not? Some dogs are better built to sit pretty, do backflips to catch Frisbees, or even spin and twirl.

## Wave

- For many dogs, this trick capitalizes on a trick they may already know: give a paw.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 15 and **Wave** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Take a Bow

- This trick is really a front-end down, so your dog should have at least a solid down for a hand signal before attempting this.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 15 and **Take a Bow** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Spin

- If you're going to teach your dog to spin in both directions, give them different names and different hand signals. When you're teaching spin, the enemy is sit and down; keep your dog in a stand at all costs.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 15 and **Spin** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Heeling

- Heeling is in the tricks category because of its limited utility. It used to be a centerpiece of obedience training, but nowadays it's strictly optional.
- The first thing to do is find your most comfortable mechanics. You might be a cross-body prompter, or you might prefer to prompt with the hand on the dog side. It doesn't matter which side, right or left, you heel him on, unless you intend to compete—in which case, heel on the left. If you want to do agility, do both.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 15 and **Heeling** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- On step 2, notice that prompt removal predicts reinforcement. It is very important to notice this. This approach to training is diametrically opposite that which creates show-me-the-money dogs. We're after dogs who love it when the prompt disappears: It signals that they're getting closer to reinforcement.

- The process we are using is this: Do a certain number of steps, then remove the target briefly, and then position-pay.

- Your walking pace is a bonus prompt. Fight the urge to slow down to make it easier or to fudge his being out of position. Walk as briskly as you can comfortably walk. If you are able to, practice a little without the dog to get used to the mechanics.

- This process deviates from normal procedure in an important way: Even if your dog is staying with you, a recommended strategy is discretionary sticks on step 4 or 5 (half a beat or 1 beat of removal) until he's not only staying with you, but is visibly brightening up when you remove the prompt. This is how to fight having a show-me-the-money dog, and it lays a nice foundation for the rest of the plan.

- If you were never on a drill team or in a marching band, it can take a bit of practice to iron out the counting and paying. Also, there's a thing called chew factor, where the dog stops walking to consume the treat. It can make it all feel awkward. But don't give up.

Lesson 16

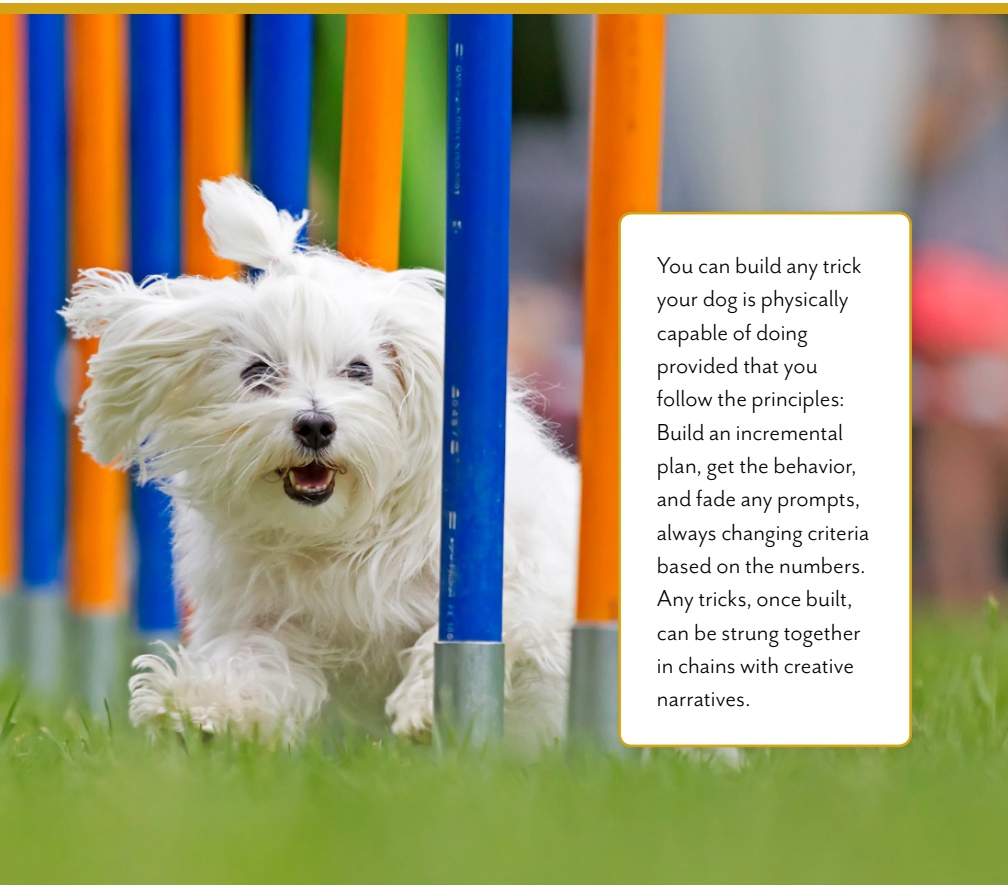
# TRICKS: DISTANCE DROP, FRISK, SIT PRETTY

In this lesson, you will learn how to train your dog to drop down from a distance (distance drop), put his paws against a vertical surface to simulate being frisked by the police (fugitive frisk), and sit on his hind legs with his front paws in the air (sit pretty).

## Distance Drop

- This is fun to train, and the formula—gradually increasing the distance and the distance cue followed by a closer-up prompt—can be used to train any distance maneuver. With this behavior, your dog will learn that if he does the right thing, you will travel to him to reinforce him. Eventually, he learns that the verbal from far away predicts the up-close prompt, and he starts jumping the prompt.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 16 and **Distance Drop** in the Training Plans Appendix.



You can build any trick your dog is physically capable of doing provided that you follow the principles: Build an incremental plan, get the behavior, and fade any prompts, always changing criteria based on the numbers. Any tricks, once built, can be strung together in chains with creative narratives.

## Fugitive Frisk

- This is a transitive trick. The pattern is that you will **get the behavior** first, using a prompt and then trying to get it for just a hand signal, and then you will start to add distractions. And your dog will only be let down from his frisk when you give him the release cue, which is "he's clean," as though you are a cop deciding that he doesn't have any arms on him.

- You need good footing for this trick; don't do this on a slippery floor. You also need a fairly solid vertical surface, such as a wall; furniture can be okay for smaller dogs, but not if the furniture will move. Take this trick on the road on the early side: Do it in multiple locations in your house, on multiple walls, on multiple stable pieces of furniture, outside, on fences, on fire hydrants, and on concrete walls on walks. You don't want your dog to be married to a single wall, because that becomes a prop cue. Not only will you have sluggish performance elsewhere, but your dog will end up throwing himself up against that particular wall whenever you're in the room with him. You want this behavior to only be happening on cue.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 16 and **Fugitive Frisk** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Sit Pretty

- This trick involves muscle building—muscles that help him stay stable when he is on his haunches—as well as learning. For this reason, you build the modest duration fairly early to help develop the muscles needed for this trick. It is recommended that you work on this trick and then take a break of at least 2 days to allow his muscles to strengthen.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 16 and **Sit Pretty** in the Training Plans Appendix.

This behavior can be physically challenging for dogs who have a long back and/or a big front end that has to be hoisted off the ground.

Lesson 17

# BUILDING A CONDITIONED EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Up until now, you have been primarily immersed in operant conditioning: the manipulation of behavior via control of its consequences. In this lesson, you will learn about one of the most powerful and useful forms of training, but one that doesn't get as much play: respondent conditioning, also known as classical conditioning or Pavlovian conditioning. You already did some of this when you initially conditioned your novel recall cue. This lesson will review the basics and then the rules canon for use in applied settings, and then you will put the rules into practice on your dog.

## Respondent/Classical/Pavlovian Conditioning

- In operant conditioning, the contingency is behavior—consequence. There is still a contingency in classical conditioning, but the contingency has nothing to do with behavior. In fact, it is behavior-blind. The contingency is "this event reliably predicts this other event." The dog can't control it. Think of it as event A telling the dog "here it comes," and event B being it. The terminology for these 2 events are conditioned stimulus and unconditioned stimulus, respectively.

- The result of this conditioning is anticipation. Remember, the animal can't do anything to affect whether the unconditioned stimulus—event B—is going to happen, but he can prepare himself. He can anticipate. And this anticipation is known as a conditioned response.

- In some simplified descriptions of classical conditioning, you'll read that the conditioned stimulus is a neutral stimulus and the unconditioned stimulus has to elicit some reflex or response. This is not accurate. Anything can be in the conditioned stimulus or unconditioned stimulus slots. That said, some conditioned stimuli and unconditioned stimuli go together better.

- For example, animals learn more readily if a taste predicts later illness than if a visual stimulus or an auditory stimulus predicts illness. Learning a relationship between eating something noxious and subsequently being ill is adaptive.

- Another incorrect simplification you might see in older descriptions of classical conditioning is that the conditioned response is a kind of miniature version of the unconditioned response. In the case of metronome sounds followed by food powder in old classical conditioning research, it's true that the food powder elicits gastric secretion and salivation and the predictor, the metronome, comes to do likewise.

- But if you teach a rat that a tone predicts shock, the shock elicits attempts to escape, but the warning tone elicits a hunkering response. The conditioned response is anticipatory. It is strategic in nature, not just a time shift of the unconditioned response.

- The original research of Pavlov on physiological processes, such as gastric secretion and salivation, is not relevant to applied behavior, but there is one area of involuntary response that is important for applied behavior: emotions—specifically, whether dogs fear something, really like something, or catalog something as irrelevant. We can, if we're crafty, develop a specific kind of conditioned response, called a **conditioned emotional response (CER)**.

- The execution of the "here it comes" followed by the unconditioned stimulus seems very simple on the face of it, but the devil is in the details if you want efficient and robust conditioning. Ironically, we do get robust classical conditioning inadvertently. For example, when you pick up your dog's leash, your dog gets excited and runs to the door in anticipation of a walk. However, there is no good utility of dogs loving leashes.

- There are plenty of things that we want dogs to like—such as strangers, grooming, and car rides—but these things usually don't get organically conditioned the way leashes do. We have to consciously condition them. And there are rules for doing so.

## The Rules

- Rule 1: The conditioned stimulus—the first event, the thing we want to condition—must come before, or predict, the second event. This order of events is canon law. The conditioned stimulus comes first, and then the unconditioned stimulus. If they happen in reverse order, it's no good (or you'll get conditioning the other way). If they happen at the same time, it's no good (it's not much of a tip-off).

- Rule 2: As well as we can engineer it, we want the best possible approximation of a 1-to-1 ratio between the conditioned stimulus and the unconditioned stimulus, meaning that you don't have one without the other. We especially want to avoid extinction trials, where the conditioned stimulus happens without the unconditioned stimulus. We don't want to say "here it comes" and then it doesn't come. For example, leash pickup and then no walk is an extinction trial. One won't undo years of conditioning, but early on, when you're developing a CER, it muddies the water.

- Reserving the unconditioned stimulus is less critical. For example, if you teach your dog that the kid next door means a fetch game, it's important that you don't have the kid without the fetch game, but it's less critical that the dog sometimes gets fetch games without the kid present. If you really need to crank up motivation to maximize efficiency and strength of conditioning, you can reserve key unconditioned stimuli, such as steak, for important conditioned stimuli that you want to condition. But for everyday conditioning, you'll probably be okay without this reserving.

- Rule 3: Identify and weaken your competition. Note that competition is not the same as distraction. In this context, the word "competition" is very specific. Let's say that you want to condition your dog that the kid next door means a fetch game. The kid comes over and plays fetch with the dog. The order of events—kid, then fetch—is correct. And let's say that the kid never comes over without then having some fetch. And let's even say that you don't play fetch anymore unless the kid comes over. This is a perfect 1-to-1 ratio.

- But how does it unfold in everyday life? Let's say that on Saturday you get a text from the kid that he's coming over in 10 minutes, and in 9 minutes, you rummage around and bring out the tennis ball. The kid then appears and starts playing fetch with the dog.

- Your goal is for the kid to be the best predictor of the fetch game. But the dog notices the ball materializing. And he has had past experience that when balls come out, fetch ensues. So, the ball being brought out is robbing some of your thunder. The kid becomes somewhat parenthetical as a predictor—doesn't give the dog any new information—so conditioning is weak or nonexistent.

- Let's say that you didn't get conditioning using the ball, so you decide to teach the dog that the kid next door means chicken. And to avoid the problem you had with the tennis ball, you don't get out the chicken ahead of time. Instead, you arm the kid with the chicken. So, the kid comes over armed with chicken and practices tricks with the dog for 10 minutes. But at the same time, as the dog sees the kid, he smells the chicken. And that robs your thunder. This is weak or nonexistent conditioning. The dog doesn't learn that the kid predicts chicken; he learns that the smell of chicken predicts chicken. It confirms what he already has learned.

- We don't think about the competition—the alternative conditioned stimulus options—when our conditioned stimulus wins. We do think about the competition when it trumps our conditioned stimulus. Luckily, there is not an infinite world of competition.

- In practical everyday dog training, the usual suspects fall into 2 categories: alternative conditioned stimuli that are really big and noticeable, such as the smell of chicken to a dog, and alternative conditioned stimuli that have a conditioning head start on us, such as tennis balls predicting fetch games.

- The usual suspects are the smell of food if you're using food as your unconditioned stimulus, the preparation of food if you prepare right before you condition, the presence of a toy or treat pouch, and actions such as reaching for a toy or treat or crinkling the bag the treats are in.

- One way we can make sure that your desired conditioned stimulus has predictive value is to time-shift these things so that your conditioned stimulus comes first. That's why, in your recall cue conditioning, you gave the cue and then went to the fridge for the party. The other strategy is to break the 1-to-1 rule for your competition with bait bag fashion shows.

- If you're going to use chicken as your unconditioned stimulus, put some chicken in a plastic bag in your treat pouch, wear it around the dog, reach for it, and crinkle it, but don't dispense any. This weakens the bait bag—

the smell and the reaching and crinkling. It makes the dog wonder what makes the chicken happen. Then, you answer the dog's question: When the kid comes over, you dispense some. The dog now has one thing to go on to know that the chicken is coming: the kid. This makes for faster, more efficient, and stronger conditioning.

- You can put these rules into practice to teach your dog that 2 things are wondrous: a head halter and his toothbrush.

## Head Halter Desensitization

- A **head halter** is a device that gives the maximum amount of power steering. It is introduced with a random CER procedure, similar to what you did with the recall cue, where at a few random times during the day, you bring the device out, show it to the dog, and then have a huge food party. You can also do the bridge and fridge, where you bring out the device, show it to the dog, and then go to the fridge, where you have a food party. With something like this that can be upsetting for dogs, patience is the rule. Going slow with training will pay off because then you'll have a lifetime of a dog who loves his head halter.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 17 and **Head Halter Desensitization** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Stationing Muzzle Hold: Review

- You already learned how to train this behavior in lessons 3, 4, and 5. Front-loading that training will now serve you very well as you gradually segue that muzzle station plan—the restraint part—with the actual implement: the toothbrush and toothpaste.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 17 and **Stationing Muzzle Hold** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Toothbrushing

- You want to make sure that it's not the training setup—the fact that you're just showing the dog something—but that it's specifically the toothbrush that causes the food party. To do this, show your dog alternative objects, such as tape, a stapler, and a drink cup, without giving treats. When the toothbrush is shown, give treats. Next, touch your dog's face with the alternative objects and toothbrush but only give treats when the toothbrush touches his face.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 17 and **Toothbrushing** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Toothbrushing is a usable template for any procedure that involves handling and implements. You condition the implement, condition the stationing and body handling, and then you dovetail the 2 together. You can replicate this with anything from brushes and combs to giving ear drops or even vaccinations.

You can use any kind of toothbrush for your dog—just make sure that it's a soft one. For a large dog, you can use a regular adult soft toothbrush. For a small dog, you can use a children's or an infant's toothbrush. There are also toothbrushes that are made specifically for dogs that have different brush angles. Experiment to determine what your dog likes.

## GLOSSARY TERMS:

**conditioned emotional response (CER)** • This is one type of respondent (also called classical or Pavlovian) conditioned response. Pavlov's original research focused on the conditioning of salivary and gastric responses, which are not relevant to dog training. However, one subclass of involuntary

responses—emotions—is extremely relevant. Using respondent conditioning procedures, you can train a dog to like or fear people, places, procedures, times of day, and things. One of the side effects—really a side benefit—of training dogs using positive reinforcement is the collateral positive conditioned emotional response. The dog not only learns to sit, down, stay, come, etc., but also to love hands, being reached for, the trainer, being trained, etc.

**get the behavior** • This is an aphorism in animal training that speaks to how crucial it is to focus early on in the training process to getting the animal to do the action (or some part of it) so that it can be reinforced. So, even though it's intuitive for language-oriented beings like humans to focus right away on cueing or "commanding" the behavior, this is poor technique. Get the behavior—nice, strong, robust behavior—using capturing, prompting, or shaping and only then give it a name.

**head halter** • Halters have been used historically to manage horses, ponies, camels, etc., as these are large animals that require significant control. More recently, this same principle has migrated to the management of dogs. Head halters use mechanical advantage to turn the dog's head when he attempts to pull on leash, rather than pain or strangulation, which makes head halters more humane. One disadvantage is that some dogs and owners don't like head halters. Some people don't like the look—halters resemble muzzles to the untrained eye—and dogs often take some time to get used to the sensation of the strap on their face—think about your first time wearing eyeglasses—and in the meantime paw at the halter. Like anti-pull harnesses, there are different brands that fit a bit differently.

## SUGGESTED READING


- Rescorla, "Pavlovian Conditioning."

Lesson 18

# HUSBANDRY: HANDLING AND OBJECT CONDITIONING

Husbandry refers to the physical care we give our dogs, including feeding, grooming, health monitoring, and medical care. Some of it—notably grooming and medical care—can be stressful. But it doesn't have to be. You have the option of not settling for grim tolerance or, worse, frank fear or aggression. It's quite possible to train happy and active participation for most procedures, including grabbing and lifting; grooming (brushing, combing, nail trimming, bathing); toothbrushing; administering medication to ears, to eyes, to skin, and in the form of pills; and having veterinary exams and procedures.

## Restraint

- The big parameter that we often neglect with husbandry is restraint. Most people readily empathize with the invasiveness of procedures. If a procedure is physically uncomfortable or painful, we feel the obligation to mitigate or comfort. But we often take for granted restraint—grasping and holding body parts. We don't automatically appreciate the dedicated anti-restraint software animals come packaged with. And everything from nail trims to radiographs involves restraint.

- The plans you're about to work on are broken down into where on the body you're touching, for how long, and how invasive it is. And as you learned in the previous lesson with the toothbrush, when there's an implement, you condition that separately and then dovetail it together with the restraint part.

- You've done a bit of strategic preliminary work with sit-stay and stationing muzzle hold that you are now going to build on.

## Sit-Stay for Ear or Mouth Handling

- With this behavior, unlike with toothbrushing, we are now back to operant conditioning, where your dog will be working for consequences. He is going to have the criteria for holding a sit-stay while you examine his ears and mouth. To warm him up for this, start with a walk-around stay.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 18 and **Sit-Stay for Ear or Mouth Handling** in the Training Plans Appendix.

## Toothbrushing

- Continue with the toothbrushing plan you started in the previous lesson. In this lesson, you will actually use toothpaste.

There is unequivocal research that daily toothbrushing prevents gingivitis and periodontal disease, which is associated with all kinds of other health problems in dogs. It can add healthy years to your dog's life.

- There are many dog toothpastes on the market that allegedly taste good to dogs. Some dogs tolerate the taste, some dogs actually do like it, and some dogs don't find it very tasty. For your dog's first session, try using cream cheese as the toothpaste. This way, his first experience with the bristles touching his mouth is very enjoyable.

- Do not use human toothpaste. There are sometimes ingredients in human toothpastes that are toxic to dogs. You can also just use water. The key part of toothbrushing is the mechanical action, not the toothpaste.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 18 and **Toothbrushing** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- Note that toothbrushing was approached from 2 angles: with the desensitization and counterconditioning toothbrush plan as well as via a sit-stay for handling. These 2 plans dovetail really nicely.

