

It's A Dog's World™

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PRIVATE LESSON: WEEK 2

The goals for Lesson 2 are to learn how to give corrections properly for the commands that you taught your dog last week and to start teaching your dog “Down” and “Wait”. We will also teach you how to stop your dog from jumping.

TRAINING COLLARS

There are a number of styles of training collars available. The trick is to determine which type of collar best suits your dog's personality and temperament and facilitates the best result with the least amount of correction. Types of collars that are effective include head halters such as the Gentle Leader® or Halti® brands, as well as Martingale “check-chokes”. In addition, specialized training harnesses such as the Easy-Walk® or the Sense-ible® may also be effective, especially in controlling pulling.

Head halters fit over the dog's muzzle and snap snugly behind the ears. When you look at your dog from the side, the collar should form a “V”. Head halters work by gently guiding the dog's head in the direction you want to go and so they work especially well in preventing pulling behavior when walking. The Martingale collar is similar in appearance to a flat collar, except that it is connected by a small loop of chain, which causes a “ratchet” sound when the leash is pulled.

Training harnesses are designed to restrict a dog's forward movement because the leash attaches on the strap across the dog's chest. It restricts pulling, and in some cases, can reinforce other obedience cues by pulling up or down on the leash in the direction you want the dog's body to go.

Your trainer will help you select the best collar for your dog and fit it correctly. You may need to experiment with different collars to see which style achieves the best results.

CONSEQUENCES FOR BEHAVIOR

At this point, we have given your dog one week of nothing but praise and positive reinforcement in learning new behaviors. By now your dog should know the meaning of the words “Watch”, “Sit”, “Come” & “Let's go”. Beginning this week, you are no longer permitted to repeat your commands. Your dog has by the count of one to start the behavior and by the count of two to complete it. In other words, your dog only has two seconds to do the command.

When giving a correction, the most important thing is to be consistent. Always correct your dog the **first** time it doesn't follow your command. Correcting the dog one time and letting it get away with ignoring you the next time will only confuse the dog and encourage the dog to not listen to you in the future. The same is true for repeating your command multiple times before giving a correction. The dog learns that it probably doesn't have to listen to you until the third or fourth time you repeat the command.

Corrections, in the form of guiding the dog with the leash, are paired with the word, "No!" Never use the dog's name when you are correcting. For example, you don't want to say, "Fluffy! No!" This teaches the dog that its name is part of the negative reinforcement. When correcting the dog, it is also not necessary to yell or shout, "No!" It is more important to be firm, calm and matter-of-fact.

Corrections using the leash are given in the direction that you want the dog to go in. To correct for sit, you want to calmly and gently correct up on the leash and back towards the dog's tail. Remember, when the head goes up, the bottom goes down.

DOWN

You are going to start out with your dog in the "sit" command. You may want to have two treats in your hand, one to give for the sit and one to give for the down. Once your dog is sitting, take your second treat and place it on the tip of your dog's nose. At the same time, you are going to be bent down on your dog's right side. Place your left hand, with the leash in it, gently upon the dog's withers (shoulder blades). Do not push down on the withers. With the treat on the tip of the dog's nose, draw the treat straight down to the ground in between the dog's feet and give the command "down". It is important that the dog is following the treat. As the dog is following the treat, bring the treat straight out across the ground (you are making an "L" shape with the treat). It is important not to pull the treat straight out, as this will bring your dog into the stand position. Once your dog is lying down, release the treat while saying, "Good down!" Before moving your hand away, give your release word.

The hand signal for down is a palm to the ground as if you are pushing the dog's head toward the ground. Take your hand all the way down to the ground. Start using the hand signal after the third or fourth day.

For the rest of the week, continue working on the down command in the same fashion as the sit. Don't be disheartened if your dog appears to not want to perform "down" at first. This is the command that is least liked by some dogs, particularly if they are dominant, as it is a submissive posture.

WAIT COMMAND

Wait is meant to teach your dog to not go in or out of any door or opening without first hearing its release word.

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. Right as you get to the door, do a body block, placing yourself outside the doorway, keeping the dog inside. Say, "Yes!" and give your dog a treat. Repeat this at least five times. Now, 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 her. Also, start adding distractions.

STAGE 4: Your goal is to be able to run out the door, with your dog stopping you! 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 her back over the threshold.

By teaching your dog “Wait”, your dog will begin to understand that they cannot go in or out of any door without first hearing their release word.

JUMPING

There are a number of successful methods for correcting your dog from jumping on people. You may need to try a combination of methods to completely eliminate jumping behavior in your dog.

One method is to immediately turn your back on your dog **WITHOUT** moving away from the dog. Typically, your dog will stop jumping long enough to come around, face you and start jumping again. If this happens, turn your back on your dog again. Continue turning and keeping your hands calmly at your sides until your dog stops jumping. Once your dog stops jumping, praise or treat your dog. It is important that you do not give your dog any attention or praise until he is sitting or standing calmly. This will teach your dog that excited jumping behavior will not get him the attention he’s looking for.

Some persistent jumpers will happily continue to circle you or your guests while trying to jump for attention. If this is the case, you will probably need to keep a “grab tab” attached to the dog’s collar or keep the dog’s leash handy when company comes over. There are two ways to **STOP** your dog for jumping using a leash or grab tab.

First, attach your dog’s leash to his collar. Give your dog the “Sit” command before opening the door to let your guests in. Open the door to let your guests in, if your dog gets up, stop opening the door and re-direct your dog back into the sit command. Once your guests come in, give your dog a treat for staying in the sit position. Continue having your dog be in the sit position until your dog relaxes and no longer tries to jump. Ask your guests to ignore the dog until it calms down. At that point, release the pressure on the leash and give lots of praise and treats for the calm behavior. If the dog starts jumping again, repeat the exercise until your dog can sit or stand calmly with all four feet on the floor.

Watch for moments when your dog is standing on all four feet, or walks up to you or a guest and doesn’t jump up and give treats for it. Conversely, when your dog is jumping, giving your dog no attention at all will teach it that jumping does not get rewarded and the behavior will eventually diminish. **Never yell, try to push your dog down, put your knee into the dog’s chest, or play with your dog when it is jumping up.**

HOMEWORK

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

- Start separating verbal and hand signals.
- Have your dog perform commands the first time you ask, no repeating commands!
- Get your dog to work up to a 2-minute Down.
- Have your dog perform “Wait” at a variety of barriers (front door, kitchen, coming in the back door, etc.)

Remember to keep your lessons upbeat, practice in a variety of locations with increasing distractions and always end on a good note. Most importantly, don't forget to have fun!