



# PLACE / MAT

## PLACE / MAT PART ONE

Teaching your dog “place” is an excellent way to help them settle down. You can teach your dog to go to their place when you have company over, or a spot to keep them in public, which can help increase confidence in unusual situations. Many tricks can begin with “place” as well as other activities, such as agility.

Place is a mat, bed, or blanket that you can easily take with you anywhere you go with your dog, and that you will teach your dog to lie down on, on cue. The more comfortable the mat, the easier the training will be. It is best to start with a brand new item that your dog has never seen or used before, since this will become their special space.

- Lay your mat on the floor, when your dog sniffs it, looks at it or shows any interest at all, click and put the treat on the mat
- Practice this for a while, rewarding any behavior – EXCEPT for grabbing it!

Having your dog see their mat as a positive experience is very important. We want them to enjoy seeing this particular item

- If your dog begins offering behaviors, like sitting on the mat, or standing on it, use your clicker and give them a treat.
- If your dog begins laying down on the mat, use your clicker and give them a special, high value treat!
- If your dog does not offer behaviors, use your down cue, and ask them to lay down on the mat. When they do, click and give them a special, high value treat
- After you have given your dog the down cue about 6 times, pause and see if your dog will lay down on their own. If they do, click, and reward your dog with 2-3 special, high value treats.

We want your dog to understand that any behavior on the mat is rewarded but laying down gets the best rewards.

**Remember:** Do not use any cue with this behavior yet

## PLACE / MAT PART TWO

Now that your dog is offering behaviors on their mat, it's time to make it harder!

- Get your dog to lay down on their mat
- Give your dog a release cue, move a few steps away from their mat.
  - If your dog gets off of the mat, stand quietly and ignore them.
  - If your dog returns to the mat, use your clicker and begin giving treats again as before.

Repeat the step above multiple times, giving the cue and walking away from the mat. Slowly begin to increase the distance you step away from their mat. Don't forget to also approach your dog while they're on their mat.

When your dog is consistent about returning and laying down on the mat each time, you can start adding time to the "Down on the mat" behavior. Even if your dog is great at stay regularly, you must treat this as a new behavior, so only do a few seconds at a time. If your dog gets off the mat before you give the release cue, pick up the mat and ignore them for about 30 seconds, then lay down the mat and try again. **Do not use the cue "Stay" during this.**

When your dog will go to their mat and lay quietly on it for an extended period of time, you can finally add your verbal cue "Place" or "Mat".

- Practice sending your dog to their "Place" from longer and longer distances, and eventually, anywhere in the house.

Finally, after your dog will go to their "Place" from anywhere in the house, you can begin adding distractions, like clapping or jumping and slowly work up to harder, more difficult ones like running children.