Lesson 19

# HUSBANDRY: LIMB HANDLING AND TOOTHBRUSHING

Aside from their mouths, dogs tend to have issues with other body parts, including ears, feet, and—for some dogs—rear quarters, such as their tail. In this husbandry lesson, you will continue your sit-stay for handling and your toothbrushing plan with your dog, and you will also start foot handling.

## Sit-Stay for Ear or Mouth Handling

- Continue with the plan for this behavior that you started in the previous lesson. The requirement for this exercise is that your dog holds his sit-stay while you're touching his ears and mouth.

For proper technique, reference video lesson 19 and **Sit-Stay for Ear or Mouth Handling** in the Training Plans Appendix.

If your dog's ears are painful and you have to give him drops out of immediate medical necessity, it's not a good time to attempt head restraint or ear drop desensitization.

It's much better to be honest with the dog. Don't tell him that it's okay, because it's not going to be okay. In fact, signal to him that something aversive is about to happen. Before approaching him, say, "It's torture time; I'm so sorry." This compartmentalizes the inevitable nasty experience so that your approach at other times is protected. It takes reps for the dog to learn this discrimination, but it's worth cultivating. Approach and touching your dog are worth protecting. Then, once he's feeling better, start working the plans to gradually get him used to ear handling and drops.

## Toothbrushing

- Continue with the plan for this behavior that you started in the previous lesson. In this lesson, you will actually do some brushing, eventually of all 4 quadrants of your dog's mouth.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 19 and **Toothbrushing** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- You can use this same template to develop a plan for ear or eye drops: Work the implement or chemical and the restraint separately and then dovetail them gradually together.

## Foot Handling

- Foot handling is a huge bugaboo for dogs because limb injuries in natural settings are often a fast track to death. Animals who are lame can't escape predators as well, can't feed themselves as well, and so on. This is why feet are tricky. To work on them, you always start higher up on legs and gradually work your way down. A firm grasp higher up the leg is a better starting point than to do even tiny touches right on the feet.

- The big parameters are location (where on the leg or foot), invasiveness (how firm), and duration (for how long). Invasiveness and duration are front-loaded, and migration down the leg is done a little later.

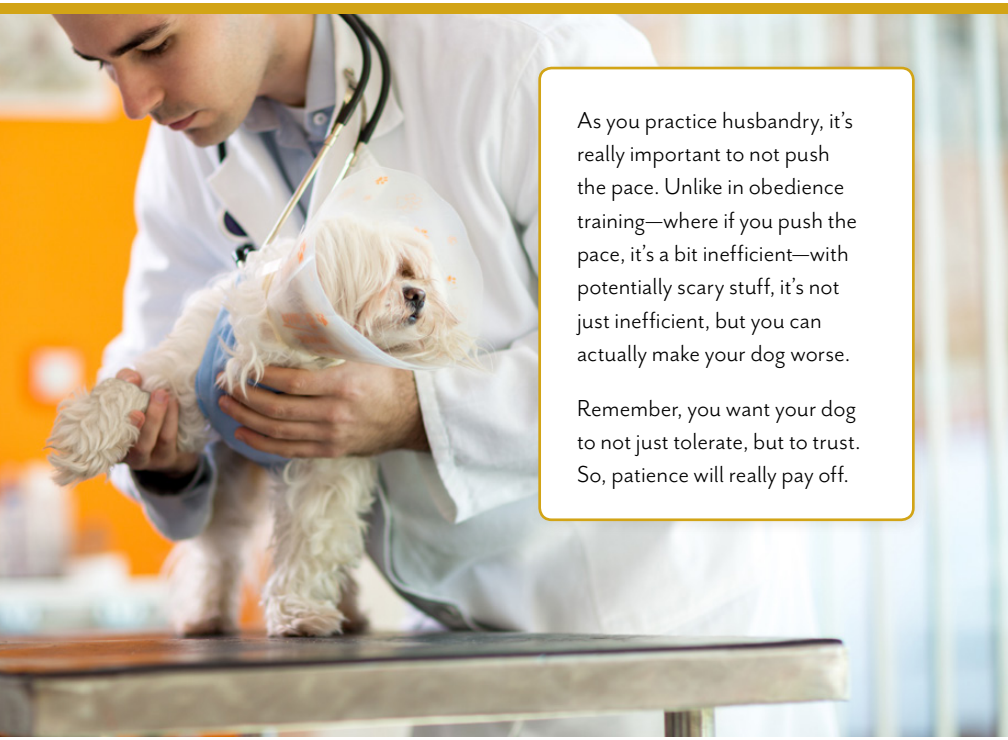
- As usual, separate any implements, such as nail trimmers, and then dovetail with your restraint work.

- The front foot plan is an actual sit-stay, but the rear foot plan is Pavlovian: Your goal is not a stay, just that your dog is comfortable and relaxed.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 19 and **Sit-Stay for Front Foot Handling** and **Rear Paw Desensitization and Counterconditioning** in the Training Plans Appendix.

In the last few years, there has been increasing interest in the veterinary community in reducing fear and stress for animals at the vet. This is a great thing. The Academy for Dog Trainers is working on granular, owner-friendly training plans that you can work on at home to prepare your dog for routine visits and procedures—from exams and injections to blood draws and lying still for radiographs.

- If your dog is sensitive about the front or rear feet, go slowly. Insert splits. Push only on 5 out of 5 in the case of the stay and on happy anticipation in the rear foot plan. It really pays off to go at your dog's pace.



As you practice husbandry, it's really important to not push the pace. Unlike in obedience training—where if you push the pace, it's a bit inefficient—with potentially scary stuff, it's not just inefficient, but you can actually make your dog worse.

Remember, you want your dog to not just tolerate, but to trust. So, patience will really pay off.

## SUGGESTED READING

- Nanan, "Nailed It!" https://lorinanan.com/course-in-canine-nail-care/.

Lesson 20

# PUPPIES AND SENIOR DOGS

This lesson focuses on puppies and seniors. If you have a young puppy, or are planning to get a young puppy, it's important that you prioritize certain time-sensitive items: socialization, bite inhibition training, and aggression prevention. This means that the stuff that might be driving you crazy—and that might feel like priorities, such as housetraining and chewing your possessions, get bumped to second tier. When it comes to seniors, enrichment activities can help them maintain a high quality of life, even if their exercise tolerance and playfulness isn't what it once was.

## Puppies

- You may have heard people refer to their 10-month-old or even 2-year-old "puppy." For the purposes of this course, "puppy" can be defined more formally and in line with existing research on dog development. The stages of puppyhood are as follows:

  - Neonatal period (birth–14 days). The eyes and ears of neonates are closed. This doesn't mean that they have no awareness. Their brains are wired for vision and hearing. It's likely that they hear muffled sound and see light changes, as you do when your eyes are closed. Neonates are sensitive to extremes of temperature, which is why they sleep in a pile to conserve heat or spread out to cool off. They spend most of their time sleeping and eating. They have a few notable reflexes: They root, which is a search function for their mom, and they have a robust sucking reflex. They cannot yet eliminate on their own. Their mom cleans them, which stimulates them to eliminate, and she eats the products. This serves to keep the nest clean. Neonates can't yet walk, but they crawl around.

  - Transition period (14–21 days). Sometime between 2 and 3 weeks, the eyes and ears will open, and the puppy will sometimes get up and take a tottering step. They can learn via operant conditioning at this age. It's likely that they can also learn from operant conditioning as neonates, but that hasn't actually been tested.

  - Socialization period (21 days–?). The big opportunity for socialization commences when the puppy starts engaging with other beings, at around 3 weeks. The socialization window is the time where the puppy is especially plastic with regard to whom and what he is going to accept in his life as a social being—someone to whom he will emit prosocial behavior. Because we want dogs to feel safe in our world and we want to protect the public safety from a species that has significant weapons, socialization is of absolute paramount importance. It's not clear when the socialization window closes. There is increasing convergence that it's probably fairly young—12 weeks, possibly even 8 weeks—and the younger the better for maximal bang for buck.

A concerning trend in dog training is that of undersocializing puppies, or selectively socializing puppies so that they have some reserve around strangers, so that they are less of a nuisance. The idea seems to be that if they are less keen to greet strangers, you can label them as "calm." A dog who doesn't attempt to greet people can be appealing and seems polite, but the cost is that he is not pro-social. This is a bad trade-off.

Socialize your puppy fully; this is not mutually exclusive to good manners.

- The **Puppy Socialization Hit List** in the Training Plans Appendix is a handy checkbox that you can use to make sure you're covering big-ticket items, such as a wide variety of people of various ages, races, and sexes; fun car rides; and age-mates to play with.

- Also, novelty is important. Take your puppy to new places—quiet places, busy places, and everything in between. Make sure that he doesn't see his first skateboard or bicycle or person wearing mirror shades at age 10 months. Make sure he walks on a wide variety of surfaces, rides in an elevator, gets to climb on things, and sniffs plenty of things on walks. Dogs who frequent cafés and restaurants are calm and blasé. They have so much regular exposure that they've seen it all and it's gotten old.

- This volume of exposure and good experience is called padding. It's like layers of protection or inoculation against the inevitable bad experiences your puppy will have in his life. If he's met and played with dozens of puppies and had a great time, the first time a dog is mean to him, he is much less likely to generalize that experience to dogs as a whole.

- The next time-sensitive item is known as bite inhibition or acquired bite inhibition (ABI). It doesn't refer to how readily a dog will bite—that's bite threshold. Instead, ABI refers to the pressure the dog exerts when he bites. Trainers talk about dogs having soft mouths if ABI is well established and hard mouths if a dog's default bite pressure is injurious.

- The roots of ABI are in the broader concept of ritualization of aggression. Aggression is expensive behavior for animals. Even if you win an argument, you spend energy and, importantly, risk injury. You especially risk injury if you are a species with significant weapons. And dogs are such a species. Dog jaws can crack bone. Yet most bites and most dog fights do not produce bone-crunching injury. They produce little ding-type punctures, abrasions, or sometimes just saliva. That is remarkable restraint, given the underlying capability.

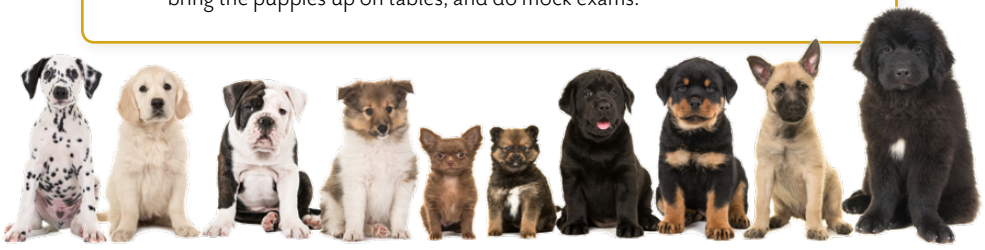
- Another observation is the relentlessness with which puppies play-bite living things, from their littermates to people. The prevailing hypothesis for why they do this is rehearsal. And one of the things dogs are thought to be rehearsing is default bite pressure.

**Training Sessions and Classes for Puppies**

Some puppies have the proverbial short attention span, for whom short training sessions are best. Other puppies can work longer, and you can train as long as they're interested. You can train using the same plans you've been using for adult dogs in this course.

Classes are great for puppies. Be a cautious consumer when it comes to puppy class selection. Dog training is unregulated, and anybody can hang out a shingle and make a mess of your puppy. A good puppy class will have the following features:

- Puppies. It really is a puppy class, not a mixed adult and puppy class. The trainer should screen out any dogs over the age of 18 weeks.
- Supervised play. The puppies get to interact with, investigate, and play with each other while trainers and assistants monitor for problems. There are chairs and benches and other means for puppies to hide under if they are not ready to play yet.
- Modern training methods. If you are asked to purchase a collar that chokes or digs pins into your puppy's neck, or you observe a class and puppies are pinned to the ground or startled, run in the other direction. As much as this stuff is unnecessary with adult dogs, it is strongly contraindicated for puppies, who are babies. The motivation should be strictly treats, play, toys, and happy voices.
- Bite inhibition training and body handling exercises. The body handling will be gentle and involve plenty of treats. The trainer might dress up in scrubs, bring the puppies up on tables, and do mock exams.

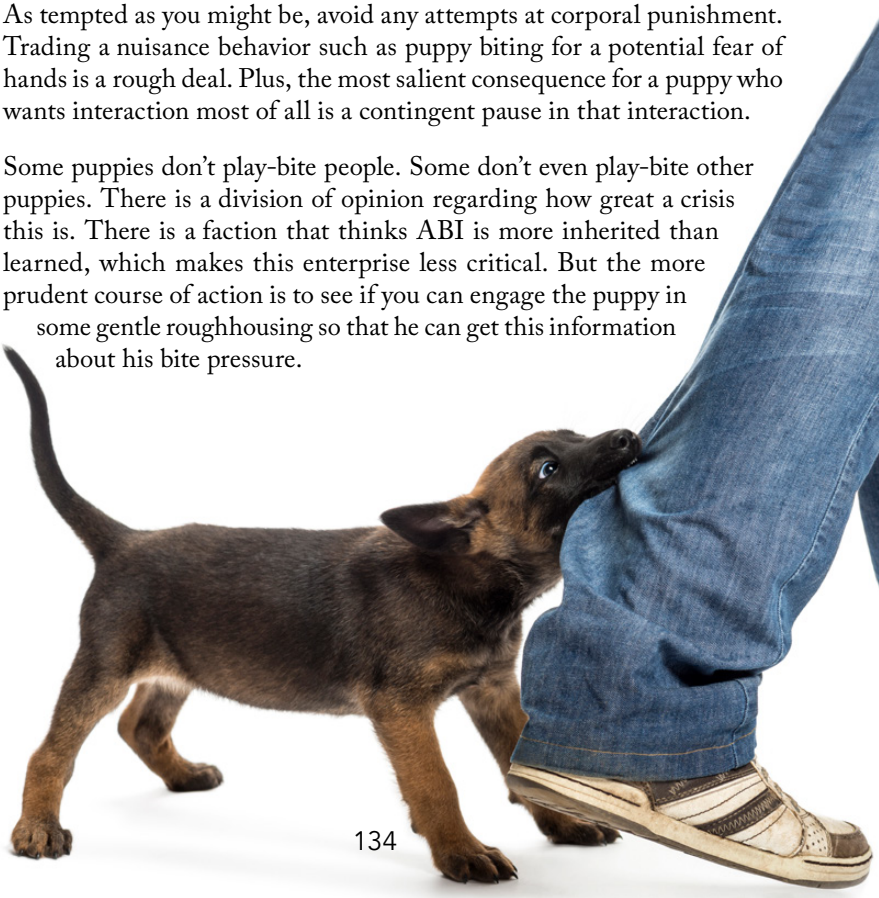


- Once a dog reaches adulthood, if the mouth is not good, you're stuck with it. You can alter the dog's feeling about triggers—you can clean up food or object guarding or make him better with strangers—but the mouth is static in adults. This makes it a time-sensitive item in puppy training, if we are to have this important line of defense.

- If your puppy never bites hard, let him keep biting you for a few weeks. Then, redirect him to toys. If all the bites aren't soft, make a distinction. Allow the softest ones (for example, the softest 75% or 80%), and target the hardest ones for play cessation—a time-out. The contingency is this: If your dog bites hard, you leave for a minute or 2.

- As tempted as you might be, avoid any attempts at corporal punishment. Trading a nuisance behavior such as puppy biting for a potential fear of hands is a rough deal. Plus, the most salient consequence for a puppy who wants interaction most of all is a contingent pause in that interaction.

- Some puppies don't play-bite people. Some don't even play-bite other puppies. There is a division of opinion regarding how great a crisis this is. There is a faction that thinks ABI is more inherited than learned, which makes this enterprise less critical. But the more prudent course of action is to see if you can engage the puppy in some gentle roughhousing so that he can get this information about his bite pressure.



- The final time-sensitive priority is aggression prevention, which is broken down into food bowl exercises, object exchanges, and body handling. Think of socialization, anti-aggression, and bite inhibition training as being multiple lines of defense against aggression. Dogs are animals, and animals bite. They bite in predictable circumstances: when they feel threatened and when competing over resources. If they like people, like having their bodies handled, and like their possessions being approached or taken away, they are at a much lower likelihood of biting. And if they have soft mouths, if they ever do bite, it is much more likely to be non- or minimally injurious.

## Senior Dogs

- The age at which a dog is considered geriatric is not cut in stone because, in general, larger dogs age faster than smaller dogs. Some giant breeds, such as Great Danes, usually only make it to age 8, though some individuals might surpass this, whereas toy dogs routinely live twice as long. We don't know why this is.

- It does change the picture regarding how early we should step up our care of a now-senior dog. A very large breed can be considered geriatric at age 5 or 6, a small breed after age 10, and a medium-sized dog somewhere in the middle.

- To nail down whether your dog is considered geriatric, bloodwork can determine if organ function values are getting into the senior range, and a physical exam can check for osteoarthritis and other conditions. Do get these treated, and don't guess; make an appointment with your veterinarian.

- Old dogs thrive on attention, activities at their pace, and being trained. You can absolutely teach an old dog new tricks—and you should. Just because your dog might not need training from the misbehavior perspective, it doesn't mean that he won't love the puzzle, the interaction, and the treats. Good choices from this program for older dogs would be spin, take a bow, hand targeting, and fugitive frisk.

- Senior dogs love puzzle toys. There are also behaviors you can train that double as muscle strengthening. For example, sit pretty helps build core strength.
- If you Google "physio exercises for dogs" or "balance exercises for dogs," you'll get all kinds of ideas and videos that use devices such as balance discs and wobble boards. They're not just for post-op or post-injury rehab; they're good for keeping dogs limber and strong in their dotage.
- If your dog has more serious orthopedic issues or you just want to go all out, note that there has been an explosion in the number and quality of canine physio and rehab centers. These facilities have a large variety of balancing gear; cavaletti, which are low hurdles that prompt the dog to pick up his feet to traverse them; and underwater treadmills, which serve both to support the weight of the dog and provide resistance.

There is an epidemic of obesity in pet dogs. This is a disease risk factor and is very tough on dogs' joints. Many people with overweight and obese dogs are in denial.

- Senior dogs' joints benefit from passive range of motion stretches. There are numerous superb demonstration videos on YouTube. These are actually relaxing to do and can be a nice bonding time with your dog.

**Is adding another dog good for a resident senior dog?**

If your senior is not very old, loves other dogs, and is still a possible play prospect, then consider adding another dog to your household. But if your senior is old, or infirm, or tolerates but doesn't adore other dogs, or hasn't played in years, it's probably not a good idea.

- Dental discomfort and dental disease is epidemic in senior dogs. There is no reason for your dog to suffer with this. Just 30 seconds once a day and he avoids periodontal disease, plus has better breath. If you have a senior dog and you have not been toothbrushing, get him evaluated by your veterinarian, who might recommend performing a professional cleaning, which you can then follow up with daily toothbrushing. It is not too late to start.

- Canine cognitive dysfunction (CCD), sometimes referred to as "dog Alzheimer's disease," is the dog counterpart to human cognitive decline. It can't be cured, but its symptoms can be mitigated. Dogs with CCD display a few characteristic symptoms: disorientation, some changes in their circadian rhythm, anxiety, and housetraining lapses. All of these symptoms overlap with other causes, so the ruling out must be done by a veterinarian who examines your dog and takes history from you. CCD can often be improved with medication.

## SUGGESTED READING


- American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior, "AVSAB Position Statement on Puppy Socialization."
- Anderson, *Remember Me?*
- Killion and Herron, *Puppy Culture*, DVD.
- Mills and Zulch, *Life Skills for Puppies*.
- Morrow, Ottobre, Ottobre, Neville, St-Pierre, Dreschel, and Pate, "Breed-Dependent Differences in the Onset of Fear-Related Avoidance Behavior in Puppies."

