

## 6-Week Beginner Class

**Week 1:** Congratulations on your decision to teach your dog how to stay safe and well behaved! Get ready to learn the most proven training methods that teach your pet the basic obedience commands, and teach you how to communicate in a way that makes sense to your dog. This class will strengthen your bond with your beloved companion and prepare you both for many years of peaceful coexistence. Before we get started, please familiarize yourself with the class rules.

**Class Rules:** In order to keep everyone safe and comfortable, and to make sure we minimize distractions for all our students, please adhere to the following rules:

- 1) Please spread out and never allow your dog to get close to another dog or pet parent without permission from the trainer (unless we are working on greetings, etc.)
- 2) Always keep your dog secured on a 4 to 6ft fixed length leash. No retractable leashes for training class, please.
- 3) Choke chains, prong collars, and shock collars are not allowed in training class. Please use a traditional buckle collar, harness, or head halter in class. Please speak to the trainer if you believe you have an issue which requires a device that is not allowed.
- 4) Smacking or hitting your dog is forbidden.
- 5) If your dog is becoming a distraction to the other dogs in class, you may be asked to briefly take him or her out of the training ring to settle down.
- 6) Prior to beginning class, please make sure your dog is healthy and current on her or his vaccines.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of these rules, please speak to your trainer.

**How we Train:** While dogs and humans are quite different in a lot of ways, we also share some similarities. For example, both people and dogs respond well to rewards and positive reinforcement. Also, we both tend to do the things that work for **us**, and avoid the actions that we don't find so rewarding or pleasant.

We will use this knowledge to make the behaviors that **we** like work for our dog, and make sure that the behaviors we don't like fail to be rewarding for our pet. It's a simple concept, but not so easy to carry out. To change our dog's bad habits, we must first change our own habits in dealing with those "bad behaviors".

But don't worry, that's why you're here! Through practicing the proven techniques you learn in this class with **consistency** and calm **patience**, your furry companion will quickly begin to learn which behaviors pay off, and which ones are a bust. Ready? Let's get started!

**Reward Marker:** One of the ways that we are hugely different from dogs is in our use of verbal communication. We have literally hundreds of different ways to say the very same thing. Dogs however are primarily non-verbal communicators. They make only a few basic sounds to

convey their feelings or intentions, and mostly communicate their intentions through body language and facial expressions.

It is a **whole** lot easier for us to learn to communicate like a dog than it is for them to learn our intricate and nuanced way of communicating with lots of words. So, to keep things simple for them, we are first going to teach our dogs a simple sound which will become extremely impactful to them. We will now begin to teach them the sound that means they have just earned a treat!

The sound can be a “click”, or any simple word like “yes!”, “treat!”, or “score!”. The sound you pick is entirely up to you. Pick yours then stay consistent with it, and only use it when you are about to deliver a treat. To quickly teach your sound to your dog, follow these simple steps:

**Step 1:** Make your reward sound

**Step 2:** Immediately deliver a small treat to your dog’s mouth

**Step 3:** After your dog has finished the treat, repeat.

**Step 4:** Continue this exercise until your dog understands the connection between the reward sound and the act of receiving a treat. The way you’ll know that your dog has made this connection is by waiting for him or her to stop paying attention to you. Once your dog has become interested in something else, make your reward sound. If your dog snaps back to you looking for a treat, the connection has been made, and this exercise is no longer needed.

**Important Note:** Be certain that you make the reward sound **before** giving any indication that the treat is on the way. Because, if you start moving your treat hand or bending down before you make the sound, then the sound didn’t give your dog any new information, and it will remain meaningless to them. Since dogs live in the moment, the reward marker allows us to “mark” which of our dogs many behaviors was the one that we were after, so they will be more likely to repeat it in the future.

**Watch me:** A great way to get your dog to pay attention to you, and not every distracting thing going on around him, is by teaching “watch me”. This is also an extremely important behavior for reactive dogs to learn, because it is impossible for your dog to be barking and lunging at what’s behind him, if he’s focused on you. “Watch me” just means look at my eyes.

**Step 1:** Place a treat at your dogs’ nose.

**Step 2:** As soon as he engages the treat, pull it up to your eyes.

**Step 3:** As soon as eye contact is made, say your reward marker and deliver the treat.

**Step 4:** With each repetition, have your dog hold eye contact for a moment longer than the last.

**Step 5:** Once you have consistent success, say “watch me” right before engaging with the treat.

**Important Note:** If your dog fails twice in a row at maintaining eye contact for the attempted duration, lower the bar and do some short “watch me’s” to get him back on track. Then resume building duration. Gradually progress to the “watch me” hand sign shown in class, without beginning with the treat all the way at your dog’s nose.

**Sit:** Sit is an especially important behavior, not only because it makes it easier to teach things like “down” and “stay”, but also because it can be used as a substitution for a “bad behavior”. For example, your dog cannot be jumping up on someone or charging across a busy road if they are sitting.

