



# Beginner Class Five

## Teaching Your Dog Stay Part Two

Now that you've practiced staying still and adding time to our command, it's time to add distance and space. Make sure you go slowly with this since dogs can get confused and frustrated, remember that training should be fun and enjoyable for both you and your dog! Here's how to add distance:

- Get your dog into the "Sit" position
- Facing the flat of your palm towards the floor with your hand positioned over your dog's head, use the command "Stay"
- Move **half a step** back. Don't move a full step, don't leap backwards, make sure it is a small, easy amount when we are first beginning.
- If your dog remains in their spot, use your clicker, **return to your dog** and give them a treat!

The key to this is making sure you return to your dog after stepping away. Real world applications of this command mean that you won't always be backing away from your dog. Sometimes you'll need them to stay while you approach, or when you're unloading groceries. Once your dog is comfortable with the half step, continue on:

- When your dog remains still after the first half step backwards, take the second half step using your other foot
- Use your clicker, return to your dog and give them a treat!

You want to feel like you're doing the moon walk rather than backing away from your dog. Here are some additional notes:

- Practice slowly moving further away as you succeed, making sure that you change up the length of distance so your dog doesn't know how far away you'll go this time.
- Keep your steps tiny and continue returning to your dog at the start position.
- **Don't go further away than your dog is comfortable with!** If you go back too far, your dog will get up and ruin the stay command. We want more successes than failures!
- **Don't call your dog to come to you while learning stay.** This can confuse your dog about which command they are receiving a treat for. "Stay" means "*sit still*", it doesn't mean "*sit still until I call you to come.*"

**Release word:** A release word is a word, or set of words, that you can use when you know that your dog will get up before you can return to them. When you are at a distance, you can use the release word to let your dog know it's safe to get up and end the "Stay" they were doing. When thinking of a release word, make sure it's not something you say all the time, make it unique! My favorite release word is "Free Dog" because I never use it outside of training.

## **Additional Training**

There are other things you can do to make sure that your dog is well behaved. One of my favorite things to do is to link commands together. Here is a few examples of that:

- Tell your dog to “Come” and once they arrive, make them “Sit” before being rewarded. Make sure you use the clicker when each individual command is successful.
- Tell your dog “Let’s go” and when you pause in your walk, give them the “Sit” command. This can help your dog behave themselves when you’re waiting to cross the street and help you create good habits.
- Keep practicing “Stay” with your clock positions to get a more reliable behavior.

## **How To Use Less Treats**

By this point your dog should be obeying most of the commands without needing a treat. Your praise and petting should be reward enough for good behavior. Clickers can replace the use of treats for those of you who enjoy using yours. **Don’t stop cold turkey!** It’s not fair to your dog that they should work so hard and not get paid every once in a while. Instead, slowly wean your pet off of the treats by only rewarding faster response times or when their **position is exceedingly good**. Use games or walks as rewards for good behavior, teaching your dog that we gets to go exploring more when we doesn’t pull at the leash or comes when they’re called to. **Remember: Never stop rewarding for your “Come” command!**

**Good luck and never stop practicing!**

**We hope to see you again in Beyond Beginner Intermediate Class**