
Step Two Training Plans

Teaching Sit

Sit is one of the first skills that we teach our dog, and it is really useful! We can use it as a way to “say please” before giving food, a special item or even before they can say hello to a person. It is useful before entering or exiting a door way and sitting at a crosswalk. It’s up to you where you would like to use “sit”.

With any skill, you have to practice in various environments and be consistent – this is when “sit” will become a habit. Check these off when your pup can consistently sit at least three times in a row in the following situations (it gets more difficult as you go down the list!):

	<u>Grade School</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>University</u>
	Use the hand signal and verbal cue (you may have to repeat after 3-5 seconds)	Try using just the verbal cue (remember to reward)	Try just waiting for the sit without cuing your dog (ask for a sit if it doesn’t happen after 3 to 5 seconds)
At home in the living room			
At home in the kitchen			
At home, while sitting down			
At home with your back turned to your pup			
Outside on a walk – just for fun			
Outside at a crosswalk			
Outside when your pup sees a person from a distance			
In a park setting with distractions			
Outside as a person is walking towards your dog			

Go to Your Mat/Place

Go to your mat is a very useful cue both inside and outside; while you are eating dinner or have guests over, out in a park or on a patio or to wait your turn during formal training or during dog sports. It is also a great way to keep your dog calm when the doorbell rings and when people enter your home. Here are the basics of getting your dog to their mat/place. (adapted from clickertraining.com)

1. *Get a [mat](#), blanket, dog bed, and without saying anything to your dog, put it on the floor near you. The second that your dog shows any interest (by looking at it, sniffing it, putting a paw on it), click or say "yes!" and put a treat on the mat.*
2. *As long as your dog continues to interact with the mat (walking on it, sitting or even laying down), keep on saying "yes!" or clicking and putting treats on the mat. My preference is down, but I also want to reward sits or any other behaviors the dog is offering on the mat. If he lays down, a jackpot of treats or a higher value treat is given so that he will try lying down again.*
3. *The second the dog leaves the mat, all clicking, praising, and treating ends. Stand quietly and wait. Most dogs at this point will go back to the mat in an effort to restart the game. When they do, throw treats on the mat. Continue to reward everything, giving the highest value treat for a down.*
4. *When your dog is staying on the mat, while treats keep coming, you can now ask for a down. To reset your pup say "all done!" or "finished!" and throw a treat off the mat. Then say "place!" or "spot" and point to the mat. Your dog should happily come on the mat expecting treats. Now ask for a down (most dogs take a bit to understand that you are asking more of them, so wait for 3-5 seconds before asking for another "down"). As soon as your pup lays down, big rewards.*
5. *Reset your dog by saying "all done!" or "finished" and throw a treat away from the mat. Repeat Step 4 while keeping your dog laying on the mat for longer periods of time. The key, in the beginning is to constantly reward while your dog is laying down. If your dog gets up, that's ok, just say "place!" or "spot" to reset your pup.*
6. *Put this to use! Working on DURATION - While you are cooking in the kitchen, put the mat close to you but in an area where your pup can't get to scraps. Continue to reinforce the down on the mat every few seconds and gradually increase the time in between rewards. Use this while you are working from home. Put your pup close to you and reward intermittently for laying on the mat. Use this during dinner time – put the mat closer to the table and keep reinforcing staying on the mat. The first few times at dinner may take a lot of resets.*

1. *Don't forget to say "good girl/boy" – this will give you more time in between treats.*
 2. *For times when you need longer stays, use a kong or a chew stick*
 3. *When you are done, don't forget your release word such as "finished!" or "all done!"*
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7. *Working on DISTANCE – once your pup is happily staying on the mat, start to get up and walk around close to the mat while treating or while your dog is enjoying a kong or a bone. Slowly increase the distance between you and the mat and don't forget to praise while your dog remains on the mat. Switch it up to using treats:*
 1. *Walk two feet away, come back and treat*
 2. *Walk five feet away, come back and treat*
 3. *Walk one foot away, come back and treat*
 4. *Play with the distance until you can be out of sight without your dog getting up to see where you are*
 5. *Practice slowly for a few minutes once or twice a day*
 6. *Don't forget your release word when you are done practicing*

Eventually three things will happen:

1. Your dog will love the mat and knows that wonderful things happen there
2. He will be able to move a reasonable distance away from you to the mat.
3. He will be confident remaining on the mat until you release him.

Taking it to the Next Level – The Relaxation Protocol

Now that your dog is reliably going to the mat, let's start training a reliable stay while you walk away and for long periods of time. This relaxation protocol also teaches dogs to learn to calm down, so it is super handy. In addition, this training involves a lot of mental stimulation so it will actually tire out your pup. This is great for dogs who have a hard time settling at home!

The Relaxation Protocol was developed by Dr. Karen Overall and is a step by step process to get your dog used to relaxing on a mat while you walk away and for long periods of time. It is a 15 day process (or longer if you need more time) and can be followed through an MP3 or by printing out the instructions.

