

It's A Dog's World™

K - 9 A C A D E M Y

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GROUP CLASS: Week 2

The goal for this lesson is to teach your dog to focus on you by introducing the “*Watch*” command, as well as teaching “*Sit*”, “*Leave It*”. You will also begin learning how to manage your dog’s behavior when walking on a leash.

WATCH

“*Watch*” is a fundamental and essential command for all dogs to know. Teaching your dog the “*Watch*” command teaches your dog to have good eye contact with you. Good eye contact keeps your dog focused on you, instead of other dogs, skateboards, or in general, various distractions that can excite or agitate your dog.

To teach the “*Watch*” command start by having a treat between your thumb and your index finger. Take the treat up to your eyes and give the command “*Watch*”. As soon as your dog makes eye contact with you praise your dog while giving him the treat. Gradually increase the amount of time that the dog is giving you the eye contact by having your dog give you the eye contact and delay the moment that you give the treat.

When you begin working on this command, train in a low distraction area. For example, work on this command while you are watching television in your living-room. Eventually increase the distraction level in the environment that you are working in. Your dog should be able to give you the “*Watch*” command while you are sitting in the waiting room at the veterinarian’s office or while at the park.

SIT

Start off by holding a treat between the thumb and index finger of your right hand. Put the treat on the tip of the dog’s nose. Draw the treat straight up the dog’s nose and in between the dog’s eyes and give the command “*Sit*”. Naturally, when the head goes up to follow the treat, your dog’s bottom should go down. Once the dog’s bottom hits the ground, release the treat into the dog’s mouth and say “Good sit!” Before you move your hand away, give the dog its release word.

By about the second day, you are going to take the treat and hold it in your left hand along with the leash. Pretend that you have the treat in your right hand. Lure the treat like you did previously. Once the dog’s bottom hits the ground, pop the treat into the dog’s mouth from **your left hand**. You are teaching the dog that the treat will not always come from your right hand.

Start using the hand signal for “*Sit*” after the third or fourth day. The hand signal starts with your arm straight at your side with your palm facing outward. Bending your arm at the elbow, bring your hand straight up (like you are tossing something over your shoulder).

By the third and fourth day, before you start your training session, hide treats in easily accessible spots in the area where you will be training. By now, your dog should know to sit on command. Stop luring with the treat and simply ask your dog to “*Sit*” while giving the hand signal. When asking your dog to sit, be sure to be near your hidden treats so that you may give the treat to your dog quickly upon successful completion of the behavior without you or the dog having to move. The dog has just learned that treats can come from your right hand, left hand or even from anywhere around where he or she is standing. This makes the dog want to work for you even though there isn’t a treat in your right hand!

By the end of the week, you are going to start weaning your dog off the treats. Give your dog a treat for every other good sit, then every third and finally for only the best sits. You are also going to try to get your dog to start holding the sit for longer and longer periods of time. Start by milking the treats out to your dog. You may have to continuously feed your dog treats at first. Slowly build up the time in between giving treats. Give a treat every second, then every 5 seconds, then every 15, and so on until you are giving only 1 treat out once a minute.

LOOSE LEASH WALKING (Let’s Go or Heel) W/AUTO-SIT

In order to eliminate weaving in and out of your legs as you walk, your dog needs to learn to always position himself on the same side of your body EVERY TIME! The traditional side for walking a dog is on your left side. From now on, you will always make sure your dog is on your left side before you start to walk. After awhile, this will become a habit for your dog and he will feel strange being in any other location.

As you did with the “*Sit*” command, start by placing a treat between your thumb and index finger. With your dog on your left side, put your right hand, with the treat, across your body by your left knee and in front of your dog’s nose. Take about five steps and have your dog follow you while you walk with the treat in this position repeating the command “*Heel*” or “*Let’s go*”. Fold the leash twice in your left hand and keep your left arm relaxed and loose at your side. You only need to walk a few steps, then stop and lure your dog into the sit position. Try not to say, “*Sit*,” when you stop because we want the dog to learn to perform this behavior automatically.

The hand signal for “*Let’s go*” is patting the left side of your leg as well as stepping off with your left foot. You can start using the hand signal straight away. By the third or fourth day, try to get your dog to pay attention to you by giving you good eye contact while you are walking. Do this by drawing the treat up from

your knee to your eyes while you are walking. You should no longer bend over and should be standing upright.

For the rest of the week, try to keep adding steps in between auto-sits (sitting automatically in the heel position). Practice making right and left turns, while saying “Let’s go” every time you change direction.

LEAVE IT COMMAND

There may be times when you need to get your dog’s attention BEFORE he or she gets something in his or her mouth, (e.g.- a dead bird, food, etc.) or if your dog becomes too fixated or focused on something (a cat, another animal, a person walking past your property, etc.) You are going to teach your dog to look at you every time you give the command, “*Leave it*”.

Step 1: To begin teaching the “*Leave it*” command, start by holding a “high value” treat in one hand. In your other hand, have several smaller reward treats. Keep the reward hand behind your back so that your dog doesn’t get distracted. Keeping the “*Leave it*” treat in your loosely closed hand, offer it to your dog and say, “*Leave it*”. Of course, your dog is going to try to get the treat out of your hand. Keep repeating “*Leave it*” and try not to pull your hand away from your dog. Your dog should eventually get frustrated and will usually look up at you as if to say, “What do I have to do to get this food?” As soon as your dog looks up at you, give verbal praise (“Good Leave It!”) and reward your dog with a treat from the hand behind your back. Keep repeating this until your dog immediately looks away from the hand that’s off limits.

Step 2: Once your dog is consistently looking away from the “*Leave it*” hand, it’s time to advance the concept. Put your dog on a leash, and toss the “*Leave it*” treat a couple of feet away from your dog. If your dog starts to move towards the treat, cover the treat with your hand or foot and give him a verbal correction (e.g. – “No!”) accompanied with a mild leash correction. Once your dog stops attempting to get the treat on the floor and looks at you, promptly reinforce him or her by giving your dog a treat from your reward hand along with verbal praise. Soon, your dog will understand to ignore the treat on the floor. Once this begins to happen, you can begin saying to your dog, “*Leave it*” as you toss a treat on the floor. You want your dog to learn that when s/ he hears “*Leave it*”, s/he comes to you for a reward rather than picking up what is on the ground.

Next, begin to watch your dog for signs of avoidance when you toss a treat on the ground. Signs of avoidance can vary from dog to dog. Watch carefully, or you may miss your dog’s cue for avoidance. Typically, most dogs will look away, look at you, or simply move its head away from the treat. Once you have determined that your dog is displaying signs of avoidance, immediately praise him or her and reward with a treat. When the response is reliable, you can introduce other items and practice “*Leave it*”

HOMEWORK

Work with your dog several times a day for only 10 – 15 minutes in each session. Keep your lessons upbeat and always end on a good note.

By the end of the week, you should be able to:

- Get your dog to perform sit without luring.
- Give the hand signal and verbal signal simultaneously.
- Work up to a one minute sit in your front yard - do not move any further than six to twelve inches from your dog.
- Get your dog to stay focused on you using the “*Watch*” command for up to a minute. Practice this command at random times throughout the day, regardless of what your dog is doing.
- Get your dog to walk alongside you, while you are standing upright, and follow through with the auto-sit.
- Practice the “*Leave It*” command using a variety of items in several different locations (e.g. - in the house, yard, sidewalk, etc.)

Do not give any corrections this week. Remember to have fun!!!