



## HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

### Intermediate Obedience for Dogs

#### Handout #2

##### Targeting

Targeting is a very useful tool in training. This skill teaches your dog to associate receiving a reward for just touching a simple object. The object may be your hand, finger, or even a stick. Through this process you are able to shape their behavior with willing participation. Once the behavior is easily performed, the final step is pairing the entire behavior with a cue (word).

- Begin with the dog close to you.
- Hold small food treat in left hand.
- Hold right hand palm open, in front of and close to dog's nose.
- When dog looks at, licks, or touches your open palm with his nose say "yes" or another verbal positive marker you choose and deliver food treat from left hand.
- Repeat several times.
- Once dog is reliably offering behavior (touching) add a verbal cue, say dog's name then cue; "Buster, touch" = dog's nose makes contact = "yes" or "good dog" = deliver food reward.
- Fine tune touches by rewarding only when dog touches with nose.
- Practice targeting hand at various short distances.
- As dog becomes comfortable with this exercise, increase distance and alter positions (add back of hand).
- Add other objects to touch or target. A stick, paddle or pointer.

##### Targeting Tips

- ✓ If dog does not touch your hand
- ✓ Move hand closer to his face / nose
- ✓ Rub treat on palm of targeting hand, (dog will follow smell)
- ✓ Tap the inside of your palm with your left index finger

##### Finish

This cue will be part of a complex behavior; "Front and Finish". Having already worked on an automatic front sit following a recall cue the finish will complete the behavior. The goal being to have your dog move from in front of you to circle your right side going around and behind you and ending up sitting squarely by your left side. Here is where you will apply your target training.

- Begin with your dog in front position (do not include the recall at this point)
- Cue a right hand touch (back of hand or palm or closed hand, mix it up and keep it fun).
- Reward nose touches with "yes" or "good dog", then deliver small food reward.
- Slowly move right hand around to your side and behind you, rewarding touches along the way (hold food treat in closed palm of right hand). You may also offer

- the food reward from your other hand if this is more comfortable for you, just be careful your dog should only follow and touch the target hand.
- To make it more comfortable for you and more accessible for nose touches you should acclimate your dog to back of hand touches.
  - As dog is circling around you use your left hand to complete the half circle.
  - You may also drop a food treat from your left hand on to the ground beside you (left side) to entice the dog to complete the half circle around you.
  - Repeat this part of the exercise until the dog is making fluid 180 degree turns around you coming to a stop by your left side.
  - Once dog is reliably offering behavior (circling), add a sit cue to the end as he stops at your left side.
  - Dog circles around behind you stops at your left side; “Buster, sit” = dog sits “good dog” = deliver food treat.
  - Repeat several times.
  - Once dog is reliably offering behavior (circling), with sitting at your left side. Introduce the Cue “Finish” and start at the beginning from “Front”.
  - Dog is sitting straight in front of you; “Buster, Finish” (you can use whatever verbal cue you choose) = dog circles around behind you and sits at your left side = “good dog” (marker) = deliver food treat.
  - Fine tune both behaviors as the dog becomes more comfortable with the exercise. Reward ONLY fluid circles and straight sits as your dog improves at each level.

### **Finish Tips**

- ✓ A short step forward and to your left makes it easier for your dog to complete his move around you.
- ✓ Make your body movements, only as necessary to get the dog around you and then phase these moves out as soon as possible.
- ✓ Try to keep a smooth rhythm as you begin to chain the behaviors together (front, finish and ending with sit).
- ✓ Mark a T on the ground where you are working or make a T bar out of small PVC tubing. This will give you a guide as to placement for completing a straight sit.

### **Front and Finish**

Now you put it all together. Start with a recall cue when your dog is off leash. Dog returns to you sits straight in front of you (close enough that you can touch him without bending or moving a lot, except very small breeds). On cue completes a 180 degree circle around your right side to sit at heel position on your left side.

This behavior is a series of separate behaviors chained together. Each behavior must be trained separately while keeping in mind the context of the final product. Each step should be shaped into a reliable, well positioned behavior before moving forward to the next step. This training may take your dog some time to perfect but it will also be important to not stay at a sub - adequate level for too long and therefore reinforcing that behavior. Work towards straight sits and prompt cue delivery and completion of cue.