Lesson 21

# HOUSETRAINING, CHEWING, AND DIGGING

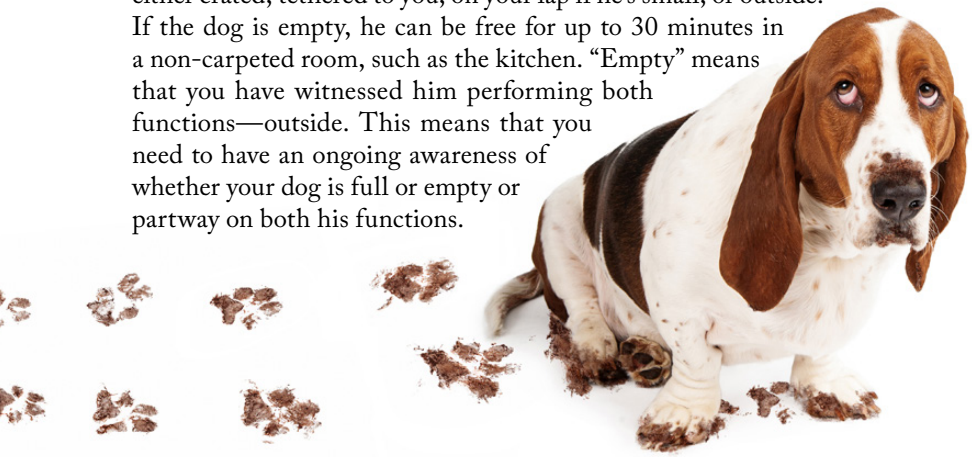
This lesson is about dogs whose expression of species-normal behavior conflicts with house rules or cultural norms. The focus is on housetraining, chewing, and digging—the 3 most commonly presented problems of the dog-guessing-wrong variety. Our approach to solving behavior problems will not involve yelling at dogs, spraying them, or hitting them. Luckily, we don't need to. We have really good protocols for preserving welfare while also preserving your carpets, shoes, and rosebushes.

## Housetraining

- Housetraining is a discrimination of the difference between indoors and outdoors, and eliminating—urinating and defecating—solely outdoors. The categories "indoors" and "outdoors" are obviously different to people, but they are less so to dogs. Dogs, when it comes to elimination, more readily learn substrate, or the surface type. And for them, carpets and grass have much the same feel. There are some dogs who don't have a preference for soft and porous for urination, but most dogs do, so it's not surprising that they readily urinate on carpets. And they don't have any moral ideas about it.

- There is a formula that is about as close to a guarantee of success that one can responsibly give in applied behavior. It works on puppies, adults who have never been housetrained, dogs who mark incessantly, and tricky cases, such as dogs who merrily soil crates. But there is some labor involved. In fact, there's a good month of diligent rule-following. The more closely you adhere to the rules, without improvisation, the faster you'll get your dog trained.

- There are 2 stages in the program. The first stage is the orchestration, via careful management, of zero accidents. Basically, you arrange it so that your dog has no opportunity to make an error. He is not free in the house if there is any chance whatsoever that he might eliminate. He is either crated, tethered to you, on your lap if he's small, or outside. If the dog is empty, he can be free for up to 30 minutes in a non-carpeted room, such as the kitchen. "Empty" means that you have witnessed him performing both functions—outside. This means that you need to have an ongoing awareness of whether your dog is full or empty or partway on both his functions.



- The other piece of the first stage is that you must accompany him outside and praise and reward him for outdoor elimination. So, if you have a yard, you can't send him out. You must go with him. If you prefer walks or have to do walks because you have no yard, you'll automatically be with him. If you do a mixture of walks and yard, you must accompany him not just on walks, but into the yard as well. Otherwise, the timing of reward will be late. You need this behavior—outdoor elimination—to increase in frequency and become a strong preference. When the time comes to praise and reward him, time it so that you don't actually interrupt him. Also, keep a treat supply near the door or leash so that you're armed for outings.

- You do this regime—orchestrating zero accidents indoors plus reinforcing outdoor elimination—for 3 weeks. Unfortunately, if you slip up and there are accidents, it will take longer; it's 3 weeks of actual orchestration of no accidents, not 3 weeks of attempt.

- The first wrinkle in this plan is a dog who marks. Marking is the deposition of urine, usually on vertical surfaces and usually by male dogs. Dogs who mark usually do so many times before their bladders are empty, and they often have the urge to urinate even without much in the bladder. Interestingly, marking does not change how housetraining is approached.

- Marking in the house is a problem insofar as it is the deposition of urine inside instead of exclusively outside. So, although it might feel different to us, it is the same kettle of fish. You need to train your dog to mark exclusively outside. And the formula for doing that is identical: Orchestrate an accident-free 3 weeks and reward elimination—including marking—in a timely fashion in the desired location. The only difference is that dogs who urine-mark are rarely empty. And because of this, they cannot have free periods in the house the way you can do for non-markers when they are empty. This means crate, tether, or lap.

- How long can you crate a dog without it becoming inhumane warehousing? Provided that the dog is being taken out at regular intervals—for an adult dog, every 2 to 4 hours, and for a small puppy, every hour—and provided that he has regular exercise and chew toys to pass his time in the crate, for the finite period of about 3 weeks, there is not a welfare issue.

A long-standing model of behavior problems that has now crumbled insisted that dogs are hierarchical. In fact, they're not just hierarchical, but they're obsessed with where they fit into the quasi-pack that is their human family, and behavior problems are symptoms of either the dog's uncertainty about where he stands or his attempt to take the top spot.

But the overwhelming likelihood is that dogs do what they do because it works—not to achieve any status, but to get through their days and feel okay. They get into chew objects the way you get into a good book. They urinate on the carpet because they don't have any conception of a carpet having value beyond it being possibly a sleeping spot or a porous substrate for urinating on.

- For housetraining purposes, the crate should be large enough that the dog can comfortably rest in lateral recumbency, but no larger. Make it comfortable with a bed or crate pad, unless the soft surface prompts him to eliminate or if the dog is a dedicated hard-surface, cool-seeking sleeper.

- What we're capitalizing on is the effect of close confinement on elimination. Most dogs will defer eliminating until they can get away from where they're resting or sleeping. So, we use the crate once we're past the 30-minute free period to safely fill him up before the next outdoor excursion.

- Unfortunately, not 100% of dogs avoid soiling their crates. Some merrily urinate and defecate away. Sometimes this is because they were forced to eliminate in close confinement at some point in their lives and they lost the urge to keep clean, and sometimes they're just built that way.

- If your dog is a crate-soiler, try to nurse back the close confinement effect. Crate him, but only crate him when he's empty or near empty. You'll notice that this is the opposite of what we hope to use the crate for eventually: stretching him. Keep the crate and the dog scrupulously clean. When you're home, tether him to you in order to stretch him up to a few hours and religiously reward him for outdoor elimination.

- When you're not there, and he can't be tethered to you, and you're still working on developing the crate as a tool, put the dog in a long-term confinement area, which is a finite space, such as a laundry room or kitchen that's not too vast. The floor surface is hard and easy to clean and the area has been dog-proofed, which means nothing valuable in reach that's chewable. At one end of the space, put a comfortable bed, food, water, and toys. At the other end, put the toilet. This can be newspaper, commercial wee-wee pads, or an artificial turf rectangle.

- Your hope is that he makes use of this arrangement, but you are not guaranteed that he will. And because there's not close confinement, there's no incentive to defer elimination, which means the habit of waiting to go outdoors and the attendant muscle conditioning won't happen. But you're at least stopping the habit of him using your carpets or other more precious surfaces in your house.

- The more you use long-term confinement, the slower the process of housetraining will go. So, only use it if you have no other choice: You have a crate-soiler, you have to leave your dog for more than 4 hours, or you have a puppy who is 2 or 3 months old and too young to physically hold on and you have to leave him for more than an hour or 2. The younger the puppy, the more frequently he has to go.

- If you use long-term confinement, it's important that when you are available, you work the housetraining program: crate or tether or lap unless guaranteed empty, and consistent reinforcement for elimination outside.

- If you're forced to use long-term confinement regularly, you won't ever have the 3-week blitz period of engineered outdoors-only elimination. So, how do you know when you can move onto stage 2? You'll know when, for 1 full week, you come home and the long-term confinement area is clean. This will vary from dog to dog. Note that you'll get there faster the more diligently and the more often you can work the program when you are home.

- If you've had 3 weeks of laborious, tight management or you've done a hybrid of long-term confinement for damage control and diligent housetraining when you're available and you've had 1 week without a single indoor elimination in the confinement area, you're ready for stage 2—which is the gradual loosening of the strict management.

- For 1 week, instead of the 30-minute free period in the kitchen when he's empty, allow 1 hour. If that goes well, go to 2 hours. If that goes well, try 3 hours. If that goes well, go back to 1 hour when he's empty, but now give him 1 floor of the house. Then, try 2 hours. At this point, keep an eye on him.

- For one thing, you want to make sure it's working. If you see him wind up to go, interrupt him and take him outside. You only need to interrupt him; you don't need to blast him. Then, praise and reward him when he does it there. And make a note: A 90-minute free period in the house is safe, but 2 hours is not, so when he's empty, he gets 90 minutes, and then he's crated for another 90 minutes to stretch him.

- As he becomes more reliable, you can stretch the time, add more rooms, loosen the supervision, and relax the rewarding of outdoor elimination. But only do so as he's successful. Prematurely going deep into stage 2 is at the root of much grief in housetraining.
- This is, admittedly, a lot of work. But if you do it—and do it right—you only have to do it once. You then have a lifetime of coasting with a fully housetrained dog.

Dogs are not good generalizers, and this applies to housetraining. Plenty of dogs who are perfect at home will lapse in a house that's new to them. So, when taking a dog to a rental or visiting friends or family, get him empty before giving him freedom, or keep him on a tether until you can get him empty. You don't have to redo the entire process, but you do need to be vigilant the first few days.

## Chewing

- Chewing used to be considered teething, which was legal in puppies but illegal and a sign of neurosis in adult dogs. But now we know better. Dogs chew the way we get engrossed in page-turner novels or binge-watch a great series. It's not a pathology; it's just a pastime.

- There's an epidemic of boredom in pet dogs, part of the solution for which is the provision of chew and puzzle toys. Once you have figured out what kinds of toys most engages your individual dog, the problem becomes training him to use them exclusively.

- One prong to chew training is building up a stable of toys that your dog likes. The other prong is habit formation. It's vital that you prevent him from rehearsing chewing illegal items. This is very much like the first phase of housetraining, where you manufacture what you want by giving the dog no opportunity to make errors.

- Unlike housetraining, managing a chewer doesn't require close confinement. You don't need a crate or tether. You just need a dog-proofed area where the only choice is the legal objects. This might mean a carefully cleared room or the kitchen. You can also use a tether if you want him to join you in the living room and that room is not able to be dog-proofed.

- Orchestrate this error-free existence for 2 or 3 weeks, and then, under supervision, give him some freedom. If he attempts to chew furniture or shoes or anything else illegal, interrupt him and direct him to his chew toys. When you're not supervising, he's in the dog-proofed area. Keep this up until he doesn't try for the illegal items anymore. Then, you're safe relaxing the supervision. If he starts making mistakes again, repeat the process.

## Digging

- Digging is the next most common complaint after house soiling and chewing. Dogs dig for a variety of reasons: for critters, because it smells interesting, to bury items, to escape, and to keep cool.

The overlap in the formulas for housetraining, chew training, and dig training is to prevent rehearsal, which buys you time to install an alternative habit that meets the basic need.

- Digging is by far most often seen in dogs who spend time alone in yards. The easiest solution in this case is to keep the dog inside and provide him with plenty of chew toys to pass his time. If you absolutely want the dog outside for part of the day, or you want him to have access to the yard via a doggie door, there are a few things you can do.

- The first thing is to meet the need. If you suspect that your dog is hot, there are cooling pads available for dogs to rest on, and this can be worth a try. Some dogs love lying in small plastic children's wading pools filled with a few inches of water.

- If your dog is bored, it can help to increase his enrichment. Physical exercise in the form of walks, dog parks, fetch games, and tug games are great options. Work-to-eat projects—such as training, obedience, or tricks—plus puzzle toys can push back against the scourge of boredom.

- If your dog likes digging for treasure, and you're amenable to it, a solution is to designate one area as the digging area. Some people install a small sandbox or dirt box, and other people just choose a spot in the yard. Then, fill that place with treasure: Bury chew toys, cookies, and food puzzles. Start with a real density of treasure buried shallowly. Point out to him that the stuff is there the first time or 2. Then, bury things deeper and spread it out more. Odds are that he will start to confine his digging to this fruitful area.

- If you're not willing to meet him halfway, which is understandable—some people simply cannot abide any digging anywhere—you'll need to add supervision and redirection to the alternative pastimes you provide.

## SUGGESTED READING

Donaldson, *Dogs Are from Neptune.*

Lesson 22

# CRATING AND ALONE TRAINING

This lesson is about crate training and alone training. It also includes information to help you determine whether your dog has separation anxiety, which is an indication to get professional help—it is absolutely treatable. If you are convinced that it's worth the time to crate-train your dog, this lesson will help you feel armed and ready to select a crate and proceed systematically.

## Crate Training

- The first thing to think about is whether you need to crate-train your dog or not. If you have a puppy or an un-housetrained adult, crate training is helpful, as it really facilitates housetraining.

- If you don't have to housetrain, you might still choose to crate-train because it prepares your dog for any mandatory close confinement he might have to endure in his life. Any hospitalization will involve close confinement, most groomers use cages or crates to confine dogs before and after grooming, and air shipping requires confinement. Also, some people prefer to secure dogs in crates for car travel rather than using seat belts or pet barriers.

It used to be taught to dog trainers that dogs were den animals. Now we know that they really aren't, but many dogs still like having an enclosed place all to themselves.

- If you decide to crate-train, the first order of business is choosing a crate. You need a very specific size if one of your goals is to inhibit elimination. The crate should be large enough for your dog to lie comfortably on his side but no larger than that.
- If you have a puppy and want to purchase just one crate that will accommodate him as an adult, cordon off sections according to his current size using plexiglass or an exercise pen panel.
- There are 4 main materials that crates are manufactured in: heavy-duty plastic, wire mesh, fabric (typically nylon), and wood or wicker.
    - Hard-sided heavy-duty plastic crates are the most secure and the type that is required for air travel. Some people like the sturdiness and ease of cleaning, and some dogs like the sense of security.
    - Wire-mesh crates offer the most field of vision for the dog, are foldable, and are relatively sturdy but not sufficient for the strongest and most determined escapers. Part of the onus is on you to make the crate somewhere he's comfortable hanging out, but even some dogs who are non-anxious in their crates find it a sport to bust out if they can do it.
    - Fabric crates are attractive and foldable but definitely only for dogs who do not ever attempt escapes.
    - Some people want crates that are less of an eyesore and therefore invest in attractive wood or wicker models. These are chewable, less secure, and usually pricier, so they are a perfectly fine choice for an already crate-happy dog who is chew-trained.
- If you want a portable dog-proofed area that is not confined, there are exercise pens, which are small corrals like playpens for toddlers. You can fold them up when you're not using them, and they come in a wide variety of sizes and heights. They are not difficult to get out of and therefore are not good choices for escape artists.

- Unless your dog chronically urinates in his crate or is always hot and seeking cold, hard resting surfaces, furnish the crate with a comfortable bed or crate pad as well as chew and puzzle toys.

- For the standard plan to teach your dog to love his crate, reference video lesson 22 and **Crate Training** in the Training Plans Appendix. If he is crate-naïve, it will usually go uneventfully. If he is already fearful, you will have to go more slowly. Undoing existing fear is much more involved than training a non-fearful dog.

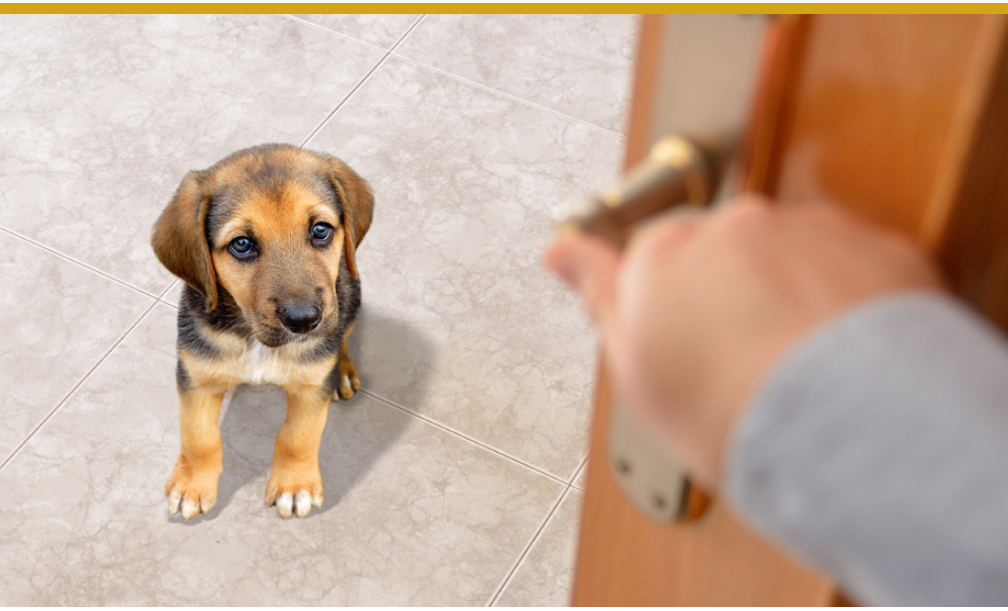
- Step 1 is passive training, where you drop goodies in at the back of the crate and let your dog go in and collect on his own time, so it won't try your patience. For step 2 and onward, where you're present, you will need to cultivate patience. Remember, you're winning him over and teaching him that you can be trusted to not go faster than he can handle. This is undoing emotion, not just training behavior.

- If your dog is fearful, step 1, passive training, will take longer, and you may even want to split to bread-crumb trails. You can also split to having him put 1 or 2 paws in as well as closing the door at a slower pace. Again, do not rush this or he will never believe that you can be trusted.

## Separation Anxiety and Alone Training

- Crates are a great tool for housetraining, and for many dogs, they provide a private bedroom. Crates are not solutions for separation anxiety, which is a disorder where dogs have anything from mild, chronic distress to full-blown panic attacks when left alone.

- It is unknown what causes separation anxiety. There are correlations with sound sensitivity, which might point to a genetic predisposition, and some dogs with separation anxiety have histories of overly long absences, traumatic experiences, or big life shake-ups, such as rehoming.



- Dogs with separation anxiety are not angry at you, or spiteful, or just having fun while you're away. It is not the same as garden-variety chewing, barking, or house soiling.

- How can you tell if your dog has separation anxiety? Many such dogs will vocalize when alone or not touch their puzzle toys however tasty they might be. Some will demonstrate predeparture anxiety, such as pacing, whining, trembling, or hiding as you get ready to leave, the cues for which they learn via classical conditioning. Many will be destructive, especially at exit points, such as door and window frames. Some will also urinate or defecate in their panic. But the bag of symptoms varies.