<https://journeydogtraining.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ProtocolforRelaxation.pdf>

“Drop”

Drop can be fun for your dog. Setting up practice sessions to build muscle memory and making this more of a game than a command can save you a lot of stress if your pup has something that they shouldn't have! Drop means that you want the dog to spit out whatever they have in their mouth, so it is different from “leave it”. Essentially “drop” should be seen as a “trade”. This exercise can also avoid resource guarding.

Key Points

1. Always use a positive voice – easier said than done when you are in a rush or when you feel that there is something that is going to go wrong. Dogs sense stress in your voice, so take a deep breath, imagine your dog dropping the item and say “drop!” as if you are playing a game
2. Do not encroach on your dog's space nor move your hand towards your dog. This gets their defenses up and can cause a game of chase me or make the dog eat whatever they have quickly.

How to teach:

- a) Make a list of all the items your dog likes in order from least to most favorite – these can be toys, food or even things like toilet paper rolls, tissue, etc.
 - b) Prepare to work with the first three or four lower value items first
 - c) Sit on the floor with your dog and give them one of the items. Let them play, chew, etc.
 - d) After a few seconds say “drop” then show them the higher value item
 - e) As soon as they drop the item, say “yes!” or click and throw the higher value item away from what they just dropped.
 - f) Every once and a while, give the same item back after they drop it so they learn that the item does not always disappear.
 - g) Practice this as you go through the list of valued items.
 - h) Once your dog is reliably dropping things inside, start from the bottom of the list again and practice in different areas of your home
 - i) Then start from the bottom of the list again and practice outside
3. Practice – have a bunch of toys and treats ready and play the drop game. Knowing what your dog really likes and starting with things that he will drop easily and moving up to more desirable things is the best way to approach this game. Only play for about 5 minutes at a time to keep it fun and interesting for both of you
 4. Keep space in between you and your dog when asking for a “drop”. Don't try to take something out of your dog's mouth unless it is an actual emergency.
 5. Throw things – when your dog drops an item, throw the item that you have, whether it is a toy or food. It makes it more interesting for your pup and they will move away from the item that you want to pick up.
 6. Always pick up the item that your dog drops, even if you are playing. Let your dog get used to the idea that you will pick up the item and they just might get it back the next round.

7. Praise your dog – each time he drops an item, say “good!” or “yes!” and then give or throw the higher value item.
8. Do I have to trade or treat forever? No. First build the trust and the muscle memory and then treat or trade intermittently.

“Drop” for dogs who want to play “Chase Me”

Is your dog bouncing away from you when you ask for a drop? Is food or another toy not working for a trade? Have you ever chased your dog to get something back? Some dogs take our items to play the chase me game. This game is more rewarding than anything else you could trade with. So what do you do?

Turn around and walk away.

If you aren’t going to give attention and play the chase me game, then there is no point in the dog grabbing that item.

You can also do the following exercise to make these items less important to your dog and eliminate the chase:

1. Take the item that your dog covets (tea towels, socks, masks, mitts, etc) and have two to three on hand.
2. Call your dog, show the item and throw it
3. When your dog has it, ask for a drop and provide the same item – for example, if you threw a tea towel, ask for a drop and offer another tea towel
4. If your dog doesn’t drop the item, get up and walk away.
5. If your dog drops the item and takes the other, big praise.
6. Repeat this three or four times. You know this is working if your dog drops the item quickly when you ask. You may have to practice this a few days in a row – just for a few minutes each day.
7. When your dog is dropping reliably, take it to a different environment – especially outside or in another person’s home. Play the game again a few times.

*** Please do not play this game if your dog swallows the coveted items. This is only for dogs who hold the items and run with them. ***

“Touch” or Targeting

Targeting, or teaching your dog “touch” is a wonderful skill and is so easy to teach! “Touch” can help with loose leash walking (have your target beside your body and your dog will move there), for recall (for some reason dogs will listen to “touch” more often than “come”) and if you want to get your dog to move to a specific place (jump in the car, go to their bed, or even teach them to back up or move from one side to the other). This is also a key skill if you want to move your dog off of furniture without having to physically move them. It is also a great foundation for tricks!

Outline:

1. What will your “target” be? It is usually easiest to use your hand, a closed fist or even a sticky note if you want your dog to touch things such as bells to go outside or other tricks.
2. Put the target just in front of your dog’s nose.
3. As soon as your dog looks at the target (or even touches right away!) click or say “yes!” and treat.
4. Repeat #2 and #3 two or three times.
5. When your dog is readily putting her nose to the target, now say “touch!” when you present the target.
6. When the dog touches the target, click or say “yes!” and treat. Repeat two to three times with the addition of saying “touch!”.
7. ***LEVEL UP: Change location of the target (right hand to left hand), the height, and the distance between you and your dog.***
8. Work in short sessions, no more than 3-5 minutes at a time.