

Cueing Our Dogs (Hand and Voice)

Attention

Asking for your dog's attention is critical to your dog's learning and training. An easy way to start attention training is to quietly observe your dog. Whenever you notice him giving you attention, reward your dog with praise or a treat (food or petting) or whatever your dog finds enjoyable. Wait for his gaze to catch yours – and reward. Repeat this activity and then quietly add the cue for his attention – say WATCH when he gazes into your eyes. Reward him when he does.

Name Game

Building on the Cue for attention is the Name Game. This can be played any place the dog finds you interesting, like in the kitchen. Say your dog's name once, then immediately give him a tasty treat. Do this a dozen times in a row. Now say his name again, but wait until he looks at you before you reward him (with something the dog finds irresistible). Repeat this game often.

After your dog has learned that when you say his name and he looks at you, he will get the best treat on the planet. Now, say his name without food visible. He may lose interest or become frustrated, but be fair and consistent. Perhaps, you have gone forward in his training too soon. Back up in your training. Return to something he knows well, like SIT.

"SIT"



When teaching your dog a cue for a behavior, make sure the dog knows the behavior first. This may sound backwards, but remember your dog doesn't speak English.

Begin teaching any behavior by luring the dog with a piece of food into the position. The hand with a treat will eventually become the hand signal.

For example, the hand cue for SIT is to sweep your palm upward toward the sky while holding the treat between your thumb and forefinger (the rest of your hand is flat).



Remember to be consistent with your cues. For example, for sit use SIT. Don't change it to sit-down. You may confuse your dog. Also, remember to say your cue only once. If your dog needs help, lure him with a treat. Praise and reward even if you had to help by luring your dog into position.

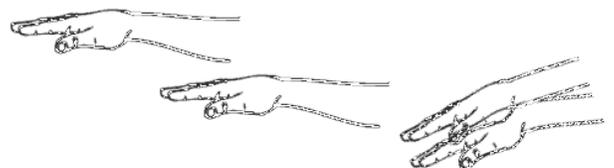
"DOWN"



As with SIT, teach DOWN with a lure. Remember, your dog won't know what DOWN means, so practice until the dog knows the hand cue. After your dog knows the hand cue

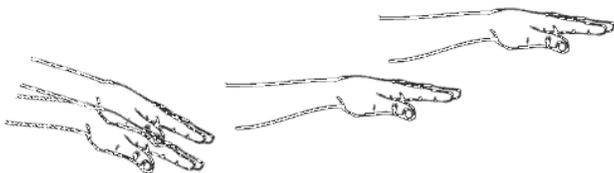
and you are certain he will comply with the hand cue, add the verbal cue DOWN.

The DOWN hand cue is to sweep your hand downward with your palm facing down.



“STAND”

When cueing your dog to stand, lure your dog forward (slightly). Keep your palm flat, facing downward (have the treat between your thumb and forefinger), then move your hand forward from your dog’s nose.



STAND is a handy cue when you take your dog to the veterinarian or to the groomer.

“COME”

COME is an important cue for safety reasons. We want our dogs to trust to come to us. Never punish your dog after you have called your dog to you. You will train your dog not to come or to avoid you.



With a flat palm sideways to the ground (facing your dog), sweep your hand to the front of your body (touching your chest with your palm if necessary).

Loose Leash Walking

Going for walks with your dog can be one of the most enjoyable pastimes you can share. However, if your dog drags you all around your neighborhood the pastime becomes a dreaded chore.

Position yourself next to your dog. Hold your dog’s leash with both hands, like the illustration below. Before you begin to move forward, say to your dog “Let’s go!” in a happy voice. Pat your leg if needed. If your dog starts to pull on his leash, stop moving forward. You don’t need to say anything to your dog, just stop.

When your dog stops pulling and turns to you as if to ask, “Why aren’t we moving?” say “Good” or “Yes” and begin walking forward.

If your dog starts to pull again, repeat the step above. Stop and wait.

At first this will be a slow process. You may take half an hour to go around the block. In the grand scheme of things, it will make walking with your dog pleasurable. He will want to move forward and this only happens when he attends to you and does not pull.



Walking forward and spending time with you are the rewards for the dog.