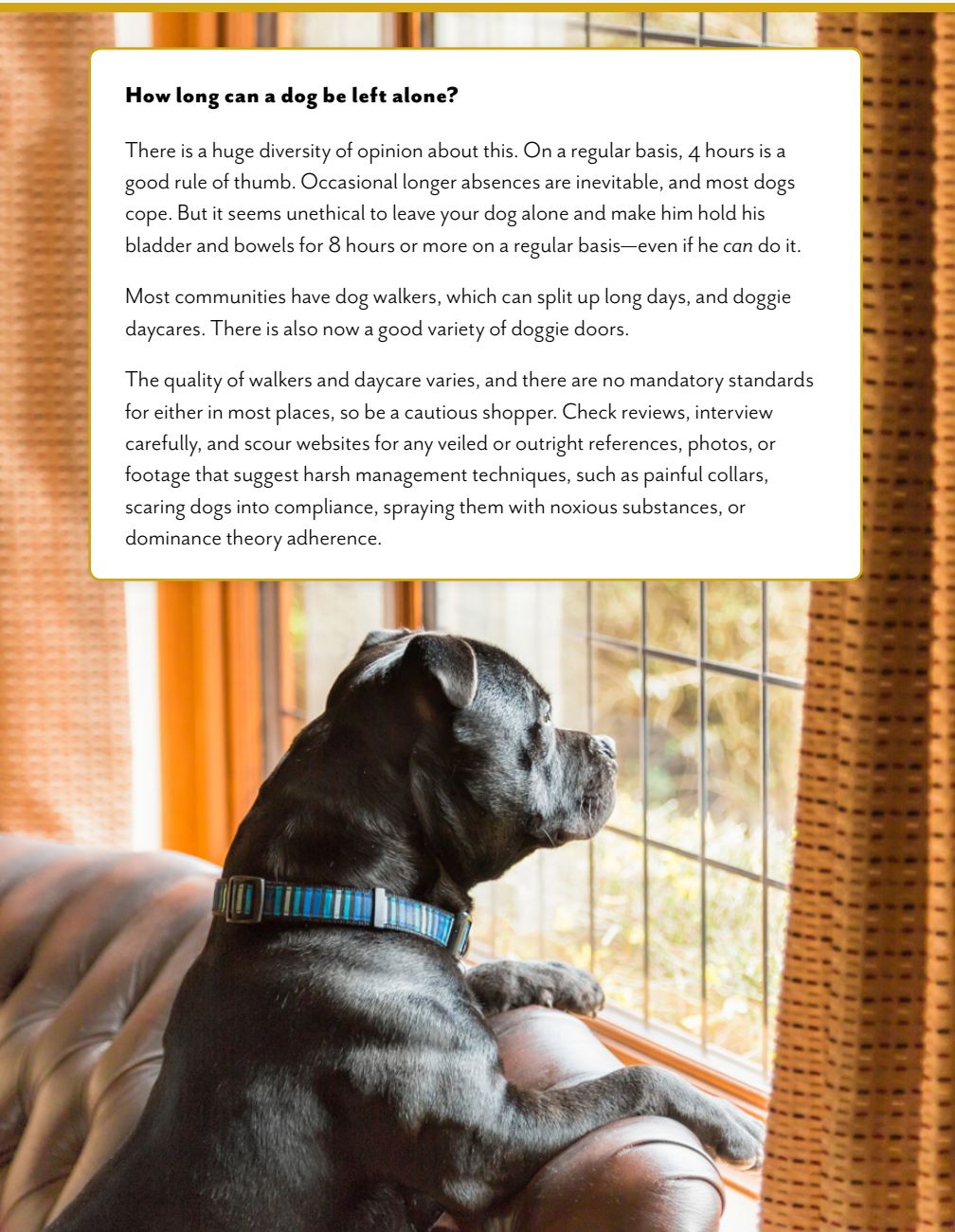
- The best acid test is to videotape your dog or get a live feed on him when he's left alone. Dogs with separation anxiety will be visibly distressed. If you're not sure, a certified separation anxiety trainer can view your footage and help you rule it in or out.

**How long can a dog be left alone?**

There is a huge diversity of opinion about this. On a regular basis, 4 hours is a good rule of thumb. Occasional longer absences are inevitable, and most dogs cope. But it seems unethical to leave your dog alone and make him hold his bladder and bowels for 8 hours or more on a regular basis—even if he *can* do it.

Most communities have dog walkers, which can split up long days, and doggie daycares. There is also now a good variety of doggie doors.

The quality of walkers and daycare varies, and there are no mandatory standards for either in most places, so be a cautious shopper. Check reviews, interview carefully, and scour websites for any veiled or outright references, photos, or footage that suggest harsh management techniques, such as painful collars, scaring dogs into compliance, spraying them with noxious substances, or dominance theory adherence.



- If it turns out that your dog has separation anxiety, work with a certified separation anxiety trainer. If you'd like to try to go it alone, the book *Treating Separation Anxiety in Dogs* (referenced in the Suggested Reading list at the end of this lesson) will walk you through treatment.

- Treatment for separation anxiety is a very involved process where you gradually desensitize your dog to very short absences at first and then—always at his pace—longer and longer times. One of the necessities of effective treatment is temporarily suspending absences that are longer than the dog can comfortably do. This can feel very daunting, but certified separation anxiety trainers can support your efforts to build a village that will allow you to accomplish this. This is difficult, but it can be done. Finally, medication can greatly facilitate progress, so a consultation with a veterinarian who has separation anxiety experience should be considered.

- Given that we don't absolutely know what causes separation anxiety, dedicated prevention measures are difficult to define. However, gradual alone training for dogs that don't have separation anxiety is likely helpful and certainly humane.

- Alone training looks very much like separation anxiety treatment but greatly condensed. Start with short absences at times when your dog is maximally tired, and soften the blow with a puzzle toy. For example, after he has had a romp at the dog park, give him his breakfast in a few Kong toys and do 10 or 15 minutes of errands. After a few of these episodes, increase your time away to 30 minutes, then 1 hour, then 2 hours, and then 4 hours.

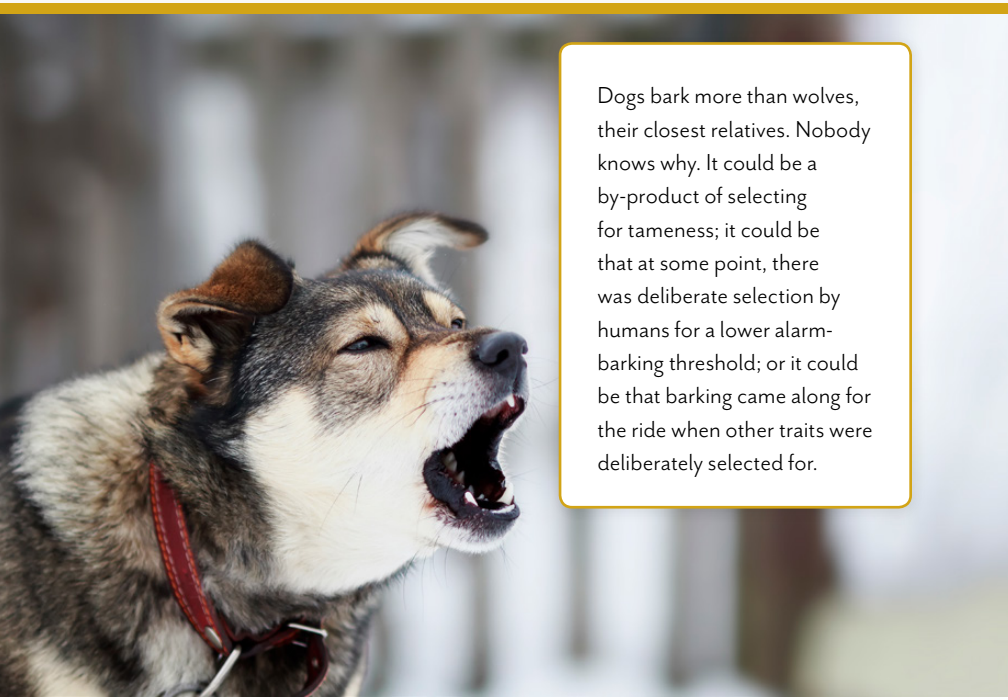
## SUGGESTED READING

- DeMartini-Price, *Treating Separation Anxiety in Dogs*.

Lesson 23

# MANAGING BARKING

Is all barking the same? Can barking be decoded as communication? And can it be successfully reduced without resorting to putting voltage through your dog's neck? In this lesson, you will discover the types of barking and what drives them and then learn some strategies to reduce barking. Once you have diagnosed your dog's barking, you can dial it down to a level you both can live with.



Dogs bark more than wolves, their closest relatives. Nobody knows why. It could be a by-product of selecting for tameness; it could be that at some point, there was deliberate selection by humans for a lower alarm-barking threshold; or it could be that barking came along for the ride when other traits were deliberately selected for.

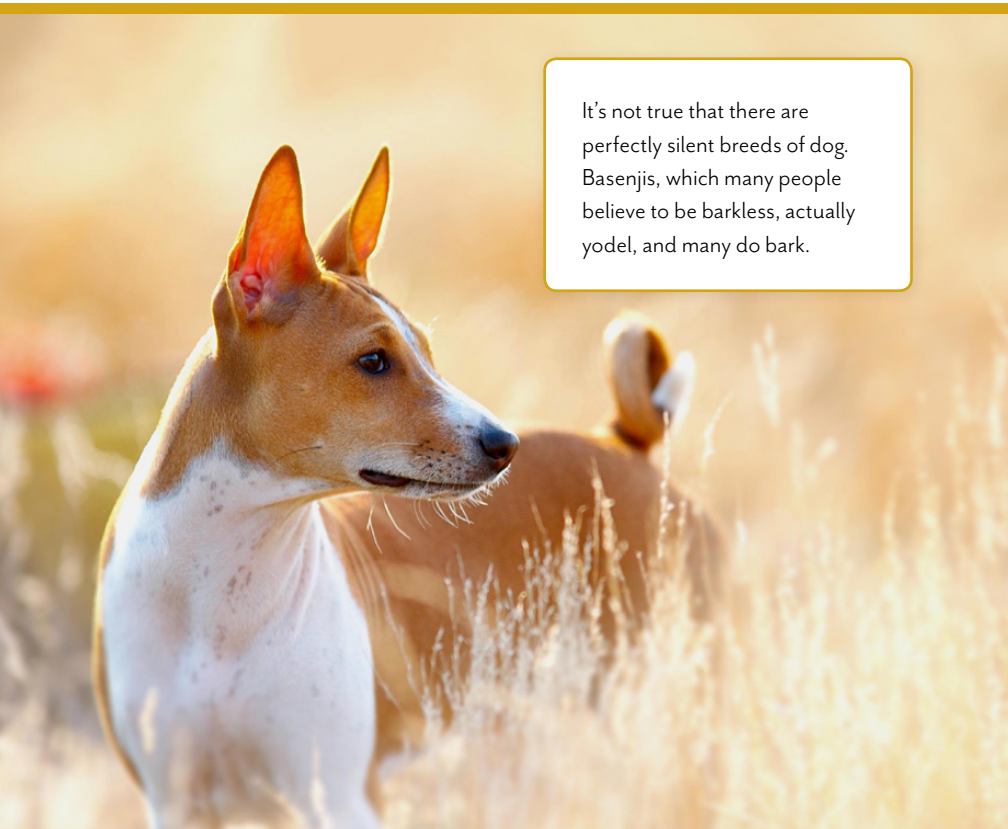
## Types of Barking

- There are 5 types of barking that are worth splitting out, as the etiology is different along with the prognosis and modification strategies: watchdog barking, spooky barking or barking secondary to fear, demand barking, frustration, and conflict-elicited barking and anticipatory barking and whining.

- Watchdog barking is the tendency for dogs to bark at home in response to the initial awareness of an intruder. It usually manifests as barking at the doorbell, so it's sometimes called doorbell barking. But sometimes watchdog barkers will go off in the car, and some will alarm-bark at people who are just passing by.

- Watchdog barking is likely the type of barking for which there has been some deliberate selective breeding. In prehistoric societies, the value of a sentry announcing and possibly driving off intruders was significant. Such dogs may have been favored for the sharing of precious resources, such as food and shelter. It still has value for most people, though sometimes we want to reduce either the degree of hair trigger or the length of the barking sequence once the dog goes off.

- The second type of barking is spooky barking. This functions to tell a person or dog to get lost—to increase distance. In other words, this is a dog who is upset. It might seem, on first brush, to be the same as watchdog barking, or barking at an intruder. But they're not the same. Plenty of watchdog barkers are prosocial to strangers.



It's not true that there are perfectly silent breeds of dog. Basenjis, which many people believe to be barkless, actually yodel, and many do bark.

There are differences when it comes to how readily a breed or an individual barks, especially barking of the watchdog variety. Terriers and schnauzers and herding breeds tend to bark a lot, but there's a lot of individual variation, and the environment—such as socialization and enrichment—plays somewhat of a role. Bored dogs who find the world scary will likely bark more.

- Watchdog barkers run a very constrained piece of software: intruder alert, intruder alert! And that's the end of it. He's not upset and he likes people just fine but is compelled to bark to announce that someone is at the door. The barking of dogs who are spooky, by contrast, is not just about announcing an intruder. These dogs find the intruder scary, so they're delivering a threat to keep him at a distance.

- A quick-and-dirty differential for watchdog versus spooky barking is the can-you-pat test: Can a visitor, once let in the house, pat the dog? If the answer is yes, the overwhelming likelihood is that you have a garden-variety watchdog barker. If the answer is no, or if the reply is equivocal (such as "he takes a little while to warm up"), then you might have both.

- If barking at strangers also occurs in other contexts, whenever they get too close, and ceases once the person is far enough away, then the dog is almost certainly uncomfortable with people. And if he is, the solution is to get at the root of that problem—not to just treat the symptom of barking. If your dog is uncomfortable with people, get professional help.

- The next type of barking is affectionately referred to as demand or request barking. The dog is barking because it works. It gets him attention, some food, a toss of the ball, or the door open. It's a successful strategy, so it gets learned—like any behavior.

- Next is barking secondary to barrier frustration. A dog looks out the window, sees a cat on the street, would give anything to run after that cat but is stuck inside, so he barks. Or a dog is on leash, sees a dog across the street, would give anything to meet that dog and investigate him but can't because he's on leash, so he barks. This is the opposite of spooky barking: A spooky barker wants the stimulus to go away, while a barrier-frustrated dog wants access to the stimulus, but he's thwarted.

- Conflict in general elicits barking. Barrier frustration is an external conflict. The dog is very clear on his goal and his motivational ducks are in a row, so he is not internally conflicted, but he is prevented from acting on this strong motivation.

- There are also internal conflicts that might lead to barking. For example, when you were doing the Premack recall, your dog may have barked. If he did, one reason is that he was simply thwarted by the distractor not giving him food or demand-barking that the distractor relinquish the treat, but he also may have felt pulled in 2 directions: on one side, the distractor with the treat, and on the other, the person calling him with friendly prompts.

- And after a few successes, there is actually greater conflict, at least temporarily. It's been proven to him that moving toward the person calling works to get the treat, but all of his previous life experience has taught him that moving away from something never works to get it—so he barks. At the heart of this conflict is aggregate reinforcement versus recency. This is called an approach-approach conflict.

- Another internal conflict that sometimes leads to barking is an approach-avoidance conflict. Rather than there being 2 attractive but mutually exclusive options, such as in the Premack recall, in an approach-avoidance conflict, the same stimulus simultaneously attracts and repels. You may have seen your dog encounter something new, such as a horse, and he's simultaneously curious and afraid.

- As a result, the dog oscillates between moving forward and retreating backward. The forward movement is often a stretch investigation, where the dog is sniffing on tippy-toes and ready to spring backward in an instant. And part of this picture might be barking. If the conflict is resolved in favor of the new thing being interesting and not scary, the barking dissipates. If the conflict is resolved in favor of the stimulus being scary, then there may not be any more conflict-elicited barking, but now there might be spooky barking.

- The final type of barking is excitement barking, which is seen in dogs who are unglued because something fantastic is about to happen. In other words, it's anticipatory rather than consequence-driven. This same excitement can manifest as whining rather than barking.

## Modifying Barking

- Dog trainers dread car whining and barking because it's the most difficult one to modify. The problem is that it is emotional in nature. It's not a strategy. Many have tried and failed, for example, to cancel the park contingent on the car whining to no avail. It's driven by the emotion. But it's not an upset emotion: We don't need to desensitize him to the park.

He already loves the park. It's happy emotion. And we don't want to trade happiness for fear or dread.

- The top strategy is to compartmentalize it the best you can by taking the dog on more boring car trips. Have him accompany you on errands and swing near the park without going in. What you'll get, over time, is a finer discrimination. He'll learn that the car in general is not a good predictor of the park, but the turn into the parking lot is. So, you still have car whining, but now at least it's confined to the parking lot.

- With watchdog barking, the usual goal is to reduce the amount of barking in a sequence, rather than eliminate it altogether. Attempts to eliminate it altogether, especially if done in a heavy-handed manner, with shock collars or collars that spray citronella at the dog, are over the ethical line.

- From the dog's perspective, he's been bred—without his consent, for hundreds, or possibly thousands, of generations—to be alert to intruders and to announce their presence by barking. To breed it in and then shock him for doing it is a really dirty trick. So, let's meet him partway and let him do a bit of what he's compelled to do by his genes but have an off switch so that he doesn't go on and on.

- There are 2 prongs to this strategy, and you can do one, the other, or both together. The first prong is to teach a behavior that is mutually exclusive to barking, get it fluent, and then migrate it into the doorbell context. One option that often fits this bill is a simple down-stay. For reasons unknown, some dogs can't bark while lying down. This can also double as a means of preventing him from skipping out or milling at the door when you're trying to conduct business with delivery people.

- There are 3 phases. The first is to train down-stay using the standard plan up to step 10. Train the stay on a mat that is placed fairly close to the door so that you can monitor him while proofing the doorbell, which is what you do next. The next phase is warmed-up simulations. You'll ring the doorbell yourself over and over. Finally, you'll do more realistic simulations—not warmed up and other people ringing the doorbell.

- Remember the important build/use distinction. Don't try out your down-stay on actual visitors or deliveries while you're still working the training plan. Premature use of behavior is bad for the behavior-building cause. Instead, work your plan between actual rings.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 23 and **Doorbell Down-Stay** in the Training Plans Appendix.

- The same 2-pronged strategy that is used for watchdog barking can be used for demand barking. But for demand barking, because it's "pulled" by consequences rather than "pushed" by the antecedent of an intruder, you've really got him. You control the stuff he's asking for, and your availability for training is better than in a watchdog scenario.

- The principle, though, is the same: Build a more likable behavior, which the dog can then use to ask for the stuff he wants, and once he has this viable strategy, you tidy up the barking with some time-outs.

**Time-Outs**

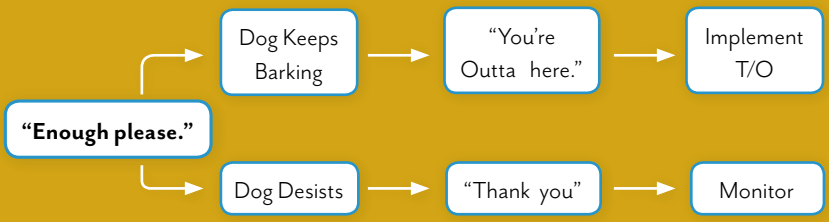
Time-outs are a safe form of punishment—unlike anti-bark collars—that you can use to manage your dog's barking. Time-outs are events that reduce behavior. There are 3 rules to effective time-out: follow-through, clear criteria, and appropriate magnitude.

1. Unlike rewards, which can work very powerfully even if not administered every time, time-outs work much better if the dog gets one every time he makes the criteria for time-out.

2. In the case of demand barking, you have 2 choices to keep criteria really clear and therefore learnable for the dog. The first choice is to time-out every single instance of barking. The other choice is to use a warning cue, such as "enough please," that means "the very next bark will get you a time-out." And then, you have to follow through. Don't issue multiple warnings, no matter how tempting it is; this muddies the water and compromises learning.

3. Use an appropriate magnitude. A heftier time-out is more motivating for your dog than a lower magnitude time-out. Do something on the order of 5 minutes for barking, with the additional caveat that the dog only gets out of time-out if he's quiet. You mustn't crack. Get earplugs or leave the house, but don't let him out of time-out until he's been quiet for at least 30 seconds.

**Time-Out Flowchart**



- The reason dogs find their way to demand barking for things like door opening and tidbits and attention is that they've tried other strategies and were ignored. This is on us, so part of the solution here is that we become mindful of using these organic reinforcers—the ones that occur in the course of everyday life—for behaviors we actually want more of.

- If your dog is holding a down-stay while you're watching TV, politely sitting while you're eating chips, or quietly standing at the door to be let out and these don't get him anything, they undergo operant extinction. This isn't him being bratty; this is a law. He might cycle through other strategies, and one of those is barking. If it works, it gets trained in.

- That's why such a big part of the solution here is taking the reins of these contingencies. He's never going to stop wanting the door opened. He's never going to stop wanting some chips. And he's never going to stop wanting your attention. So, vow to notice—or cue—and reward likeable behaviors at those junctures where your dog usually barks.

- The first part of the 2-pronged strategy for demand barking is to give him a way to ask for stuff that you can live with. This means employing behaviors you've trained, such as sit and down and stay, in everyday life and noticing when he attempts to use them to get his needs met. Of course, you can't grant everything, but when you are willing to grant things, notice when he's asking politely and make that work. The second part is to teach him that not only does barking not work as well as these other strategies, barking makes things worse: He's further from his goal when he barks.

