



# Beginner Class One

## A Few Facts About Your Dog

Your pet has a very unique way of viewing the world. They are playful, easily distracted, balls of energy that may have some habits we'd like to work on or prevent. Knowing a few key things will help you train your puppy and get the quickest results.

- **You have 3 seconds** to praise or punish before your dog no longer understands what you're so excited or upset about.
- **Dogs need consistency!** Everybody in the house needs to agree on the rules for the household pets and everybody needs to follow them. If a dog is allowed on the couch one time, they think they are allowed on the couch all the time.
- Dogs need **120 repetitions** of something before they truly comprehend a command.
- **Dogs communicate mostly through body language** and very little verbally. This is why we train with hand signals first, because they are easier for your dog to understand. Once your dog understands what we want, we will add the verbal command.
- Dogs are not capable of feeling guilt.
- When a trainer speaks of socializing your dog, it's not just to other animals and people, but also to locations. Puppies need to be exposed to all sorts of different places (After they have had their 4th set of shots) so that they can be well rounded individuals.
- The three forms of attention are: **Visual** (eye contact), **Physical** (touching) and **Vocal** (spoken)

## Getting Your Dog To Respond To The Clicker

Clicker training is an excellent way for you to bond with your dog. It provides a sound that marks correct behaviors and can eventually help you remove the need for treats every time your dog obeys a command. Here's a good way to get your dog used to the clicker:

- Click the clicker and immediately give a treat to your dog, no matter what it is doing. Keep doing this until your dog instantly pays attention to you when you click.
- Wait for your dog to start looking away from you then click. If your dog instantly looks back at you, reward it with a treat!
- Wait for your dog to wander off before clicking again. If your dog comes back to you quickly, then your dog is ready to train with a clicker!

After your dog is used to the clicker, here's how you use it in training:

- When the dog performs a behavior that you want them to do, use the clicker immediately as your dog does the action and give them a treat within 3 seconds of the behavior (example: Dog sits = Click + Treat)

## **Teaching “Sit”**

Teaching your dog to sit is the base for many other commands. We teach with hand signals first so the dog does not get confused and ignore you when you give the verbal command. We want your dog to obey you the first time you say sit! For this first week, you will not being say the word “Sit” at all. Let’s get started:

- Hold a small, soft treat in your hand between your thumb and index finger
- With your palm facing the ceiling, lower your hand so the treat is in front of your dog’s nose
- Slowly lift your hand upwards, luring your dog’s nose to follow the treat and look up
- When your dog looks up, he should sit down on the floor
- Click your clicker and give your dog the treat within 3 seconds of the sit

Your dog needs to understand that the hand signal you are using is related to the sitting action before you use the word “sit”. Spend your first week of training using only the hand signal until your dog responds to it every time. When you are ready to add the word to your hand signal, here’s what to do:

- Use your hand signal and say the word “Sit” at the same time
- If your dog responds correctly, click your clicker and give your dog a treat within 3 seconds
- If your dog does not respond, put your hand behind your back for 10 seconds and try again

Whatever you do, do not repeat the word “sit” multiple times in a row. Dogs do not understand that you are repeating a command, but instead, all they hear is “Sitsitsitsitsitsit”, which teaches them to ignore the command instead. Your dog should sit before meals, before you open the door, while out on walks, etc. The more you practice, the better your pet will become.

## **Teaching “Watch”**

While “Watch” doesn’t seem like a very important command to many people, it can be a very useful and versatile skill to have. “Watch” gets your dog’s attention and is used to achieve the advanced command “Heel”, it’s also a very fun trick to show off to your friends. There are reasons beyond even that, because the “Watch” command helps your dog get comfortable with eye contact, which is considered a threat in the doggy world. This command has a hand signal that we will use for the first week before adding the verbal command, just like we did with “sit”. To start the watch hand signal, here’s what you do:

- Hold out a small, soft treat between your thumb and middle finger, with your index finger pointing down. Make sure your hand is lowered so that it is at your dog’s nose.
- Roll your hand up so that your index finger taps your nose
- As soon as your dog’s eyes look at yours and you gain eye contact, click and give them the treat

You should be able to get your dog to look you in the eye before too long using this hand signal. For the first week, you will not be giving any verbal command at all. Eventually, you can lengthen the time of the eye contact by tapping your nose with your finger before giving them the treat. After a week of practice, when you’re ready to add the verbal command, here’s what to do:

- Use your hand signal and say the word “Watch” at the same time
- If your dog responds correctly, click your clicker and give your dog a treat within 3 seconds
- If your dog does not respond, put your hand behind your back for 10 seconds and try again

## **Helpful Training Tips:**

If you find yourself getting frustrated with a lack of progress, give your dog an easy command that they do almost automatically and end the session on a good note. Your frustration can feed into your dog and make training less fun than we want. It's better to walk away for a little while and come back to it when everybody is feeling better.

- When giving your dog a command, do not ask it to do something. Make sure your voice is gentle yet firm, showing that you expect it to be done
- Make sure you are displaying proper posture when working with your dog! Slouching = submissive! Keep your shoulders back and your spine straight with your head up.
- Make sure the collar is appropriately sized, allowing two fingers of space, no more and no less.
- Just because your dog is cute doesn't mean they deserve treats! Make your dog work for EVERYTHING you give them!
- A bottle full of water set to "Stream" is effective in interrupting poor behavior. Once you have interrupted this behavior, immediately give your dog a command to prevent them from returning to the undesired behavior.
- Play with your dog's feet, ears, mouth and tail. By using treats when you touch these parts of the body, your dog will find it less stressful. Conditioning them to be used to these touches will make it easier for you to trim nails and for your vet to do an oral exam and get your dog's temperature.