



# Beginner Class Two

## Teaching Your Dog “Leave It”

Leave it is a skill, which 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)

## Teaching Your Dog “Drop It”

Drop it is the command you use when your dog already has something in their mouth. This is also a lifesaving command and can be used to make your dog drop something dangerous which they have picked up, such as glass, medications or other items. This is also a great command for fetch and fun games too.

- Offer a toy to your dog (whatever type of toy is their favorite)
- Play with your dog for a few seconds and wait until they have the toy in their mouth
- Hold a treat in front of your dog's nose and say “drop it”
- As soon as your dog drops the toy for the treat, use your clicker and reward your dog

Notes about Drop It:

- **Don't let your dog drop anything into your hand.** Always let them drop the item onto the floor because you never know what it could be! (Gross!!)
- When practicing with a toy, make sure you take the toy and hide it behind your back for a little while before beginning again. Anytime your dog drops it, that item is yours now

## Teaching “Down”

To teach your dog “Down”, it should already know the “Sit” command. **This command is to get your dog to lay down and should not be confused with “Off”** (the command to get your dog to stop jumping, get off the couch, etc.) Let's get started:

- Give your dog the command to sit
- Hold the treat in your hand and rotate the “Sit” hand signal until your palm faces the floor
- **Slowly** begin lowering your hand **straight** downwards
- When your dog is laying down, use your clicker and give them a treat

Sometimes dogs do not feel comfortable in a new place (or at the vet clinic) and will choose not to obey this command. For this reason, it's best to start this in a place where your dog is relaxed and comfortable, like home. Some dogs are even picky about the type of flooring they lay down on, preferring carpet better than the cold floor. Other dogs only seem to get halfway down before they pop right back up! If your dog is like that, follow these steps:

- Give your dog the command to sit
- Hold the treat in your hand and rotate the “Sit” hand signal until your palm faces the floor
- **Slowly** begin lowering your hand **straight** downwards
- When your dog lowers their head, use your clicker and give them a treat
- Repeat this, with your dog getting steadily lower before you use your clicker and give them a treat until they eventually lay completely down

After a week of practicing silently without using the verbal command, it'll be time to add the word "Down" to the hand signal. Here's what to do:

- Use your hand signal and say the word "Down" 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

## **Teaching "Take It"**

Take it shows your dog what they are allowed to put in their mouth. This helps your dog understand what toys are theirs and can assist with issues chewing. It's also incredibly easy! Here's how to do it:

- Hold a treat in your hand
- Offer it to your dog and say "Take it"

Once your dog understands this command, you can begin using toys instead of treats. **Play with your dog, because play is a reward in itself** and it will show your dog just how fun that object can be!