- The final modification strategy is for barking that is secondary to barrier frustration. Like with spooky barking, the best strategy is to get at the root cause, and that will depend on the particular context. Almost any dog who is left out for long periods in a yard and has visual access to passersby and dogs being walked will find it agitating and will bark. A chronic diet of barrier frustration can actually culminate in a dog who not only barks, but is bona fide aggressive, should he get access to what has been tormenting him for months or years. So, it is prudent to minimize putting dogs in these situations.

- The easiest solution for this is twofold: Minimize extended yard time to prevent this visual parade and make sure that the dog is not gravely understimulated. Being kept inside and getting his meals out of snuffle mats can go a long way here.

- But we do want our dogs to have yard access, so what do we do if a dog is not a backyard dog but does encounter stimuli that prompt him into barrier barking on the other side of the fence? The answer is to train an automatic recall into the house. This has some labor attached to it, but it's really effective.

- Start by building a recall using the standard plan; reference **Recall** in the Training Plan Appendix. Generalize it to the yard when there is not anything across the fence teasing the dog. Then, get an accomplice to simulate the usual problem on the other side of the fence and practice your recall using the following order of events: the frustrating stimulus, then you cue and prompt your recall.

- This will be really difficult the first time. You might not get anything until the stimulus has actually passed by. That's fine. Persevere. When he finally comes into the house, regardless of how protracted an affair it was to get him to do so, pay him like you've always paid—with a chicken party for 30 seconds. Then, do another trial.

- After a session or 2 with an accomplice, start practicing any time he goes off. Your signal to cue a recall is him going off. The sequence you're after is this: the frustrating stimulus followed by recall cued and prompted, followed by the behavior and then a hefty payday.

- Over time, what will happen is exactly the same as what happens when you put verbal cues in front of hand signals: A predictive relationship occurs, and the dog starts jumping the prompt. The frustrating stimulus becomes the cue for the recall.

- Try to not sweat the latency—the time it takes him to do the recall—in the early stages. It will start to come down over time. Eventually, your dog might do a few perfunctory barks but charges inside before you have had the chance to call him.

Lesson 24

# TRAINING CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

A large part of being an effective trainer is problem solving. Dogs are individuals, and the very-best-laid training and behavior modification plans can feel like they've gone to blazes once they make contact with a live dog. Also, your own dog's problems can feel personal. But as much as it might feel like your dog is defiant or learning-impaired, the truth is that it's usually technical. This final lesson will review common training problems and their solutions, in part to help lift you out of any enmeshment you might have with your training subject.

## What and Why Problems

- When you're trying to teach your dog something and it's just not going well, the first thing to do is to figure out if you have a *what* or a *why* problem. A *what* problem is a clarity issue. You have a dog who's dying to obtain whatever reward you're offering, but he's guessing wrong. A *why* problem is about motivation. It doesn't matter whether the dog is at all clear—or not—about what he has to do to obtain whatever reward you're offering. He doesn't want it. It's not enough for this behavior at this time, or the dog has a better offer elsewhere.

- To tell whether you have a *what* or a *why* problem, the first diagnostic test is whether the dog will take a freebie. If you're training with food, offer him a piece. Don't ask him to do anything first—just give him a piece. Does he take it? If the answer is no, you have a primary motivation problem.

The training problems presented in this lesson assume that your dog is well. If you suspect that he might not be well, get him checked out by your vet.

- What can you do? How can you avoid this in future? That depends on how long you've been training in the session where he quits. If you've been training a long time, it could be that he needs a break, so quit for a day or 2. But if your dog quits and you haven't been training for very long, there are 2 usual suspects: competition and an **open economy**.

- Competition is usually an easy diagnostic. You're offering praise and chicken, but the tree over there is offering a squirrel. All of the dog's sensory apparatuses are pointing at the tree, or he's 20 yards away circling the tree. Or you're offering patting, but the dog over there is offering interesting dog smells and interaction.

- The bread-and-butter strategies for training against competition are drop criteria to an easier step in the plan, upgrade or change your offer to see if you can trump the competition, saturate the competition (let the dog punch himself out to the point where it gets old), Premack the competition, or get away from the competition to salvage your session.

- The magnitude of reinforcers—how valuable they are—along with the quantity really matters in animal training. Properly functioning animals allocate their behavior strategically depending on what exactly it gets them versus the expense of these behavior options. It's called the matching law. If your dog seems distracted, try upgrading from typical treats to chicken or Pecorino Romano cheese.

- For dogs in class who only have eyes for other dogs, another thing that would work is to let them socialize and investigate each other for the first few minutes of class. An important caveat if it's an adult dog class is that the dogs would need to be prescreened to make sure there's unlikely to be mishap. It works like a charm, and it doesn't take that long. Even among the most dog-crazy and dog-deprived dogs, provided that they're actually social and not fearful or bred for generations for gameness, other dogs get old.

- Sometimes, for practical reasons, saturation isn't an option, and no upgrade will trump your competition. The next option is Premack: Harness that very distraction and dole out access to it as a reward. If your dog is obsessed with a squirrel up a tree, get him on a leash and use it as a directional goal. You'll have to set criteria with some craft. He's not going to do a series of tricks. But you could wait for or prompt eye contact, where he glances at you and gets 3 paces closer. You may not get a ton of reps on any given occasion, but your dog's brain will note what worked to get him closer—and, over time, a diet of this will get through to him.

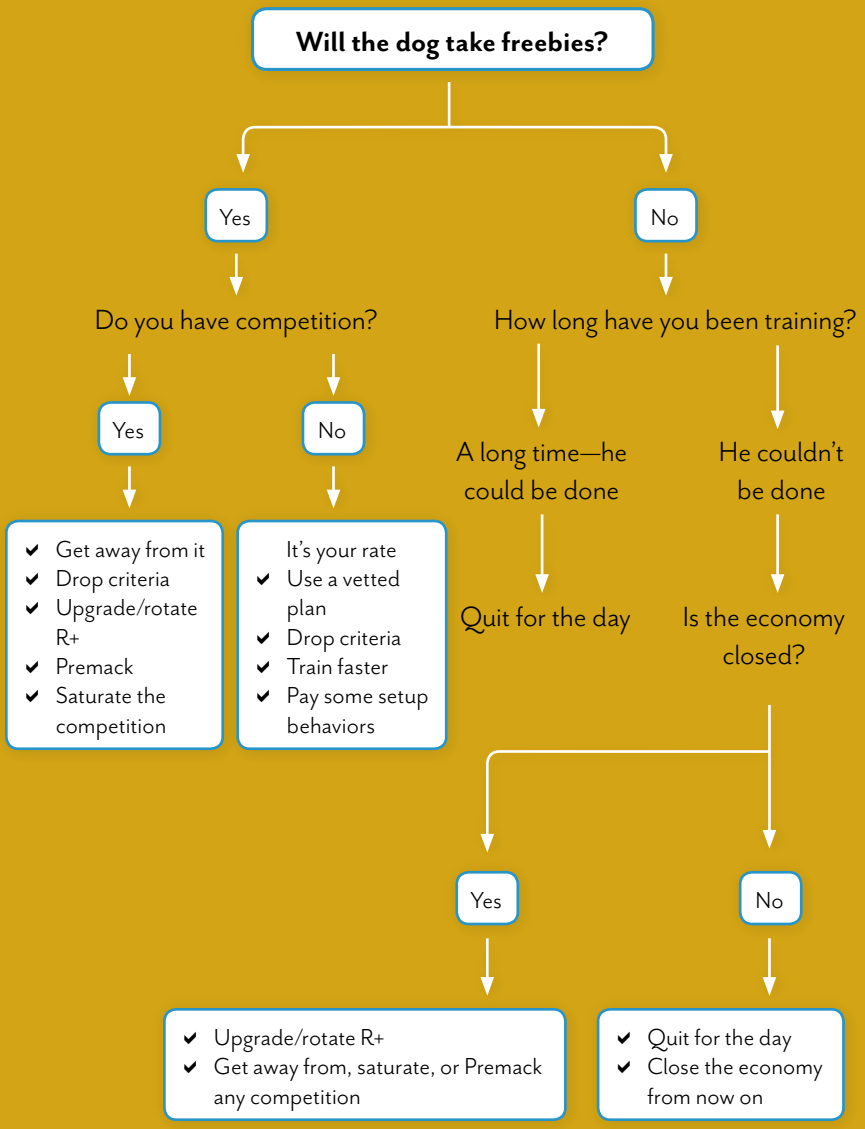
- Finally, it is perfectly honorable—in fact, it's smart—to put some mileage between your dog and some extremely magnetic competition if you're trying to train something.

- If there's no identifiable competition, he's not anxious, it's unlikely he's done, but he won't take a freebie, the usual culprit is an open economy: What you're offering has been devalued by too much access. This is saturation working against, rather than for, us. Dogs who don't have limitless drive for fetch will not work for fetch if they get it regularly for free.

- Dogs who have just been fed, or are free-fed, or who get lots of treats for free are much less inclined to work for food. If you have a dog who does not have limitless drive for fetch, **close the economy** on fetch: Only throw toys as a reward in training.

- The degree to which you manipulate the economy is entirely dependent on how motivated you are to get some training done. Only mess with the economy as needed. It's fine to give your dog stuff for free if you don't need to bump up motivation.

- If your dog will take a freebie, it's still possible that you have competition. He might be willing to expend the minor energy of taking the freebie and then go back to working to obtain your competition. Again, you'll know because he will keep orienting toward the dog, or person, or critter, or scent, or whatever it is. If this is the case, you have the same options: Try an upgrade or a novel reinforcer, saturate the competition if you can, Premack it, or go somewhere else.


Will the dog take freebies?
Yes
No
Do you have competition?
How long have you been training?
Yes
No
A long time—he could be done
He couldn't be done
✔ Get away from it
✔ Drop criteria
✔ Upgrade/rotate R+
✔ Premack
✔ Saturate the competition
It's your rate
✔ Use a vetted plan
✔ Drop criteria
✔ Train faster
✔ Pay some setup behaviors
Quit for the day
Is the economy closed?
Yes
No
✔ Upgrade/rotate R+
✔ Get away from, saturate, or Premack any competition
✔ Quit for the day
✔ Close the economy from now on

- But what if you don't have competition and he's delighted to take a freebie? The likelihood, then, is that it's your rate of reinforcement—the number of rewards per unit of time, usually per minute. The canonic rate to shoot for is 10 per minute, with a Goldilocks zone of 8 to 12 per minute. This rate yields the most efficient learning.

- Low rates, especially for novice dogs, at best produce frustration and at worst produce quitting. The game is too hard. Rates that are too high are also inefficient: You're kind of spinning your wheels. You could be escalating criteria faster. The game is too easy.

- The training plans in this course, all found in the Training Plans Appendix, have been vetted on many dogs and many trainers and—provided that the technique is good enough—should yield rates in the Goldilocks zone most of the time. Because the technique is so important to your success, there are a few ways to check whether your technique is good enough.

- First, are you actually using these vetted, incremental plans, or are you pulling criteria out of thin air? Intuited—basically dreamed-up—criteria are bound to be too hard or too easy because of missing parameters followed by the human tendency to blame the learner rather than the trainer's technique.

- If you are using an incremental plan that accounts for all parameters, the next item to check is how you're changing criteria. Are doing so based on the numbers, or are you blasting along with intuition? Undisciplined criteria-pushing can produce both *what* and *why* problems.

- If the game is too hard for too long, the dog could quit, which is a *why* problem. Criteria that are too high can also manifest as a *what* problem. The dog doesn't quit, but he keeps getting wrong answers. This is inefficient and frustrating for both you and your dog.

- So, dropping criteria and being more disciplined about pushing is one way to increase your rate of reinforcement. The next way is to decrease your inter-trial latency, which is basically the downtime between reps. Once you complete a rep, how long do you wait before you initiate the next one? Do you prompt or cue the next trial right away, or do you take a 5-second break?

- Rate of reinforcement is not the sole province of the ratio of winner to loser trials. You can have the world's gentlest criteria, where the dog gets it right every time, but because of the overall pace, the rate is still poor.

- This means that one cheap way to increase your rate of reinforcement is to train faster—to simply commence the next rep as soon as the previous rep concludes. This is partly dependent on smooth mechanics. The more you train, the less clumsy you'll feel, the less you'll have to think about it, and the less rate you'll consume.

- Finally, you can boost your rate legally by simply paying some nontarget behaviors. Let's say that you're working on down from stand. You can pay your dog for some of those stands that you need to prepare for the down. You're not actually working on stand right now, but you do have to prompt it or cue it, and it is fair game to be paid. In fact, if you never pay setup behaviors, these can actually get a little wobbly. Rate of reinforcement is reinforcers per unit time, regardless of what behaviors those reinforcers are for. It all goes into the same bucket.

## Severe Pulling on Leash

- Another problem is severe pulling on leash. What if, in spite of using an anti-pull harness and trying to practice loose leash walking, your dog is just not manageable? Powerful or explosive dogs with small or frail handlers sometimes need more power steering than what is afforded by an anti-pull harness. For this, a head halter is strongly recommended. This device changes the point of leverage from the front of the body to close to the end of the nose. If the animal tries to forge ahead, he basically is turned around, which negates the reward for pulling.

- Unlike anti-pull harnesses, however, most dogs won't just accept a head halter. The strap across his face can feel funny. So, you must desensitize the dog to wearing the device.

  For proper technique, reference video lesson 17 and **Head Halter Desensitization** in the Training Plans Appendix. The same plan can be used if ever you need to get your dog used to wearing a muzzle.

## Next Steps

- Once you are at the end of a training plan, you can begin to reward less frequently. Initially, rather than paying the dog every time he does a behavior, pay him 2/3 or 3/4 of the time. Don't be too predictable. The goal is to gradually turn him into a little Las Vegas gambler. If the behavior stays strong, move to reinforcing him half the time.

- There are a few advantages to this payment scheme, which is called an intermittent reinforcement schedule. One is that it allows you to exert additional quality control; you can pick out the very best ones he does to pay. The other advantage is that the behavior becomes more resilient to extinction: Because he becomes accustomed to not being paid every time, if for any reason you can't pay several times in a row, the behavior is less likely to die. He tries it again, hoping he'll be paid next time. There are economic factors that constrain how far you can take this, so don't stretch it out too thinly. Pay at least 1/4 of the time.

- You do not have to use intermittent reinforcement. Many dog trainers reward quite densely. Also note that it is not good practice to employ intermittent reinforcement prematurely, when you're working your way through the training plan. At these earlier stages, not only is payment solving your *why* problem for you, but it also conveys *what* information. If you don't pay correct responses, it makes it more difficult for the dog to figure out exactly what the behavior is.

- Another thing you can do, as you go forward, is add to your repertoire of tricks and add features such as distance and location generalization to your tricks. You can also get involved in dog classes and dog sports.

## GLOSSARY TERMS:

**closed economy** • In dog training, this means that the dog must earn 100% of reinforcers in a given class. That reinforcer type is never given for free. For example, if a dog must sit before you open the door to the yard and you never open the door to the yard without a sit, your dog is on a closed door-opening-service economy. Even 90% to 10% is still an open economy. For difficult-to-motivate dogs, especially when the stakes are high, a closed economy is what the professionals use.

**open economy** • An open economy for any given reinforcer means that not all of that reinforcer is earned in training—some is given for free. If you decide to incorporate food in your training and cut back your dog's meal ration by 25%, he's on an open economy for food. If he earned all of his food in training, the food economy would be closed. Closed economies crank up motivation substantially over time. If the stakes are high and you really need performance, close the economy on some key motivator.

# Glossary

**anti-pull harness** • lesson 8

This is a body harness that attaches at the front and, by so doing, reduces the strength with which a dog can pull on leash. It is a much more humane alternative to neck collars (that strangle or dig pins). There are a variety of brands on the market that go on and fit slightly differently.

**capturing** • lesson 2

This is one way to get the behavior in order to reinforce it. Rather than coaching the dog to do the desired action (prompting) or reinforcing a partial version of it (shaping), the trainer waits and monitors and, when the dog happens to do the desired behavior, pays him. For example, if every time your dog yawned you paid him, yawning would increase in frequency. Eventually, he would yawn often enough that you would be able to wager that he's about to do it, so you could give a cue ("are you bored?") right before he does and then reward as usual. After a while on this regime, you could safely switch to only paying when he yawned after the cue.

**clicker**

This is a small box-shaped device that makes a brief, unique sound. Its value in dog training is its ability, when timing envelopes are narrow or when you're far away from the dog, to inform the dog of what behavior is the one that earned him reinforcement. It must be followed up with an intrinsic reward, such as food, door-opening service, being let off leash, etc. *See* **conditioned reinforcer**.

**closed economy** • lesson 24

In dog training, this means that the dog must earn 100% of reinforcers in a given class. That reinforcer type is never given for free. For example, if a dog must sit before you open the door to the yard and you never open the door to the yard without a sit, your dog is on a closed door-opening-service economy. Even 90% to 10% is still an open economy. For difficult-to-motivate dogs, especially when the stakes are high, a closed economy is what the professionals use.

**conditioned emotional response (CER)** • lesson 17

This is one type of respondent (also called classical or Pavlovian) conditioned response. Pavlov's original research focused on the conditioning of salivary and gastric responses, which are not relevant to dog training. However, one subclass of involuntary responses—emotions—is extremely relevant. Using respondent conditioning procedures, you can train a dog to like or fear people, places, procedures, times of day, and things. One of the side effects—really a side benefit—of training dogs using positive reinforcement is the collateral positive conditioned emotional response. The dog not only learns to sit, down, stay, come, etc., but also to love hands, being reached for, the trainer, being trained, etc.

**conditioned reinforcer**

This is any reliable signal to the dog that the behavior he's doing right now has earned reinforcement. The actual (primary) reinforcer is then supplied. Conditioned reinforcers must be learned (i.e., they are not intrinsically reinforcing). A clicker is an example of a conditioned reinforcer. Some trainers charge up their clickers before using them by clicking at random times and then following up the click with a primary reinforcer, such as food. Other trainers charge the clicker on the fly—while training behaviors—and the dog picks up the click-treat relationship while also learning the actual tasks.

**criteria** • lesson 1

Competent dog training is a very step-by-step process. Raising the level of difficulty on a behavior is called pushing or raising criteria. Only push when the dog is demonstrating mastery at the current level of difficulty. For example, if your dog is fluent at down-stay for up to 3 seconds at Starbucks, immediately bumping the level of difficulty up to 10 seconds in a noisy playground is an error. Criteria steps in training plans can be broken down into their parameters. So, for example, there are the 3 Ds: distraction, distance, and duration.

**cue** • lesson 2

This is a signal to the animal about what behavior to perform. Dog training uses mostly verbal cues (such as "sit") and hand signals. The most common error in novice trainers is prematurely attempting to cue behavior that has not yet been built. For example, even if you clearly and forcefully tell your dog to "sit" when he really hasn't mastered that behavior, no amount of cueing will make him able to comply. This doesn't mean that he's stubborn; it means that you're trying to cue weak behavior. Good training technique is very thoughtful about when a cue is brought into the picture. It's counterproductive to do so prematurely.

**event** • lesson 2

This is any instance of a stimulus or response. Events are the units that make up trials. Operant conditioning needs 3 events to occur: an antecedent (a cue or a prompt, including a trainer just standing there waiting for behavior in a shaping session, which counts as a prompt for the dog to "try something"), the behavior, and a consequence. Classical conditioning needs 2 events: a conditioned stimulus ("here it comes…") and an unconditioned stimulus ("it").

**fading** • lesson 2

This is the systematic reduction and then elimination of a prompt. For example, after prompting sits by raising the dog's head with a food target in her hand, the trainer then fades this to a similar hand gesture, but

without food, and then a more stylized gesture, and then, if desired, a verbal cue is brought in to replace the hand signal (the gesture). Competent trainers know how and when to fade prompts. A common novice error is to reduce rewards as prompts are faded. The novice then either blames the dog for being a show-me-the-money type or else blames the technique of prompting for "creating dependency." Effective trainers teach dogs that faded or no-prompt versions of behaviors are as likely—or even more likely—to be paid as prompted versions. In other words, you can train your dog to perform better when he doesn't see rewards up front.

