



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Basic Obedience for Dogs

Handout #1

Name Recognition

Use this exercise to ensure your pet will recognize and respond to his name in any situation. Good name recognition is an important safeguard for your pet just like a good recall. Start by saying your dog's name frequently and rewarding him when he looks at you. Positive reinforcement should be a small food reward or whatever motivates your dog. Once your dog is reliably looking at you each time you say his name add a different tone to your voice: playful, excited, rushed, loud, soft, happy, angry. Your voice naturally changes with daily life and reflects whatever may be going on at the time. Conditioning your dog to respond to his name by fluctuating your voice will reassure him no matter what you sound like good things (food treats) are going to happen. Never abuse this trust by calling your dog to you for punishment. If your dog needs to be interrupted from an undesired behavior use an interruption cue such as clapping your hands loudly and go towards your dog to move him away or distract him from the environment or ongoing behavior. Name recognition and recall cues must always result in a positive outcome for your dog to be successful.

Watch Me

Pair name recognition with a watch me cue for a powerful attention tool. This tool will help to calm your dog in stressful situations and build confidence and develop trust.

- Encourages attention
- Helps your dog focus
- Hold a treat in front of your dog's nose (almost touching), and slowly move the treat from his nose to your nose.
- As eye contact is made deliver treat, finish with verbal praise "good dog". If your dog is uncomfortable with direct eye contact focus on another facial feature.
- Reward anytime your dog looks at you.
- Once your dog is reliably looking at you add the verbal cue; "Buster, Watch me" = dog looks at you = deliver food treat = "Good Dog".
- Practice this exercise often.

Sit

- Teach your dog to sit instead of jumping up.
- Hold a small treat just in front of your dog's nose.
- Take treat upwards and backwards, over the top of dog's head, slowly.
- As head follows food up and back the rear end will drop into a sitting position.
- Deliver food treat as soon as the dog sits. Finish with verbal praise "good dog".
- Once dog is reliably offering behavior (sitting) add a verbal cue, say dog's name then cue; "Buster sit" = dog sits = treat = "good dog".

- To further encourage this behavior at home simply wait for the behavior to happen during everyday life and be prepared to positively reinforce with a small food treat this is called free shaping. Free shaping is also a great primer to work on before you begin to teach sit and a great way to keep the behavior strong after training the cue.

Down

- Cue dog into sit.
- Hold a treat in front of the dog's nose.
- Move the treat slowly and smoothly down and out between dog's front paws.
- Dog's nose will follow treat and lure him into a lying down position.
- Deliver treat once dog is down. Finish with verbal praise "good dog".
- Once dog is reliably offering the behavior (down) add a verbal cue, say dog's name then cue; "Buster down" = dog lies down = treat = "good dog".
- To further encourage this behavior at home simply wait for the behavior to happen during everyday life and be prepared to positively reinforce with a small food treat this is called free shaping. Free shaping is also a great primer to work on before you begin to teach down and a great way to keep the behavior strong after training the cue.

Loose Leash Walking

- Begin walking. Don't wait for your dog, encourage your dog to follow you by holding a small food treat in your hand with your arm straight down by your side. Deliver food treat occasionally as dog walks beside you.
- Keep an open line of communication with your dog, don't leave him guessing. Talk to your dog, encourage him and offer verbal praise.
- When dog pulls ahead change direction; offer verbal encouragement "Buster" = dog follows = treat (at knee level) = "good dog".
- Anytime your dog looks up at you while walking, praise and reward.
- You want to encourage him to look to you for direction.
- Once your dog is reliably offering the desired behavior add the verbal cue; "Buster, Let's go".
- To further encourage this behavior at home use this same technique without a leash (in the safety of your home). This behavior should also be rewarded when it happens on its own. Another example of shaping and is a great primer to work on before you begin teaching loose leash walking and a great way to keep the behavior strong after training.

NOTE

Toys may be used as rewards if your dog is not interested in food.

A food reward should be something very yummy and used only for training not as a non specific treat.

Additional equipment such as gentle leaders and front hook harnesses can be helpful with dedicated leash pullers.