



# LEAVE IT

Leave it is a skill that can save your dog's life and is extremely important in our training routine. This command tells your dog to leave something alone before they put it in their mouth. This command is

incredibly helpful with dogs who like to chase squirrels, eat cat poop, play chase with unsuspecting toddlers, or even stop your dog from eating medication you may have accidentally dropped. Since your dog will not be looking at you when you give this command, there is no hand signal. We learn this command with two games to help your dog best understand what it means.

## Game #1

- Stand or sit on a chair
- Show your dog a treat and let them get a good sniff of it
- Place the treat under your foot (Be sure to wear shoes!)
- As your dog is sniffing at your shoe and trying to get the treat, say the words "Leave it" in a firm tone (space out the commands to every 10 seconds so the dog has a chance to respond)
- **As soon as your dog looks away** from the treat and looks at you, use your clicker and give your dog a treat (not the one under your shoe)

This helps your dog understand what reaction you are looking for. Once you have given the command to "Leave it", **it is very important that you never let your dog get the treat under your foot**. Once you've repeated this game and your dog understands to look at you when they hear "Leave it" then it's time for the second game.

## Game #2

- Stand on the handle of your dog's leash, giving them the full length of it to move around
- Let your dog see a treat in your hand then toss a treat out onto the floor (Make sure it is outside your dog's reach)
- Only after **making sure that your dog cannot reach the treat**, use the command "Leave it"
- When your dog turns their head to look at you or pulls away from the treat on the floor, make sure to use your clicker and reward them with a treat

A note about Leave it:

- **Once you have told your dog to "Leave it", they are not allowed to have it.** This is a lifesaving skill and leave it means **FOREVER**, not just for a little while. When you are done playing the games, make sure you pick up the treats you practiced with and put them back into your pouch for later use.

After a week of practice with just treats, we will begin to branch out the command to include other items. During this time, **make sure you only use the "Leave it" command when you**

**have full control of your dog.** Dogs don't generalize well, which means that you have to teach them "Leave it" means more than just treats, but also other things.

- Start inside the house with socks, shoes, kid's toys, etc. Keep your dog on the leash and use your leave it command with these items
- Graduate to things outdoors like squirrels, other dogs, running children, etc. **Make sure you are constantly giving your dog treats for leaving these new things alone**
- Ultimate test: A burger!! (Do not attempt the ultimate test unless you have done amazingly well with the lower level items. I do not suggest giving pets food meant for human consumption)