**feeding for position** • lesson 2

The physical delivery of pay is an opportunity to position an animal strategically. This is why it's good practice to pay down-stays while the dog is still in the down, rather than releasing the dog from the down-stay and then feeding. Anticipation of getting up to collect payment would result in a shakier down-stay, even if a conditioned reinforcer is used. Trainers also feed strategically to set up the next repetition in the set. And although the expression is *feed* for position, it refers to the strategic delivery of any type of reinforcer. For example, flyball racing trainers use tug toys to pay their dogs for fast return over the hurdles. Because a huge part of the desired behavior is speed, the toy is delivered thrown in the direction of travel, so the dog must chase after it to collect it. The dog accelerates in anticipation, which helps the cause.

**get the behavior** • lesson 17

This is an aphorism in animal training that speaks to how crucial it is to focus early on in the training process to getting the animal to do the action (or some part of it) so that it can be reinforced. So, even though it's intuitive for language-oriented beings like humans to focus right away on cueing or "commanding" the behavior, this is poor technique. Get the behavior—nice, strong, robust behavior—using capturing, prompting, or shaping and only then give it a name.

**head halter** • lesson 17

Halters have been used historically to manage horses, ponies, camels, etc., as these are large animals that require significant control. More recently, this same principle has migrated to the management of dogs. Head halters use mechanical advantage to turn the dog's head when he attempts to pull on leash, rather than pain or strangulation, which makes head halters more humane. One disadvantage is that some dogs and owners don't like head halters. Some people don't like the look—halters resemble muzzles to the untrained eye—and dogs often take some time to get used to the sensation of the strap on their face—think about your first time wearing eyeglasses—and in the meantime paw at the halter. Like anti-pull harnesses, there are different brands that fit a bit differently.

**inter-trial latency (ITL)** • lesson 3

In training, any instance of behavior-consequence is called a trial, or a repetition (rep). The interval between repetitions is the inter-trial latency. For example, let's say that you're practicing sit. You prompt the sit and then pay the dog when he does it. There's your trial or rep. You then get the dog back onto his feet somehow for the next rep. How long it takes you to do this—to muck around before the next rep—is your ITL. The best trainers have very short ITLs. They don't take coffee breaks, chitchat, or flounder around between reps. They do another one, and another one, and another one. An efficient trainer can do a dozen rewarded repetitions of sit in the time it takes a novice to do 2 or 3 because the novice is fumbling mechanically (or editorializing about the dog's stubbornness or personality). ITL is one of the factors that determines rate of reinforcement.

**lure** • lesson 3

This is a particular type of prompt, one that is attractive and the dog follows, usually with his nose. Food lures are the most common kind. It is very efficient to move a dog through space and, by so doing, "get the

behavior" by having him follow a food lure. Luring well takes a bit of practice. This same lure can then be used as a reward, or something else can be used as the reward, depending on your strategy.

**mechanics** • lesson 2

A trainer's hands-on fluency, speed, and coordination are her mechanics. You may have encyclopedic knowledge of learning theory, all motivational ducks in a row, and a genius dog, but if your mechanics are not good, training will be less efficient. Because it is a procedural skill, the only way to improve mechanics is to train a lot.

**motivation** • lesson 1

No properly functioning living organism will do something for nothing. And in spite of cinematic attempts to portray dogs as having a "desire to please," dogs are not exempt, and require concrete motivation. If you operationalize the actions of trainers who make claims to the contrary, you find that they inevitably use motivators such as choke collars, pain, harassment, or intimidation but package this in obfuscating language (e.g., "leadership," "balance," "energy," "pack"). It is much better to be transparent about motivation. And all research suggests that the use of pain, fear, and confrontation in dog training is unnecessary, unsafe, side effect–laden, and inhumane.

So, before trying to get behavior, increase levels of difficulty, or get cues going, be sure that you've given your dog reason to perform. Failure to address motivation in animal training represents gross technical incompetence.

**no-reward marker**

This is the opposite of a click in clicker training. It signals to the dog that the behavior he just did is a dead end: It has no chance of leading to reward. It can help dogs abandon useless strategies faster if used with

good timing, just like a click can help a dog latch onto a good strategy if used with good timing. Trainers usually use something like "uh-uh," "oops," or "too bad."

**open economy** • lesson 24

An open economy for any given reinforcer means that not all of that reinforcer is earned in training—some is given for free. If you decide to incorporate food in your training and cut back your dog's meal ration by 25%, he's on an open economy for food. If he earned all of his food in training, the food economy would be closed. Closed economies crank up motivation substantially over time. If the stakes are high and you really need performance, close the economy on some key motivator.

**operant conditioning (OC)** • lesson 2

This is learning through consequences. Animals learn what behaviors get them rewards and what behaviors get them painful or scary stuff, as well as what behaviors terminate rewards and what behaviors result in relief from painful or scary stuff. The laws governing all of this were worked out decades ago. While this kind of hard-core behaviorism has fallen (rightly) out of favor in human psychology circles, it is a virtual gold mine for animal trainers.

**parameters** • lesson 2

These are the pieces of the puzzle that make up a level of difficulty (or criteria) on an exercise. For example, if you're practicing a 30-second down-stay while you go pretend to answer the door 10 feet from your dog, your parameters are distance (10 feet), duration (30 seconds), and distraction (door being opened). A good trainer is an organized trainer—very aware of her parameters. Pushing, dropping, and sticking involves playing with parameters, usually one at a time and in small increments so that the dog is successful most of the time. *See also* **criteria**.

**Pavlovian conditioning** • lesson 3

In Pavlovian conditioning, an animal learns about predictive relationships in the environment. Animals learn patterns: what leads to what. Leashes coming out of the closet leads to walks, 5 p.m. consistently predicts dinner, picking up your briefcase predicts you leaving for a long time, and so on. This is very different from operant conditioning, where the animal can affect the consequences with his behavior. In Pavlovian (or classical) conditioning, the animal can't do anything about what's going to happen, except get ready for it. Dog trainers typically use Pavlovian conditioning to teach dogs to like new people; to like being handled, groomed, or examined; to like having their food taken away, etc., by having these things predict other, fabulous things. Trainers will often refer to dogs having a "great CER" (conditioned emotional response) to something.

**Premack's principle** • lesson 3

This is a different way of framing reinforcement. Rather than saying "fetch games are a reinforcer" for a dog, David Premack might say "playing fetch is a high-probability behavior." In other words, dogs (and all animals) vote with their feet. If there's a choice of playing fetch, sniffing around, drinking water, rolling in the grass, etc., and a dog elects to play fetch, it's the high-probability behavior. Here's the neat part: The lower-probability behaviors—the sniffing, etc.—can be boosted in probability by making the fetch-playing contingent on them. The dog can play some fetch as soon as he does some sniffing. You may recognize this as grandma's rule: *If* you first eat your broccoli, *then* you can have ice cream. "If-then" is what a contingency is—the core of good dog training.

**Premack recall** • lesson 4

This has "leaving an attractive distraction and going to your owner" as the "broccoli" and "getting some of that same attractive distraction" as the "ice cream." It is very counterintuitive—weird physics, in fact—to move away from something in order to acquire it. The dog's entire life experience has taught him the opposite. But skillful training can teach the dog that the way to get goodies—even the goodies out there that are

not on the person of your owner—is to be obedient, even if obedience means moving away from the goody. A well-trained Premack-proofed dog responds just as well (sometimes better) around distractions than a non-Premack-proofed dog because the Premack-proofed dog has learned that the best strategy to actually get some of the distraction is to respond to cues. The distraction has been brought under stop-start trainer control and thus turned into a reinforcer.

**Premack watch** • lesson 3

This has "look away from a tasty morsel or interesting toy and toward my face" as the "broccoli" and "get clicked and given some" as the "ice cream." The clicker helps here because the dog's first deviations from staring longingly at the reward may be very brief, and if you're late with the reward, you might reward him for looking back at the morsel or toy. So, to improve your timing, have your thumb on the button of the clicker. You must click the instant he glances—however briefly or tentatively—away from your outstretched reward-filled hand to your face. Then, supply the reward.

**push-drop-stick** • lesson 2

Push means progress to the next level of difficulty in a training plan. Stick means train another set at the current level of difficulty. Drop means go back to the previous level of difficulty in the plan for the next set. A good trainer is highly systematic, having a set push standard, such as 5 out of 5; a set stick standard, such as 3 or 4 out of 5; and a set drop standard, such as 2 or fewer out of 5. Without this, you're really flailing around. Some trainers—usually newbies—think their instincts are so incredible that they can subjectively decide when to push, drop, or stick, but for maximum efficiency, the strong recommendation is to train in a disciplined way, with objective push-drop-stick standards and a good incremental plan.

**rate of reinforcement** • lesson 2

This refers to the raw number of reinforcers delivered to the dog per unit of time. Trainers typically calculate rate by the minute. So, if a trainer does a few sets and her coach says "your rate is 9," it means that the dog is being paid 9 times per minute. Rate has nothing to do with the 4 for 5 or 5 for 5 stuff. Rate is on the clock. Factors that influence rate are how incremental the training plan is, the trainer's push-drop-stick standards, the inter-trial latency, and how long it takes the dog to perform the behavior. By definition, a 2-minute down-stay has a maximum possible rate of 1/2 per minute (1 reinforcer every 2 minutes if the dog gets it right and all the other factors affecting rate are maxed out).

Beginner animals are very rate-sensitive. A very common mistake that beginner trainers and pet owners make is a rate that is too low. Whether it's puritanical stinginess, poor mechanics, pushing prematurely, or a plan that's not gradual enough, the resulting low rate will inevitably result in an unmotivated, distractible, or quitting-prone dog. A lot of novice-handled dogs get labeled stubborn, stupid, distractible, or dominant for this very reason. For beginner animals, the target rate is 10 per minute. Intermediate and advanced animals (who are hooked on training) can tolerate much lower rates. But you'll never get your dog hooked if you train badly.

**set** • lesson 2

This is a specific number of repetitions—usually 3, 5, or 10—of an exercise. For example, a trainer will do a set of five 2-second down-stays and then take stock: How many of the 5 did the dog get right? The number in the set is the denominator, and the number the dog got right and was reinforced for is the numerator. This fraction is then used to decide whether to push, drop, or stick: to raise criteria, stick at the current criteria for another set, or drop to the previous criteria in the training plan. It is strongly recommended that you train in sets of 5, or even 10.

**shaping** • lesson 2

This refers to building behaviors by rewarding a series of approximations of an action. It is the best—actually, only—way to get behavior the animal never does (and therefore can't be captured) and can't be prompted to do. For example, you reward your dog for brief instances of a behavior. When your dog becomes fluent at the behavior, you will probably start to see some very good instances of the behavior some of the time, and you now reinforce the dog for these. If you had held out for perfection—or even very good instances of the behavior—in those early sessions, your dog would never (or nearly never) have been reinforced, and it would have taken much longer for him to acquire the behavior you were after. A good trainer always, without exception, sets criteria at a level the subject is already achieving with a frequency that supports the desired rate of reinforcement. In this respect, all good training involves shaping principles.

**split** • lesson 2

This is a fourth option at the end of any set—aside from the usual push, drop, or stick options. It means finding a criteria level between the last fluent level and the level the dog is having trouble with. For example, let's say that you're teaching heeling. The dog can do 6 steps in perfect position with no visible lure in your driveway. You do 5 repetitions of this 6-step exercise and pay every time—a clear push. You move to the sidewalk and do the same 6-step exercise and the dog gets 1 out of 5—a clear drop. So, you go back to the driveway: 5 out of 5. Then, you go to the street: 0 out of 5 this time. You need something in between: a split. There are a lot of split options here. You could reduce the number of steps your dog has to do on the sidewalk. You could bring back a partial lure. You could move more gradually down the driveway toward the sidewalk. Or you could do a combination of these. If you find yourself splitting all the time, it's a sign that your plans aren't incremental enough.

**timing** • lesson 8

This is how close to the behavior the reward comes. If your dog lies down on signal and then stands up again and you reward him, you've rewarded him for standing up. If your intention was to reward him for lying down, you've blown it pretty severely. Or if you're trying to reward eye contact and you click just as he looks away, it's no good. Timing matters for punishments, too. If a dog urinates on the rug and then walks over and starts drinking and the owner then reprimands him, drinking got punished. Timing is a mechanical skill—practice, practice, practice.

**treat** • lesson 2

This is a food reward. Most of the professionals call this "bait" or "pay," possibly because the word "treat" implies an extra or something rare and special, whereas in most animal training, food rewards are used very extensively.

**trial** • lesson 2

This is one instance of a behavior and consequence. You prompt a recall. The dog comes. You pay. That's 1 trial. You prompt another recall. The dog doesn't come. You don't pay. That's another trial. Now he's 1 for 2 in your set of 5—and so on.

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# Training Plans Appendix

## Commando Crawl

### (Use with lesson 15)

*Goal: Your dog will crawl toward you for 10 feet on the verbal cue "Special Forces!" The distances are approximate and are meant to be just the tiniest bump forward initially and then gradually increased.*

| | CUE/PROMPT | DISTANCE | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | With your dog in a down position, lure him through a leg tunnel. | 1 to 2 inches | Very small hop forward. |
| 2 | Ditto. | 3 to 4 inches | A little bit more. |
| 3 | Lure still in place, but try without a leg tunnel. | 3 to 4 inches | Cancel if he gets out of crawl. |
| 4 | When he's warmed up on step 3, try with a hand signal (point). | 3 to 4 inches | Feed in position (down). |
| 5 | Ditto, but a little longer now. | 6 inches | |
| 6 | Raise your hand signal 1 foot higher. | 6 inches | Warm him up with step 5 if necessary. |
| 7 | Raise your hand signal so that you are no longer bending over. | 6 inches | Split the height if necessary. |

## Commando Crawl

### (Use with lesson 15) Cont.

| | CUE/PROMPT | DISTANCE | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Ditto, but a little longer now. | 12 inches | Split to a lower signal if necessary. |
| 9 | Before signaling or backing away, give the verbal cue. | 12 inches | |
| 10 | Ditto, but a longer distance now. | 2 feet | Split to a lower signal if necessary. |
| 11 | More distance. | 3 feet | Ditto. |
| 12 | And more. | 5 feet | Ditto. |
| 13 | And more. | 8 feet | Ditto. |
| 14 | More still. You can put him on a down-stay now and stand farther away so that he's soloing more (not following you). | 10 feet | Ditto. |

## Crate Training

### (Use with lesson 22)

*Goal: Your dog is comfortable in crate, with you absent, for up to 2 hours. You'll notice that the push point for this is 5/5 instead of the usual 4/5. This is because many dogs are fearful of crates, and we want to be sure we're pushing on strong comfort, not just compliance.*

| | CRITERIA | NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Leave crate door open and, randomly throughout day, drop treats at the back. Make no attempt to coax the dog into the crate. Just replenish when you notice he's collected the treats. | Push to step 2 when, for 3 days straight, the dog has charged in immediately to collect the treats. |
| 2 | Lure him into crate, feeding at the back with a tossed treat. Let him exit at will. The difference between this step and step 1 is you are remaining next to the crate. Step 1 is passive training. | Push to step 3 when he is 5/5 going in immediately to collect. |
| 3 | Lure him into the crate and commence a steady flow of treats (about 1 second apart) as long as he stays in crate. Let him exit at will. | Push when you've had a full minute without an exit. |
| 4 | Repeat step 3 but use a hand signal now instead of a lure. Wait for him to go in (i.e., don't chant your signal again and again). | Push to step 5 when he is 5/5 going in right away and stays the full minute without an exit. |
| 5 | Repeat step 4, but now feed every 2 seconds instead of every second. | Push when you've had a full minute without an exit. |
| 6 | Signal him into the crate and close the door halfway. Pay if he stays in. | Push on 5/5. |

## Crate Training

### (Use with lesson 22) Cont.

| | CRITERIA | NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Signal him into the crate and close the door fully for 1 second. Pay if he makes no attempt to exit. Let him exit if he tries to. | Push on 5/5. |
| 8 | Signal him into the crate and close the door fully for 2 seconds. Pay if he makes no attempt to exit. Let him exit if he tries to. | Push on 5/5. |
| 9 | Signal him into the crate and close the door fully for 3 seconds. Pay if he makes no attempt to exit. Let him exit if he tries to. | Push on 5/5. |
| 10 | Signal him into the crate and close the door fully for 5 seconds. Pay if he makes no attempt to exit. Let him exit if he tries to. | Push on 5/5. |
| 11 | Signal him into the crate and close the door fully for 10 seconds. Pay if he makes no attempt to exit. Let him exit if he tries to. | Push on 5/5. |
| 12 | Make the crate very comfortable with bedding. Stuff a Kong or 2. Hand signal him into the crate, give him the stuffed Kong (or other special chew object), close the door, and hang out next to the crate reading or watching television for 10 minutes. Every 20 or 30 seconds, drop in an extra treat or 2. | Do this 4 or 5 times over the course of a few days. Push to step 13 only if he merrily works the chew toy; doesn't exhibit any distress, such as whining or attempting to get out; and each time you start the exercise he goes in the crate without hesitation. |
| 13 | Repeat step 12, but now occasionally get up and leave room, returning within a few seconds. | Same as step 12. Watch for any distress when you leave the room. |

## Crate Training

### (Use with lesson 22) Cont.

| | CRITERIA | NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | Repeat step 13, but now leave him in for 30 minutes. Also, drop extra treats in less frequently—every minute or 2. | Same as step 13. |
| 15 | Repeat step 13, but now leave him in for an hour. Drop extra treats in every 5 minutes or so. | Same as step 13. It can help to do this for the first time when he's most tired. |
| 16 | Repeat step 13, but now leave him in for 2 hours. Drop extra treats in a few times in the course of the 2-hour period. | Same as step 13. Do the first one when he's tired once again. |
| 17 | Leave him in the crate with a stuffed Kong or other special chew object while you go about normal activities around the house for 30 minutes. The difference now is you don't sit beside him for any of the time. | Same. Monitor for any signs of distress and, as always, whether he eagerly goes in the next time you do the exercise. |
| 18 | Leave him in the crate with a stuffed Kong or other special chew object while you leave the house for 30 minutes. | The acid test here is whether he happily goes in next time. |
| 19 | Repeat step 18 but for 1 hour. | Same as step 18. |
| 20 | Repeat step 18 but for 2 hours. | Same as step 18. |

## Distance Drop

### (Use with lesson 16)

*Goal: Your dog will lie down cold (cue out of the blue, not only in the context of a training session with rep after rep to warm up) 10 feet or more away from you on a verbal cue. Note that this plan is parameter style rather than narrative style. Preprepare rewards and stash in your pocket. Barriers prevent creeping forward so build the habit of going straight down. Use the stop of the stairs, crate, or baby gate.*

| | WARM-UP | DISTANCE | CUE/PROMPT/NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre | Complete the down from stand plan in its entirety (response to verbal cue). | | |
| 1 | Cold (random single trials at least 10 minutes apart) | Right in front of | Verbal and signal. Practice down out of the context of a training session. Out of the blue, say "down," wait a few seconds, and then signal him down. Pay either way and shop for response to verbal. When he's 3/5 or better on the verbal, push to step 2. |
| 2 | Cold | Right in front of | Verbal only. If he goes down for the verbal, pay. If not, nada! |
| 3 | Training session | 2' (barrier) | Verbal, pause 2 seconds, step forward, signal. Pay every time. |
| 4 | Training session | 2' (barrier) | Verbal only. If he doesn't go down, wait a few seconds, cancel the rep (walk away briefly), and then try again. |
| 5 | Training session | 3' (barrier) | Repeat step 4, but one more pace away. |

## Distance Drop

### (Use with lesson 16) Cont.

| | WARM-UP | DISTANCE | CUE/PROMPT/NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Training session | 6' (barrier) | Now do it 6 feet away (a watershed for many dogs). If necessary, split to verbal, approach, signal. |
| 7 | Training session | 10' (barrier) | Now do it 10 feet away. If necessary, split to the approach again. |
| 8 | Training session | 6' (no barrier) | Go back to 6 feet but without a barrier. Cancel if he takes a step forward, even if he goes down. He has to go down directly. |
| 9 | Training session | 10' (no barrier) | Practice at 10 feet with no barrier. Cancel for any steps forward again. |
| 10 | Cold (more than 10-minute inter-trial latency) | 10' (no barrier) | Now do one-offs at 10 feet. If he misses, nada. Try again in 10 minutes. |

