



CLICKER TRAINING

What is clicker training?

Clicker training means using a sound (a click) to communicate with your dog. It marks your dog's correct behavior the moment he does it. Essentially the moment your dog does what you want him to do—like a sit or a down—you immediately click and give him a treat. This gives your dog *instant, specific* feedback. Dogs learn much faster with a clicker. The clicker becomes a conditioned reinforcer.

How does it work?

It is fabulously simple. First we teach the dog that the click means he has won a treat. Then we use the click to tell the dog when he has done something we like.

Charging the clicker.

First we teach the dog that click means treat. To do this we will classically condition the dog to associate the sound of the click with him receiving a treat.

Step 1. Grab a handful of really yummy treats cut into small pieces.

Step 2. Every time you click, give your dog a treat (be careful not to click and treat at the same time; the treat must follow the click, not precede or coincide with it). To begin, repeat this 20 times in a row.

Step 3. Do this standing up, sitting down, while moving about, indoors, outdoors. Basically, make sure your dog understands that the click means treat in all situations.

Step 4. Repeat the exercise a few times a day using 20 treats in a row until, when you click you notice that your dog is eagerly anticipating the treat.

Don't give away that a treat is coming except with the click. For example, be careful not to reach for a treat, point the clicker toward the dog, or reach toward him with the treat before you click. Always after you treat, bring your hand up to a neutral position (at your navel or behind your back) and keep it still so your dog does not get distracted and can learn quicker. Train yourself to insert a count or a word before you hand over the treat: Click. Count to yourself, one-one-thousand. Treat.

Clicker rules.

Click only once.

If you click you *must* treat even if you have clicked in error (we call that a freebie!).

The clicker is not a remote control. **Don't use it to call your dog to you.**



Note: To use a verbal conditioned reinforcer such as "Yes!" instead of the click, substitute one for the other.

Training Tip: Don't click near your dog's hearing-sensitive ears. Some dogs are startled by the sound of the clicker. If your dog shows any signs of discomfort (shies away, leaves the room) wrap the clicker in a towel or a sock to muffle the noise. Try again, and when your dog clearly shows he enjoys the exercise, unwrap it a little at a time. You can also try placing it in your pocket or behind your back.