



"Come", "Sit", "Stay" and "Down" are among the first exercises taught in basic obedience. Teaching your dog to respond to these commands regardless of distractions can take time and be challenging. Remember, repetition and positive reinforcement are key to your success. Have your treats handy and be patient. Keep all training sessions short, and always end on a positive note.



TREATS:
remember, reserve treats as
rewards for training!

"come."



*The most important command you will ever teach your dog is "come."
Start teaching in your home or in a fenced area.*

- Squat down and call your dog's name in a happy, lively voice while gently clapping your hands. Most dogs will come to you quickly if called in this way. Avoid calling his name over and over to get a response. When your dog reaches you, praise him by saying "good" and while gently taking hold of the collar, reward him with a small treat (needs to be small and tasty).
- Repeat this step until your dog consistently comes to you when he is called. If he is slow to come you can use a long training line in a quieter area to get and keep his attention. The line prevents him wandering away. Voice, not pull, is used to get him to come. Don't use an unfriendly voice if he is slow. He needs to want to come. Some dogs respond better to a toy and brief play more than a treat
- After a week or two of success, call your dog as before, but say "come" when your dog is almost to you. This will teach your dog to associate the command "come" with the act of returning to you. Using a small treat and lots of praise makes this behavior easy for your dog to learn. Consider three to five sessions per day, with five to ten repetitions per session.
- Once this is mastered you can start to practise when he is distracted by other dogs/people



"sit."

"Sit" is a really important command for your dog to learn. It promotes good behaviour and control and is taught easily, but needs practice so that it will be obeyed even when there are distractions .

- To avoid distraction, find a quiet spot where your dog can focus more easily. When training a small dog or puppy it is best to kneel so that you don't tower over them.
- Take a treat in your hand and make a fist. Hold your fist directly in front of the dog's nose. Let your dog sniff it. Slowly bring your hand over the top of your dog's muzzle and head (don't hold the fist too high or you'll end up teaching him to jump!).
- Most dogs will lift their head in an attempt to follow your hand. As the dog shifts his body to follow your hand, he will automatically sit. The moment your dog sits reward, pet and praise.
- After several days of success, add the command "sit" the moment your dog begins to move into the sit position. This will teach your dog to associate the command "sit" with the act of sitting. Try teaching this in three to five sessions per day, with five repetitions per session.
- Once this is mastered you can start to practise when he is distracted by other dogs/people

TREATS: once training has been successful, praise consistently, but only occasionally give a treat as a reward.



“sit-stay”

Do not train your dog the command “sit-stay” until he has mastered the command “sit”. Teaching a dog to stay is really important for safety and emergency situations, as well as general control.

- This command is difficult for some dogs as they may get anxious. Make sure you practice this in a safe area away from roads and other hazards.
- To start, ask your dog to “sit.” Remember to praise him, but do not give your dog a treat at this stage. While the dog is sitting wait three seconds, then giving the signal with a raised index finger, say “stay” and wait another two seconds. At that point, softly praise your dog and give him a treat.
- Repeat the exercise, and gradually increase the duration that your dog stays in place in increments of five to ten seconds.
- Once your dog will comfortably stay for a minute before a reward, you can add distance. To accomplish this, repeat the exercise, but this time, after you command your dog to “sit”and “stay”, take one step back. Wait five seconds, and then step back to the dog before praise and treats as a reward. If he breaks from his position, calmly put him back in position and begin again.
- Slowly increase the distance and the duration that your dog stays in place over a number of sessions. When moving away, give a clear signal and make your movements calm and steady. Briefly pause while holding your dogs attention before swiftly returning. Praise and reward are held off until you have reached him. Increase the amount of treat rewards as the duration and distance increases. Consider five sessions per day with just a few repeats per session.

“Down”

- Start in sit position and then hold a treat in your fist, close to your dogs nose
- Move your hand slowly and steadily down towards the ground and hold it in that position until he naturally settles into a ‘down’ position (with a more lively dog it may help to have him on a lead, which you can tuck in under your foot to keep him from wandering away)
- As soon as he is flat on the ground, say ‘down’ and release the treat and praise
- When he is more used to the procedure you can start to use a hand moving downward gesture to get him into position without having to bend down yourself
- You will then be able to give the reward treat and praise from a standing position

Training should be fun for you and your dog!

REMEMBER

DON'T OVERDO THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IN TRAINING- YOU MAY END UP WITH A LESS MOTIVATED AND BORED DOG. FREQUENT SHORT SESSIONS WILL GET THE BEST OUT OF HIM!