## Doorbell Down-Stay (Use with lesson 23)

*Goal: Your dog will hold a down-stay on his mat while you answer the door and let a visitor in or accept a package. Note: Some dogs can bark while in a down-stay, so this won't work on every dog.*

| | DOOR ACTIVITY | WARM-UP | SPLITS/NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre | Complete down-stay plan to step 10 on a mat that is conveniently placed near the front door. | | |
| 1 | Open front door (no bell, no visitor). | Warmed up. Train in a session. | Split to bungeeing to door and back and touching latch if necessary. |
| 2 | Open door and ring doorbell (no visitor). | Warmed up. Train in a session. | Stick on this step, paying the initial down, until he'll do a stay. |
| 3 | Open door and ring doorbell (no visitor). | 5-minute cool-off between reps. | If he flunks the cooled-off rep, do warmed-up reps until success, then cool him off again. Push when he's done it correctly cooled off (first rep) 4/5 or 5/5. |
| 4 | Open door and ring doorbell (no visitor). | 2-hour cool-off between reps. | The goal is for him to nail the first rep after 2 hours off. Same regime as in step 4. Split time if necessary. |
| 5 | Accomplice rings doorbell; you answer and let him/her in. | Warmed up. Train in a session. | This is like a real doorbell ring plus visitor except that you'll practice over and over again. |
| 6 | Ditto. | 2-hour cool-off between reps. | The goal is for him to nail the first rep after 2 hours off. Same regime as in step 4. Split time if necessary. |
| 7 | Real doorbell ring. | Cold. | Split to longer cool-offs with an accomplice if necessary. |

## Down from Sit: Plan A

### (Use with lessons 2, 4, 5, and 14)

*Goal: From a sitting position, your dog will lie down for a verbal cue or a stylized hand signal. Remember to immediately cancel the rep if your dog stands. The first order of business is keeping his rear on the floor as he works the lure or ponders the hand signal.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Down from a sit for a full food lure. If he will not go down at all, switch to plan B for this behavior. |
| 2 | Down from a sit for a hand signal to the floor. If he flunks this step twice, switch to plan C here. |
| 3 | Down from a sit for a hand signal halfway to the floor. |
| 4 | Down from a sit for a small hand signal (don't bend at the waist). |
| 5 | Say "down," wait 2 seconds, and then give the small hand signal and keep track of ("shop for") how often he goes down before the hand signal. When he is jumping the prompt (going down before you can give the hand signal) at a 3/5 rate, progress to step 6. Note that, until this is achieved, he is not required to go down for the verbal cue "down." Pay regardless of whether he goes on the verbal cue or needs the hand signal. |
| 6 | Now you will pay only when he goes down on the verbal cue. If he doesn't, deliver the signal, praise him for response to the signal, and do another rep. |

## Down from Sit: Plan B (Use with lesson 3)

*Goal: Gradually shape your dog to lie down from a sitting position. Use this plan if your dog can't do step 1 of plan A for this behavior. Plenty of dogs need these splits, so don't worry if yours does.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | With your dog in a sit, lure his nose halfway to the floor. Cancel immediately if he stands. |
| 2 | Lure his nose all the way to the floor. Cancel immediately if he stands. |
| 3 | Lure his nose to the floor and wait 2 seconds before paying. Cancel if he stands at any point. |
| 4 | Now wait 5 seconds before paying. Cancel if he stands at any point. |
| 5 | During the 5 seconds, experiment with inching the lure away from him or toward him to see if you can get him to crouch, or even buckle his wrist (lowest joint on front leg) or unlock an elbow. If you see any of these, pay right away. If not, pay after 5 or so seconds is up. It's still very important to cancel if he stands. |
| 6 | Once you've got a crouch, wrist buckle, or unlocked elbow, make him hold that for 2 to 3 seconds before paying. |
| 7 | Now make him hold his crouch, buckle, or unlocked elbow for 5+ seconds and, during that time, experiment with the lure to get him lower still. |
| 8 | Hold out for even lower. |
| 9 | Hold out for a down (both elbows on the floor). |
| 10 | Switch back to plan A. |

## Down from Sit: Plan C (Use with lesson 3)

*Goal: "Unglue" your dog from requiring a food lure to lie down from a sitting position. Use this plan if you get stuck between steps 1 and 2 of plan A for this behavior.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Down from a sit for a full food lure (step 1 of plan A). Make sure you cancel for standing. |
| | *Tried hand signal and dog would not go down at all in spite of dropping and pushing twice.* |
| 2 | Down from a sit with the lure tucked more deeply into your hand. *See the illustration below.* |
| 3 | Down from a sit with the lure still tucked. But now pay him with a treat from your other hand, to further divorce him from the lure. |
| A | Switch back to plan A, step 2. |

## Down from Stand

### (Use with lessons 4, 5, 10, and 14)

*Goal: From a standing position, your dog will lie down for a verbal cue or stylized hand signal. Do this plan only after getting to at least step 3 in the down from sit plan. It'll go much faster.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Down from a stand for a full food lure. Don't worry about which end (back or front) goes down first. Over time, he'll go faster and faster (he's in more of a rush to get to the payment part than you are). |
| 2 | Down from a stand for a hand signal to the floor. |
| 3 | Down from a stand for a hand signal halfway to the floor. |
| 4 | Down from a stand for a small hand signal (don't bend at the waist). |
| 5 | Say "down," wait 2 seconds, and then give the small hand signal and keep track of ("shop for") how often he goes down before the hand signal. When he is jumping the prompt (going down before you can give the hand signal) at a 3/5 rate, progress to step 6. Note that, until this is achieved, he is not required to go down for the verbal cue "down." Pay regardless of whether he goes on the verbal cue or needs the hand signal. If he sits on the verbal cue, rather than lying down, deliver the signal and pay—but it's still a loser trial (don't count it toward your 3/5 needed to push to step 6). |
| 6 | Now you will pay only when he goes down on the verbal cue. If he doesn't, or if he sits, deliver the signal, praise him for response to the signal, and do another rep. |

## Down-Stay

### (Use with lessons 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 14)

*Goal: Your dog will hold a down-stay around ambient household distractions with you at the other end of the room. The duration-building portion is a separate plan. The key skill in stay training is your timing of reward cancelations when he breaks. Commiserate ("Oh, too bad!") the instant he starts to break.*

| | DISTRACTION | DISTANCE | DURATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dangle a treat 1 foot in front of him in a down. Be ready to cancel quickly when he goes for it. | None | Per distraction. |
| 2 | Do the same thing for 3 seconds. Be fast with your cancels. | | |
| 3 | Now put the food on the ground 1 foot away for 1 second. | | |
| 4 | Do the same thing for 3 seconds. Be ready to grab it. | | |
| 5 | Repeat step 4, but standing on the other side of your dog. | | |
| 6 | One step at a time, commence walking around him and pivoting back in front to pay. Head tracking is fine, but movement is not. | | |

## Down-Stay

### (Use with lessons 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 14) Cont.

| | DISTRACTION | DISTANCE | DURATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Walk around him, one step at a time, in the other direction. New ball game! | | |
| 8 | Double walk-around: Do both directions for 1 reward. | | |
| 9 | Normal household ambient distractions. | 6-foot "bungee" | Per distance. |
| 10 | Dropped and thrown objects. | None | Per distraction. |
| 11 | People passing by. | None | Ditto. |
| 11 | Ditto. | Across the room | Ditto. |
| 12 | Ditto. | Across the room | Duration plan (*See* **Stay Duration Increments: Down-Stay Step 13**). |

## Fugitive Frisk (Use with lesson 16)

*Goal: On the cue "up against the wall," your dog will put his front feet on the nearest vertical surface, stay while being frisked, and then stop on the release "he's clean!"*

| | CUE/PROMPT | DURATION | FRISKING | SPLITS/ NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Food lure | 1 second | None | |
| 2 | Hand signal followed by position-feed | 1 second | None | |
| 3 | Hand signal followed by position-feed | Per frisk | 1-hand brief side touch | Cancel if dog comes down or targets side touch hand. |
| 4 | | | 2-hand brief side touch | Practice on novel surfaces, splitting to up but no frisk if necessary. |
| 5 | | | 1 frisk movement | Position-feed before releasing. |
| 6 | | | 2 frisks | |
| 7 | | | 3 frisks | |
| 8 | | | 4 frisks | |
| 9 | More stylized signal (point) | | Full frisk up and down | |
| 10 | Add verbal | | | Shop for prompt-jumping. |

## Head Halter Desensitization (Use with lessons 17 and 24)

| | FIRST DO THIS | THEN DO THIS | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A few times per day, at random times, present the head halter to your dog. Pause 2 or 3 seconds. | After the 2 to 3 seconds, run to the fridge for about a 10-second chicken party. Stop the flow of chicken after putting the head halter away. | Repeat until he demonstrates a visible anticipatory brightening up when you present the head halter. |
| 2 | Repeat step 1, only now pay him through the (loose) nose strap. | Feed 1 piece after another through the nose strap for about 10 seconds. | Split to nose partway in if he's reluctant. |
| 3 | Repeat, but now he'll feel the nose strap more while collecting. | Tighten the strap and hold the food such that he will feel a bit of pressure. | Split to semi-loosely. |
| 4 | Put the halter on loosely for 5 seconds. | Feed throughout. Take it off and stop the flow of treats. | Drop if he's at all reluctant to let you put it on. |
| 5 | Put the halter on at normal tightness (5 seconds). | Ditto. | Ditto. |
| 6 | Leash and take 1 step. | Feed a few treats and then take it off. | Walking with the halter on feels weird at first for some dogs. |
| 7 | Gradually add steps. | Feed every few steps. | Ditto. |
| 8 | Outdoor short walks. | Ditto. | Over time, you can fade the treats. |

## Heeling

### (Use with lesson 15)

*Goal: Your dog will heel off leash in a moderately distracting environment. Remember to walk briskly and to count. Once you're at the end of the plan, you can add steps or change environments. Just make sure that you do one at a time, and split back on other parameters if you need to.*

| | LURED STEPS TO GET MOMENTUM | NON-LURED STEPS | LOCATION/NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 0 – Pay if he follows the lure. | At home – no distractions. |
| 2 | 3 | 0 – Pay after 3 lured steps now. | Ditto. |
| 3 | 4 | 0 – Pay after 4 lured steps now. | Ditto. |
| 4 | 3 | ½ – Remove the lure for a *brief* instant before you pay. | Ditto. The idea here is for the lure's disappearance to predict payment. |
| 5 | 4 | 1 – Remove for 1 step. Pay. | Ditto. |

# Heeling

## (Use with lesson 15) Cont.

| | LURED STEPS TO GET MOMENTUM | NON-LURED STEPS | LOCATION/NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 2 – Remove for 2 steps. | It can help to praise on removal steps. |
| 7 | 4 | 3 – Remove for 3 steps. | Ditto. |
| 8 | 2 | 3 – Now lure for just 2 steps. | Ditto. |
| 9 | 0 | 3 – Now try with no luring at all. | Ditto. |
| 10 | 0 | 6 – Try for 6 steps un-lured. | Split to 4 or 5 and/or lots of praise. |
| 11 | 2 | 3 – Easier here (location change). | Try practicing on the sidewalk now. |
| 12 | 0 | 3 to 6 – Build back up to 6 steps. | Ditto. |

## Leave It (Use with lessons 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13)

*Goal: Your dog will refrain from touching high-value food or any novel item on the ground encountered on a walk. "Protection" refers to how easily it would be for him to win a speed game—i.e., how well protected the forbidden item is. Cultivate the habit of paying from your other hand, always with something equally good or better than what he's resisting.*

| | ITEM | DURATION | PROTECTION AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | High-value food | 1 second | In your closed hand. Wait for him to stop bugging you for 1 second. Pay from your other hand. |
| 2 | High-value food | 1 second | Open hand (close it when he goes for it). |
| 3 | High-value food | 3 seconds | Open hand (close it when he goes for it). |
| 4 | High-value food | 1 second | On the floor. Be ready to cover. Add the verbal now. |
| 5 | High-value food | 3 seconds | On the floor. Be ready to cover. |
| 6 | High-value food | 3 seconds | "Accidentally" dropped. Practice warm, then cold. |
| 7 | Greasy paper towel or other | 3 seconds | On floor*. Practice warm, then cold. |
| 8 | High-value food | 1 second | Planted on a walk ahead of time. Be ready. |
| 9 | Greasy paper towel or other | 3 seconds | Planted on walk. Omit for object guarders. |
| 10 | Novel temptation | 3 seconds | Planted on walk. Be ready (know where you planted). |

**If your dog is an object guarder, omit these items and get professional help.*

## Loose Leash Walking to Clear Directional Goal

### (Use with lessons 7, 8, and 9)

*Goal: Your dog will walk at your pace on a completely loose leash to a visible pile of high-value food or a novel toy 15 to 20 feet away. This is an all-or-nothing exercise, without increments, just rules. Initially, you'll have a feeling of "this will never work!"—but persevere. Your dog is a learning machine, and the contingencies here are crystal clear.*

**Setup**

Place a pile of high-value food, or a novel and attractive toy, and let your dog, on leash, see that it is there (without allowing access). Then, go to your start position 15 to 20 feet away.

**Execution**

Rule 1: If the leash is loose, move forward at your natural pace. Initially, it will take time for him to stop pulling. The first time he does, praise and start moving. He'll likely tighten the leash again immediately, but that's normal. Optional: Prompt him back toward you to manufacture a loose leash. You don't have to do this; he'll learn either way.

Rule 2: The instant your dog tightens the leash at any time, commiserate ("Oh, too bad!") and go back to the start position. Wait for the next slackening of the leash.

## Puppy Socialization Hit List (Use with lesson 20)

*Goal: The puppy meets and has positive experiences with a wide variety of people, dogs, places, and things and grows up comfortable and confident. Ensure freedom to investigate, treats, and play.*

| TRACK GOOD EXPERIENCES | ITEM |
|---|---|
|  | Children ages 4 to 7: both meet and greets and playing/running/making noise. |
|  | Children ages 8 to 13: both meet and greets and playing/running/making noise. |
|  | Adult men: as many ages, races, and sizes as possible, including beards. |
|  | Adult women: as many ages, races, and sizes as possible. |
|  | Toddlers: supervise to make sure neither the puppy nor the toddler is rough. |
|  | Babies: puppy sniffs and hangs out near, getting treats. |
|  | New people wearing sunglasses/big hats/backpacks. |
|  | Car rides: short rides to fun places and then longer rides. |
|  | New places: both quiet places and busy places with crowds, people moving about, bikes, skateboards, etc. |
|  | Playmates: best possible option is other puppies, but friendly, playful adult dogs are also okay. |

## Rear Paw Desensitization and Counterconditioning

### (Use with lesson 19)

*Goal: Your dog will be comfortable as you lift and restrain a rear paw for 5 seconds (not a stay).*

| | EXAM |
|---|---|
| 1 | With your dog in a stand, grasp his upper rear leg close to his body. Wait 1 second and then start a flow of treats with your other hand. Keep up the flow for 5 seconds; then, stop both the grasp and the flow of treats. |
| 2 | Same thing, but now grasp his knee. |
| 3 | Same thing, but grasp his hock (lower leg). |
| 4 | Same thing, but now lift his foot off the ground for 5 seconds. Split to 2 seconds if necessary. |
| 5 | Lift his foot by the hock and examine his foot with your other hand for 5 seconds. Then, pay handsomely. |

## Recall (Use with lessons 3, 4, 10, 13, and 23)

*Goal: Your dog will come when called even when distracted (e.g., mid-play, mid-sniff, etc.). This behavior benefits enormously from fewer reps with huge paydays, especially for the first 4 steps. From step 5 on, you still pay pretty well, but it's okay to do more reps in a row.*

| | LOCATION AND DISTRACTIONS | DISTANCE | PROMPTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | At home – no distractions. Give the cue, pause 2 seconds, and then rain a preprepared party down on him. | In the same room | None. This is a straight Pavlovian exercise. He doesn't have to do anything other than notice the relationship between the cue and the party. |
| 2 | Ditto. | From another room | If he doesn't bolt to you on the cue, prompt him with happy talk, and then party. |
| 3 | In house – Premack 1. | 10 to 15 feet away | Be sure to watch the video demonstration. The distractor's cause and effect really makes or breaks this exercise. |
| 4 | In house – Premack 2. | Triangle (~10 feet) | Ditto. |
| 5 | In the yard when he's not particularly distracted. | From the house | Happy talk if necessary. Pay handsomely. |
| 6 | At dog park at point of boredom (done playing/ sniffing). | 20+ feet (split distance if necessary) | Anything goes. (Also, this is a really good time to do a surprise treat upgrade.) |
| 7 | At dog park earlier on (before he is fully saturated on dogs or sniffing). | 20+ feet | Anything goes. Pay well, even if it takes him some prompting to come. |
| 8 | At dog park even earlier on (before he is at all done with dogs or sniffs). | 20+ feet | Happy talk. Pay well, even if it takes him some prompting to come. And send him back to his activities once he does the recall. |

## Sit from Down

### (Use with lessons 3, 4, 5, and 14)

*Goal: From a down position, your dog will sit for a small hand signal.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Sit from down for a full food lure. |
| 2 | Sit from down for a hand signal. |
| 3 | Sit from down for a smaller hand signal. |
| 4 | Add verbal and shop for signal-jumping. |
| 5 | Optional: Verbal only once your dog is 3/5 jumping the prompt (sitting on the verbal) on step 4. |

## Sit from Stand: Plan A

### (Use with lessons 2, 4, 5, and 14)

*Goal: From a standing position, your dog will sit for a verbal cue or stylized hand signal. If he is physically able (not arthritic, not obese, and no hip or knee problems) but you are unable to get him to sit for a lure at all in step 1, switch to plan B. If you get stuck between steps 1 and 2—you drop and re-push and he still will not sit for the signal—switch to plan C. These are relatively common problems and are easily addressed, so don't despair.*

*Don't forget to position-feed. He must collect in a sit.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Sit from stand for a full food lure. |
| 2 | Sit from stand for a broad hand signal (identical motion as step 1 but with no lure). |
| 3 | Sit from stand for a smaller hand signal (faster, higher, and more stylized). |
| 4 | Say "sit," wait 2 seconds, and then give the small hand signal and keep track of ("shop for") how often he sits before the hand signal. When he is jumping the prompt (sitting before you can give the hand signal) at a 3/5 rate, progress to step 5. Note that, until this is achieved, he is not required to sit for the verbal cue "sit." Pay regardless of whether he sits on the verbal cue or needs the hand signal. |
| 5 | Now you will pay only when he sits on the verbal cue. If he doesn't, deliver the hand signal, praise him for response to the signal, and do another rep. |

## Sit from Stand: Plan B (Use with lesson 3)

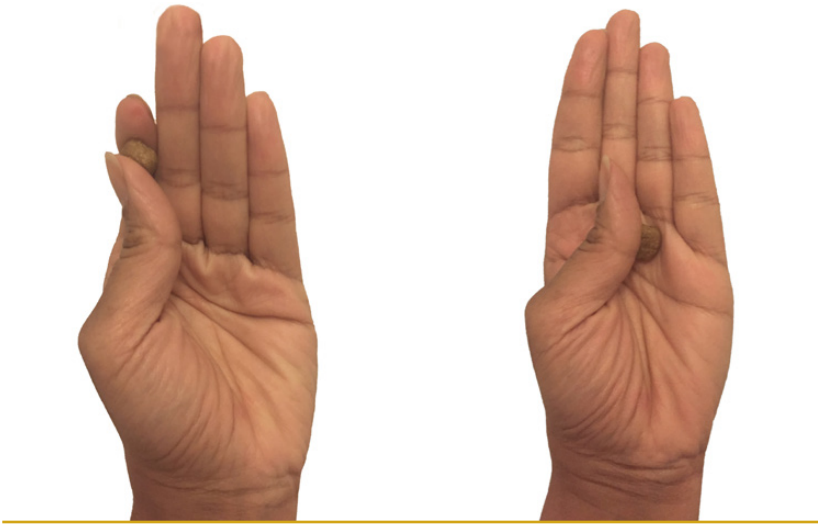
*Goal: Gradually shape your dog to sit from a standing position. Use this plan if your dog can't do step 1 of plan A for this behavior. Plenty of dogs need these splits, so don't worry if yours does.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | With your dog in a stand, lure his nose upward and slightly back with a food treat. |
| 2 | Lure his head up for 2 seconds. |
| 3 | Lure his head up for 3 seconds. Try to pay at the instant of maximum head craning. |
| 4 | Lure his head up for 3 to 5 seconds and shop for knee bends. Experiment with the lure position. |
| 5 | Hold out for deeper knee bends. If he keeps backing up, it can help to work against a wall. |
| 6 | Hold out for a full sit. |
| A | Switch back to plan A. |

