

It's A Dog's World™

K - 9 A C A D E M Y

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GROUP CLASS: Week 4

In this lesson you will start teaching your dog to wait at doorways that you specify as “off limits”. You will also learn how to introduce the “*Place*” & “*Down-Stay*” cues.

“WAIT” COMMAND

By teaching your dog “*Wait*”, your dog will begin to understand that s/he cannot go in or out of any door without first hearing the release word. “*Wait*” is different than “*Stay*” because unlike “*Stay*” where you are asking your dog to hold and maintain a particular obedience cue, “*Wait*” allows your dog to change physical positions and even walk away from a boundary. More simply, it means, “Don’t step over or through this boundary.”

STAGE 1: Start by walking toward the door and say “*Wait*”. It is important NOT to command your dog to stay or to heel at the door. As you go through the door, turn and face your dog, and use your body to block your dog from following you across the threshold. If your dog stops and hesitates, give your dog a treat. You can say, “Good Wait!” At this point, you can use your Release Word to allow your dog to come through the doorway, but Don’t Give your Dog a Treat (you don’t want your dog to think they are being rewarded for walking through the boundary you just set). Repeat this exercise at least five times.

After several successful “*Waits*” with your dog, repeat the exercise and start trying to take a step back, slowly. If your dog remains on the other side of the door jam, give a treat and praise. Continue until you are at the end of your six -foot leash. If your dog puts one toenail on the door jam, place your dog back across the threshold.

STAGE 2: Go back to the beginning of stage one. Do the body block, but now start to gently tug on the leash while you praise and give a treat. Steadily increase the pressure of your tug until you are pulling fairly hard. DO NOT JERK THE LEASH! Now continue the same process as in stage one until you can tug fairly hard at the end of the six-foot leash.

STAGE 3: Now, start eliminating the body block. Try to keep your back to your dog while you keep at least one eye on him or her. Also, start adding distractions.

STAGE 4: Your goal is to be able to run out the door and have your dog automatically stopping as you go through! Once you are able to achieve this, start getting more creative about setting your dog up. This means you can put your dog on a long line that has been pre-measured and is tied out to a sturdy object. Leave the room and go to an area where you can see if your dog attempts to go out the door. Again, you can get creative. Have a helper put your dog on the leash, while you are already hiding in a secure location on the other side of the door. If your dog attempts to go through the door, place him or her back over the threshold.

PLACE COMMAND

The “Place” command is designed to teach your dog to settle and stay in one area for up to two hours at a time, and is very similar to the “Go to Bed” command that most dogs may already know. While your dog is in their “*Place*” command, he or she can get up, turn around, lie back down, chew on toys, or do just about anything, except leave the area. You can use pet beds, old comforters, towels, sheets, rugs or even the crate to designate the place command. Just make sure that the area is big enough for your dog to lie on comfortably and not come off of easily. Most people like to use an old blanket, throw rug or small dog bed to designate the “place” because it is easy to take along on trips and to friend’s homes, etc. We recommend having more than one “*Place*” location in your home such as just outside the dining area, in your home office or workspace, and in the main area of the home where the family relaxes together in the evening. Keep in mind, though, that if you have more than one “*Place*” location in your home, you should probably assign each location a different word, such as “Bed”, “Pillow”, “Crate”, “Kennel”, etc. so that your dog doesn’t get confused about which area you want him to go to.

Start the session by having some treats so that you may reward your dog. In a friendly, happy tone of voice, command your dog, “*Place*” (or “Bed”, “Pillow”, etc.) while pointing to the area. Make sure the leash and collar are on your dog. When your dog gets into the area, say, “Good Place,” and give your dog a treat. Immediately release your dog with the release word. Keep repeating this at least five times. Now, start having your dog stay in the “place” for longer periods of time by “milking” the treats out. Give a treat and then two seconds later give another treat and so on, until your dog has been there for at least ten seconds.

Have your dog stay in the area for twenty seconds, then thirty and so on. Build your dog up to two hours! Once your dog has worked up to five minutes you can start moving the time span along much faster. If your dog makes a mistake, give a correction and place him or her back into the area. If your dog makes another mistake, go ahead and put him or her outside, in the dog run or in the crate. You are going to be teaching your dog that if they want to be in the house, they must be in the “place” command.

As your dog gets better at the command, start backing slightly further away from the area and command your dog to “place” from a greater distance. If you need to, you may lead your dog to the area. However, try to stop leading your dog as soon as you can. You may also set some treats in the area for your dog to find on their own once they have successfully done the place command. Or you can try tossing a treat to the area from where you are standing, trying to get your dog to go to the area on his or her own. Once you are able to get your dog to go to the area on his or her own from that distance, move back a little further. You can also try sitting down a few feet away, so your dog learns that they have to stay in their place, even if you aren’t standing up in front of them. The goal is to be able to be in any area of the home and tell your dog to do the place command. Your dog should run to the area on command without you leading him or her there.

In some situations, especially when there are a lot of distractions (guests in the house, sitting at the dinner table, cooking in your kitchen) you may want to help reinforce the positive aspect of the Place command by giving your dog something great to chew on, like a bone, Bully Stick, or other item that will keep your dog busy and less focused on what you are doing.

Keep in mind that the more consistent you are about having your dog do the place command, the more likely that your dog will automatically come in and lie down and behave!

DOWN-STAY

You may now start asking your dog to perform “*Down*” from a standing position. He or she does not have to be in the sitting position to start. Follow the directions for “Sit-Stay”. If your dog gets up, remember to step down on the leash. By the end of the week, your dog should be able to do a “*Down-Stay*” for two to five minutes.

HOMEWORK

- Get your dog to perform “*Down*” without luring.
- Have your dog perform “*Down*” from a standing position. Do not put your hand all the way to the ground for the down command; stand upright.
- Practice handling your dog and working on the “*Wait*” cue in different locations a little every day. Never allow your dog to go through the door or boundary without first hearing the release word.
- Have your dog go to his/her “*Place*” command for 10 minutes. Try sitting down while your dog is on “*Place*”. Don’t let your dog creep off the place location.
- Have your dog perform “*Sit-stay*” for two minutes and “*Down-stay*” for five minutes at the end of a six-foot leash in the front yard. Practice walking around your dog while in the “*Sit-Stay*” or “*Down-Stay*” positions. Practice in different situations and locations.

Remember you are still only working with your dog on the six-foot leash.

Don’t forget to keep your lessons upbeat. Always end on a good note and remember to have fun!!!