

It's A Dog's World™

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PRIVATE LESSON: WEEK 3

The goals for Lesson 3 are to correct problem behaviors that you are experiencing with your dog as well as teach two new behaviors: the "Place" command, "Sit-Stay" & "Down-Stay" and "Stand".

PLACE COMMAND

The "place" command is designed to have your dog to stay in one area for up to two hours at a time. While your dog is in the place command, he or she can get up, turn around, lie back down, chew on toys, and do just about anything, except leave the area. You can use bedding, 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 comfortably on and not come off of easily. Most people like to use an old comforter or doggie bed to designate the "place" because it is easy to take along on trips and to friend's homes, etc. Have the "place" in a centralized location like your den or TV area, so your dog still feels like part of the family but you are able to relax and not worry about what your he or she is getting up to!

To start, have some treats available so that you may reward your dog. Give your dog the "place" command while pointing to the designated area. Make sure the leash and collar are on your dog. When your dog gets into the area, say, "good place" and give him or her a treat. Immediately release your dog with your release word. Repeat 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. Then, 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 leash 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.

Once you have built up to two hours, start backing slightly further away from the area and command your dog to its "place" from a greater distance. If you need to, 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. Your goal is to be able to be in any area of the home and tell your dog to go to his or her "place" on command. Your dog should eventually run to the area on command without you leading him or her there.

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

SIT-STAY

Start by having your dog in the “sit” position. Since your dog is already holding sit for up to one minute, it should be an easy transition to teaching “sit-stay”. Give your dog the hand signal, which is a flat palm to the face, and tell your dog to, “sit-stay”. Give your dog a treat. Keep giving your dog a treat about every five seconds, then every ten seconds, then every fifteen, and so on. You are also going to start building distance. Slowly, take one step back and give your dog a treat. Then take two steps back and give your dog a treat. Continue until you are at the end of the six-foot leash. If your dog gets up, you may give a “sit” correction. If you are at the end of your six-foot leash, you may need to step into the dog. By the end of the week, your dog should be able to do a sit stay for two minutes.

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. You also do not need to go all the way down to the ground when giving the hand signal. Try giving the hand signal about a foot off the ground, then two feet, and so on until you are standing completely upright. 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 five minutes.

STAND

The purpose of the “Stand” command is to teach your dog to stand calmly for grooming or examination by your vet. Start by having your dog sit parallel to the front of your body. Hold a treat in your right hand and place it near your sitting dog’s nose. Slowly draw the treat away from your dog in a horizontal straight line, level with their back. Try not to raise the treat too high because this may cause your dog to jump. Lure the treat a foot or two away from your dog and as your pet gets up to follow it, say the command “Stand”. Stop luring and hold the treat at your standing dog’s nose for a second or two while repeating the command, then reward and praise your dog.

PROBLEM SOLVING

There are three strategies that you can use to solve any behavioral problem that your dog may display. They are:

1. Shapers. Shapers are anything that you can use that works with the dog’s natural senses of taste, touch and smell to correct or prevent your dog from bad behavior. Good examples of a taste shaper are: peppers, vinegar, alum, Bitter Apple® spray, Ben Gay®, Listerine®, chili oil, Tabasco sauce, Vicks Vapo-Rub® and more. To test a taste shaper, apply the solution to one of your dog’s favorite toys. If s/he avoids the toy, you know that it will work on other objects as well. Good examples of a smell shaper are: the dog’s own defecation, vinegar, and store bought repellents. Smell shapers can work well at keeping your dog from entering garden areas. Good examples of touch shapers are: chain link fence, chicken wire, aluminum foil, double-sided tape, or wax paper. Touch shapers such as chicken wire can be used in a hole that your dog has been digging in. Double-sided tape works well at keeping your dog from jumping up on furniture or on counters.

2. Interrupters. Interrupters should not appear to be coming from you, even though you are actually administering the correction. Examples of interrupters are: shake can, air horn, water/squirt bottle, whistle, and more. Shake cans, air horns and squirt bottles can work well for jumping problems.

3. Booby traps. Some booby traps you need to reset and some reset themselves. Examples of booby traps are:

- Tattle Tale – is a motion sensor that teaches pets to stay away from areas that you don't want them to be....like your kitchen counter tops, your dining room table, your furniture, or can be place inside of shoes, or attached to the t.v. remote control.
- Scat Mat® - is a mat that will give a mild correction once your pet comes into contact with it....like your furniture, counter tips, etc.
- Scraminal® - is like the Tattle Tale expect it also has a heat sensor built in. This is may be more practical to use in areas where motion is not going to make the device activate.
- ScareCrow® - is a motion sensor that works off of your garden hose and emits a spray of water when a pet comes into an unwanted area.
- Citronella collars – are collars that the dog wears and involves no pain, yet works with the dog's five senses; he hears it, feels it, sees it, and smells it. The Gentle Spray® Citronella Bark collars can be used for unwanted barking, or there is also the Spray Commander® Remote Trainer that has a remote hand held control unit. It can be used to deter digging, getting into trash, stealing food from the counter, etc.
- SSSCat Kit – is a motion sensor that sprays a pet when they enter into an unwanted area. It works well to keep your pet from furniture, from a window seat where the dog is barking at the neighborhood, from counter tops, and more.

Remember that it is very important when interrupting your dog's unwanted behaviors that you offer and teach your dog what the acceptable alternative behavior is, and then reward your dog when they perform the new behavior successfully. If you simply interrupt the behavior without redirecting to the acceptable behavior, your dog won't know what you want and they will go back to what they are used to doing.

HOMEWORK

- Work on the place command. Continue lengthening the time your dog is in its Place. Practice sitting down across the room while your dog is in Place.
- Have your dog do a Sit-Stay for two minutes and a Down-Stay for five minutes at the end of a six-foot leash in the front yard.
- Have your dog do a down from a standing position. Do not put your hand all the way to the ground for the down signal; stand upright.
- Get your dog to "Stand" without a treat from both a sitting and down position.

Don't forget to keep your lessons upbeat and always end on a good note and remember to have fun!