## Sit from Stand: Plan C (Use with lesson 3)

*Goal: "Unglue" your dog from requiring a food lure to sit from a standing position. Use this plan if you get stuck between steps 1 and 2 of plan A for this behavior.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Sit from stand for a full food lure (step 1 of plan A). |
| | *Tried hand signal and dog would not sit at all in spite of dropping and pushing twice.* |
| 2 | Sit from a stand with the lure tucked more deeply into your hand. *See the illustration below.* |
| 3 | Sit from a stand with the lure still tucked. But now pay him with a treat from your other hand, to further divorce him from the lure. Remember to position-feed. He must collect in a sit. |
| A | Switch back to plan A. |



## Sit Pretty (Use with lesson 16)

*Goal: On the cue "sit pretty" or "be a bear," your dog will rise on haunches for up to 5 seconds.*

| | CUE/PROMPT | DURATION | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | With your dog squarely in a sit, lure upward until his front feet come slightly off the ground. Very important to pay in position (while still highest up). | 1 second | Cancel if his rear quarters get out of sit. |
| 2 | Lure slightly higher so that he must balance in a true sit pretty. This is physically demanding, so remember that you're training muscles as well as behavior. | 1 second | Ditto: Cancel for any "dancing" on hind legs. |
| 3 | Same thing (full lure), but for longer. Remember to position-feed. | 2 seconds | |
| 4 | Same thing (full lure), but for longer still. | 3 seconds | Praise as he holds it. |
| 5 | Use a signal to get him into position and then pay from your other hand. | 1 second | |
| 6 | Longer for the signal now. | 3 seconds | Praise as he holds it. |
| 7 | Use a faded (smaller, more stylized) signal. | 3 seconds | |
| 8 | Add your verbal cue before commencing the signal. | 3 seconds | |
| 9 | Build a bit more duration. | 4 seconds | Praise as he holds it. |
| 10 | Build a bit more duration and start shopping for him going on the verbal cue. | 5 seconds | |

## Sit-Stay (Use with lessons 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14)

*Goal: Your dog will hold a sit-stay around moderate distractions and to be patted by a stranger. If your dog doesn't like strangers, omit steps 11 and 12 and seek professional help.*

| | DISTRACTION |
|---|---|
| 1 | Dangle a treat 1 foot in front of him. Be ready to cancel quickly when he goes for it. |
| 2 | Do the same thing for 3 seconds. Be fast with your cancels. |
| 3 | Put the food on the ground 1 foot away for 1 second. Re-sit him to pay if he goes down, but don't cancel. This problem almost always takes care of itself over time. |
| 4 | Do the same thing for 3 seconds. Be ready to grab the treat. Keep re-sitting him if he goes down. |
| 5 | Repeat step 4, but standing on the other side of your dog. |
| 6 | One step at a time, commence walking around him and pivoting back in front to pay. Head tracking is fine, but movement is not. |
| 7 | Once you've completed one direction, do the other direction, 1 step at a time. |
| 8 | Double walk-around: Do both directions for 1 reward. |
| 9 | Warmed-up (training session) patting by trainer. |
| 10 | Bounced and thrown toys and food. |
| 11 | Warmed-up (multiple repetitions in a row) person walking past. |
| 12 | Warmed-up (multiple repetitions) patting by a new person. |
| 13 | Cold (1 repetition, as would happen in real life) patting by a new person. |

## Sit-Stay for Ear or Mouth Handling

### (Use with lesson 18 and 19)

*Goal: Your dog will hold a sit-stay while you perform a 2-handed ear exam, lip lift, and "gator mouth." If your dog has any history of aggression during body handling, skip this plan and get professional help.*

| | EXAM | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Pre | Complete the sit-stay plan to step 7 (double walk-around). | |
| 1 | Sit-stay for a 2-handed 2-second ear touch. | Pay after each side. Split to 1 hand if necessary and to 1 second with 1 hand if necessary. |
| 2 | Now flip the ear open for 2 seconds. | Pay after each side. Split to 1 hand again if necessary. |
| 3 | Now flip the ear and look inside for 2 seconds. | Split how closely you get with your head if necessary. |
| 4 | Sit-stay for 1-handed 1-second muzzle touch. | Split to a head touch if necessary. |
| 5 | Now do 1-handed muzzle touch but for 2 seconds. | |
| 6 | Sit-stay for 2-handed 2-second muzzle touch. | Try for 1 hand under his chin and 1 on top of muzzle. |
| 7 | Now lift his lip for 1 second. | Steady his head with bottom hand and lift lip with top hand. |
| 8 | Now lift his lip for 2 seconds. | |
| 9 | Gently open his mouth and insert a treat. | Open with the top hand and insert with your other hand. |
| 10 | Open his mouth, look inside, and then insert a treat. | Once he's good at this, extend the duration a bit. |

## Sit-Stay for Front Foot Handling (Use with lesson 19)

*Goal: Your dog will hold a sit-stay for 5 seconds while you restrain for an exam of a front paw.*

| | EXAM | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Pre | Complete the sit-stay plan to step 7 (double walk-around). | |
| 1 | Sit-stay for 1-handed 2-second elbow grasp. | Split to shoulder if necessary. |
| 2 | Sit-stay for 1-handed 2-second elbow lift. | |
| 3 | Sit-stay for 2-handed 2-second elbow lift. | One hand lifts; the other holds upper leg. |
| 4 | Sit-stay for 2-handed 2-second foreleg lift with restraint. | Both hands on upper foreleg. |
| 5 | Sit-stay for 2-handed 2-second restraint with paw hold. | One hand holds upper leg; the other holds paw. |
| 6 | Same thing for 5 seconds. | Split to 3 seconds if necessary. |

## Spin (Use with lesson 15)

*Goal: On the verbal cue "spin" or a small hand signal, your dog will do 1 spin in a clockwise direction.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Fully lure a spin, paying at the very end. |
| 2 | Lure the spin more quickly so that he has to work to keep up. Cancel if he aborts the spin. |
| 3 | Same thing, but now remove the lure before paying once he's past the point of no return (for most dogs, this is just past halfway). |
| 4 | Same thing, but pay from your other hand now. |
| 5 | Same thing, but with a higher lure (more stylized and less literal). |
| 6 | Try using a hand signal now and pay from your other hand. |
| 7 | Before commencing the hand signal, say "spin." |
| 8 | After the verbal cue "spin," reduce the signal so that you're starting him off only. |
| 9 | Reduce the signal even more and start shopping for him going on the verbal cue alone. |
| 10 | Continue fading the signal and shopping for him going on the verbal cue alone. |

## Stationing (Hand Targeting) Alternative Plan: Chin Rest

### (Use with lesson 3)

*Goal: Your dog will place his chin in your hand and stay still for 2 seconds. This plan is an alternative for dogs who become fearful or aggressive if you put your hand over their muzzle. If your dog will tolerate your hand over his muzzle, do the Muzzle Hold variation, as it has more husbandry applications later on.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Place your slightly cupped hand under your dog's chin. After 1 second, feed him with your other hand before removing the cup. Do 10 repetitions before pushing. |
| 2 | Repeat step 1, but take a firmer, restraining-type grasp of his chin. Do 10 repetitions before pushing. |
| 3 | Offer your cupped hand and wait for your dog to place his chin by himself. Split to a lure if necessary. |
| 4 | Before presenting your hand, say "station." Then, pay him after he stations for 2 seconds. |
| 5 | Premack variation: Hold the treat in one hand and present the chin rest (cupped hand) with your other hand. Wait for him to cease focus on the treat and station for 1 second. Pay in position. |

## Stationing Muzzle Hold (Use with lessons 3, 4, 5, and 17)

*Goal: Your dog will voluntarily place his muzzle into your hand for up to 2 seconds of restraint. This basic behavior sets up mouth exams and toothbrushing later on.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Gently place one hand over your dog's muzzle and then immediately pay with the other hand before removing both hands. Do 10 repetitions before pushing. |
| 2 | Repeat step, 1 but grasp his muzzle more firmly, as though restraining. Do 10 repetitions before pushing. |
| 3 | Offer the muzzle "tunnel" near his head and wait for him to put his muzzle in voluntarily. Split to luring him in if necessary. Push to step 4 when he immediately puts his muzzle in the tunnel every time. |
| 4 | Before presenting your tunnel hand, say "station." Then, pay him after he stations for 2 seconds. |
| 5 | Premack variation: Hold the treat in one hand and present the tunnel with your other hand. Wait for him to cease focus on the treat and station for 1 second. Pay in position. |

## Stay Duration Increments: Down-Stay Step 13

(Use with lesson 7)

| | TARGET DURATION | TRAINING SESSION DURATIONS | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 15 seconds | **15** 3 10 4 4 7<br>**15** 12 8 1 **15** 9<br>**15** 11 6 7 **15** | |
| | 20 seconds | 8 1 **20** 5 6 15<br>7 1 **20** 11 9 4<br>**20** 12 3 13 2 **20**<br>14 2 10 **20** | |
| | 30 seconds | 9 21 4 **30** 7 24<br>14 2 11 **30** 6 **30**<br>19 8 22 8 **30** 1<br>17 9 **30** | |
| | 60 seconds | 14 3 25 **60** 11 13<br>**60** 1 42 19 7 7<br>**60** 28 20 17 6 39<br>**60** 2 21 38 4 **60** | |
| | 120 seconds | 36 5 90 20 **120** 13<br>27 80 12 30 55 2<br>100 **120** 15 40 84 3<br>**120** 22 98 34 **120** 50<br>8 16 27 **120** | Your next increments would be 5 minutes and 10 minutes. Build these using the same principle: sprinkling easier ones between. |

## Take a Bow (Use with lesson 15)

*Goal: On the cue "take a bow" and a flourishing hand signal, your dog will bow for 5 seconds.*

| | CUE/PROMPT | DURATION | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rear: full prompt (an arm or prop under his belly to prevent him from lying down).<br>Front: down signal. Pay as soon as his elbows hit the floor. | 1 second | Do sets of 10, pushing on 8/10. |
| 2 | Rear: faded prompt (an arm reminding him more than supporting his weight).<br>Front: down signal, but with your hand inverted to palm up. | 1 second | Keep doing sets of 10. |
| 3 | Rear: hand prompt in his groin.<br>Front: same (palm up). | 1 second | Keep doing sets of 10. |
| 4 | Rear: 2 fingers in his groin.<br>Front: more flourishing gesture. | 1 second | Sets of 5 are okay now. |

## Take a Bow (Use with lesson 15) Cont.

| | CUE/PROMPT | DURATION | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Rear: barely touching.<br>Front: same flourishing gesture. | 1 second | |
| 6 | Repeat step 5, but before doing anything with your hands, say "take a bow." | 1 second | |
| 7 | Verbal cue first.<br>Rear: no help from now on.<br>Front: flourishing gesture. | 2 seconds | |
| 8 | Ditto. | 4 seconds | Split to a small rear prompt if necessary. |
| 9 | Ditto. | 5 seconds | Ditto. |
| 10 | Optional distance build: Once he's in position, bungee out 1 step before paying and then add steps if he holds the bow. Then, try cueing him a step away. | Per distance | Combine duration and distance after maxing out each separately. |

## Toothbrushing (Use with lessons 17, 18, and 19)

*Goal: Your dog will happily let you brush his teeth. Done once a day, this can add years to his life.*

| | PREP | TRAINING: FIRST DO THIS | THEN DO THIS | PROCEDURE NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The central idea of this plan is to build a really good association so that your dog loves toothbrushing. So, go slowly and don't skip steps. In fact, go back a step or two if he's at all uncomfortable. This is more conservative than "he did it."<br><br>Get some really good treats ready (but don't give any) and present some objects of similar size to the dog. Do not give any treats. This teaches the dog that only the toothbrush is the magical thing, not treats being around and not any old object. | Show him the toothbrush (without paste) and let him investigate it, if he wants, for 10 seconds. | 2 seconds after you bring out the toothbrush, and with it still near him, start happy talk and praise; then, start giving him treats (suggestion: roast chicken and Pecorino Romano cheese cubes) one piece after another. | Be generous. This is not a time to be stingy with treats. And use the good stuff. Make a big impression. Continue feeding until you put the toothbrush away at the end of the 10 seconds. This teaches him that the toothbrush going away signals the end of the fun.<br><br>Repeat this step once or twice a day until he gets excited (expectant look, maybe salivation) when you bring out the toothbrush. It's your foundation, so don't rush ahead until you see clear signs that he loves the toothbrush. |

## Toothbrushing (Use with lessons 17, 18, and 19) Cont.

| | PREP | TRAINING: FIRST DO THIS | THEN DO THIS | PROCEDURE NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Do some more object presentations without treats to clarify that it's only the toothbrush that's magical. | Bring out the toothbrush (no paste) and touch it to his face for 5 seconds. If he's afraid, repeat step 1 for a few days. | 2 seconds after you start touching his face, start the happy talk and super generous treats as above. | Be very, very generous. Stop the praise and treats after you stop the toothbrush touch. Repeat (as above) until he gets excited when you touch the toothbrush to his face. |
| 3 | Put some dog toothpaste on the toothbrush. | Bring out the toothbrush and let him examine the toothbrush and toothpaste for 5 seconds. If he wants to lick it, let him. | 2 seconds after you bring out the toothbrush, start the happy talk and treats. | He can lick the toothpaste if he likes the taste and get treats. If he's at all afraid, go back to step 2 for a few more days. |
| 4 | Complete the stationing muzzle hold plan. If your dog is fearful or aggressive about having his muzzle handled, do not proceed and seek professional help. | | | It's okay to work this concurrently with the toothbrush steps 1 through 3. |
| 5 | Make sure that you've done the stationing muzzle hold before continuing. | Do a firm muzzle tunnel hold for 5 seconds. | Keep the treats coming from your other hand the whole time you're grasping his muzzle. | This is a good time to be extra super generous. This is scary stuff for dogs. |

## Toothbrushing (Use with lessons 17, 18, and 19) Cont.

| | PREP | TRAINING: FIRST DO THIS | THEN DO THIS | PROCEDURE NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | | Grasp his muzzle and use your thumb to lift his lip on one side to expose his teeth for 5 seconds. | Go crazy with happy talk and treats from your other hand—he's a genius! | It'll feel clunky trying to keep your grasp and the lip lifted while he eats. Don't worry; just do your best. |
| 7 | Prep the toothbrush with some toothpaste. | Grasp his muzzle, lift his lip, and touch the toothbrush to his teeth for 2 seconds. | Start happy talking right away. After the 2 seconds of toothbrush contact, have a big treat party with him. | Take your time here. Remember, you're setting him up for a lifetime of loving this. Be patient. Go back a step if he withdraws or is afraid. |
| 8 | Prep the toothbrush with some toothpaste. | Same thing, but do a little bit of brushing for 1 or 2 seconds. | Start happy talking right away. After the 2 seconds of brushing, have a big treat party with him. | This is one of those steps where the rubber meets the road. Toothbrushes feel weird to dogs, so be patient. Repeat a few times a day and go back a step or two if he's wary. Move on only when he loves it. |

## Toothbrushing (Use with lessons 17, 18, and 19) Cont.

| | PREP | TRAINING: FIRST DO THIS | THEN DO THIS | PROCEDURE NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Prep the toothbrush with some toothpaste. | Brush 1 quadrant of his mouth for 3 to 5 seconds. | Start happy talking right away. After you're done brushing, have a big treat party with him. | Another tricky step; be patient. Repeat a few times a day and go back a step or two if he's wary. Move on only when he loves it. |
| 10 | Prep the toothbrush with some toothpaste. | Repeat steps 11 through 13 for each area of his mouth (5 areas: upper and lower quadrants on each side and front teeth). | Be super generous with the post–brush treat party. | Different parts of his mouth may be scarier than others. Go slow if you encounter a scarier area. |
| 11 | Prep the toothbrush with some toothpaste. | Brush 2 areas before the treat party. Then, brush 3 areas. Then, brush all areas. | Be super generous; you're asking for more now. | Increase the number of areas only if he's not avoiding and is happy. |

## Wait at Doorways and while Walking

### (Use with lessons 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13)

*Goal: When a door is opened, including a car door, your dog will wait to exit for up to 3 seconds until formally released ("okay!"). He will also pause (cease going forward) on the cue "wait" when walking on leash. As with stay and other impulse control training, the key mechanical skill is a cause-and-effect door closing when he prematurely attempts to exit.*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1-second wait at door to yard with door half open. |
| 2 | 1-second wait at door to yard with door fully open. |
| 3 | 3-second wait at door to yard with door fully open. |
| 4 | 3-second wait at door to yard with door fully open and at least several hours between repetitions (cold trial). |
| 5 | 1-second wait at front door with door fully open (try cold and then practice warmed up). Optional: Add verbal cue. |
| 6 | 3-second wait at front door with door fully open and at least several hours between repetitions (cold trial). |
| 7 | While walking on leash, say "wait"; then, after 1 second, cease walking. Recommence only when dog has come to a standstill (stopped attempting to move forward). Repeat until dog jumps the prompt and stops on the verbal cue. Pay with food and continued forward motion when he does. |
| 8 | 1-second wait to exit car with hatch/door fully open and dog warmed up (multiple repetitions in a row). |
| 9 | 3-second wait to exit car with hatch/door fully open and dog warmed up (multiple repetitions in a row). |
| 10 | 3-second wait to exit car with hatch/door fully open and dog cooled off or cold (no warm-up repetitions). |

## Watch (Use with lessons 3, 4, and 5)

*Goal: Your dog will make and maintain eye contact with you for 5 seconds on the verbal cue "watch."*

| | LOCATION | CUE/PROMPT | DURATION | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | In the house | Lure from his nose to your eyes. | 1 second | Feed high. |
| 2 | In the house | Finger signal at your eyes. | 1 second | Feed high. |
| 4 | In the house | Verbal prompting goes against Premack distraction (food in hand). | 1 second | Timing is important! Don't miss any glance at you. |
| 5 | In the house | Finger signal versus Premack. | 1 second | Wait him out. |
| 6 | In the house | Finger signal. | 3 seconds | Praise quietly for 3 seconds. |
| 7 | In the yard | Finger signal. | 1 second | |
| 8 | On the street | Finger signal. | 1 second | On walks. |
| 9 | On the street | Finger signal. | 3 seconds | On walks. |
| 10 | On the street | Finger signal. | 5 seconds | On walks. |

## Wave (Use with lesson 15)

*Goal: Your dog will wave from a sit position when you wave at him from up to 6 feet away.*

| | CUE/PROMPT | DISTANCE | SPLITS AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Take your dog's paw in your hand. | Next to | |
| 2 | Put your hand out and wait for your dog to put his paw in your hand. | Next to | Split to an elbow-tap prompt if necessary. |
| 3 | Use a high-five-style hand cue now. | Next to | Do this warmed up initially. |
| 4 | Put the hand cue higher and pay the dog for missing so that he ends up waving. | 1 foot | Target is just far enough so that dog misses (waves). |
| 5 | Wave at him for 2 seconds and then deliver the target. | 1 foot | Shop for prompt-jumping. Push to step 6 only when he is waving on the wave cue 3/5 of the time. |
| 6 | Wave at him. | 1 foot | He must wave on the cue now. |
| 7 | Ditto. | 2 feet | You can also start shopping for vigor and height: style points! |
| 8 | Ditto. | 3 feet | Ditto. |
| 9 | Ditto. | 6 feet | Split the distance if necessary. |

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