**Step 1:** Hold a treat at your dog’s nose.

**Step 2:** While maintaining contact with your dog’s nose move the treat over his or her head, towards their rear end.

**Step 3:** Wait until your dog’s rear end touches the floor, say your reward word, and deliver the treat

**Step 4:** Once your dog is constantly sitting quickly through this technique, start saying sit immediately before engaging your dog with the treat.

**Step 5:** Use the methods shown in class to teach your dog the hand sign for “sit”.

**Note:** If your dog is lifting her front paws off the ground to try for the treat, you are holding it too high. If she backs up, practice in a corner. If your dog gets confused and loses interest, regroup. Say your reward word, deliver a couple treats, and start again. This time don’t wait for a full sit before rewarding. Mark and reward good effort (i.e. trying to win the treat). Each time wait a little longer before rewarding, until you get to a full sit.

**Leash Training:** Few shared experiences with your dog are more enjoyable than a nice relaxing walk together. Also, teaching your dog not to lunge or pull makes the walk much safer for everyone. However, when your dog is pulling you down the sidewalk (even a little), the relationship is clear: the puller is telling the “pullee” what to do, and the “pullee” is complying. That’s not the best scenario when trying to teach your dog the importance of listening to you...

The goal of loose leash training is clear. Teach your dog that pulling against you is never rewarding, that keeping the leash loose will bring much enjoyment, and that you are the one who makes the decisions when out on the walk.

**Step 1:** Use a harness, halter, or collar that provides you with enough control to remain completely immovable if your dog pulls or lunges.

**Step 2:** Use only a 4-6ft leash when loose leash training (retractables are fine once trained, or to provide exercise or more freedom at your destination)

**Step 3:** Hold the leash firmly with one or both hands, and only walk in the direction your dog is **not** pulling.

**Step 4:** The **instant** that the leash forms a **straight line** (not hanging loosely), **immediately** move in the opposite direction your dog is pulling, until your dog stops pulling and makes the leash loose.

**Step 5:** The moment your leash becomes loose, you can continue walking in the direction you were moving before your dog pulled, or in any direction you choose.

Be **consistent** and patient and your dog will begin to learn that pulling on the leash no longer works for her, and that keeping the leash loose and going **with you** on the walks is the best thing ever!

**Important Notes:** The training begins the moment you strap on the leash and ends when it comes off. **There is no time that it is ever ok to let your dog pull.** If you sometimes let him pull, even a little, you will undo much of your hard work, and will quickly be right back where you started. The goal for now is to teach your dog how to go for the walk, not to go for the walk. So don't leave the area around your house just yet. Wait until you've mastered the loose leash in that area before gradually venturing further

**Homework:** Make sure your dog is very responsive to her Reward Marker word ("Treat!", "Yes!", etc.), then use it every time your dog does something you're trying to teach her, and also when she does something on her own that you'd like her to do more of. Don't forget to deliver the treat every time you say the word!

Try to build up the duration of your watch me to at least 30 seconds by next class. With every new behavior, begin teaching it in an area with as few distractions as possible. Once you've mastered it there, practice in different locations around the house. After you've mastered the sit in all areas of the house, start asking for it in the yard and out on walks (don't forget to bring the treats!)

Practice each new behavior at least 10-20 minutes a day. Training sessions should last no more than 10-20 minutes at a time. Practicing with treats before mealtime delivers the best results.

**Dogs will only do what works for them.** Out on the walks, someone is eventually going to give up and do it the way the other one wants. Don't let it be you! Be consistent and patient and you will be greatly rewarded with enjoyable, safe and peaceful walks.

\*\*\*Keep a few treats stashed in secret locations around the house so you can spontaneously ask for an already learned behavior and be able to reward immediately. This goes a long way towards getting reliability from your dog when they aren't in "training mode".

Don't forget to contact your trainer right away with any training questions or concerns that may come up. Happy Training! 🐾🐾

**Week 2:** Welcome back! We'll start today's class by warming up with what we learned last week. Spread out and practice your leash walking techniques. As you wander, occasionally ask for a sit and a watch me. Keep in mind that training class is a far more distracting environment than your living room. So just like you did at home, start with some brief "watch me's" and build up from there.

**Non-reward Marker:** Last week we taught our dogs a signal that speeds up training by helping them understand which one of their many behaviors just scored them a treat. But it's also important for them to learn the opposite. A "non-reward marker" sound is especially useful in expediting training by teaching our dogs which of their actions was a mistake (like getting up during a stay, looking away during a watch me, jumping up during a greeting, etc.). Pick a neutral sound or word, and immediately pair it with the action of disengaging from your dog with the treat and/or turning your back on him, when he makes a mistake.

**Note:** If you have a sound you already use to scold your dog (like "ah-ah!" or "No!", etc.) pick something neutral like "oops", "uh oh", or "try again" when practicing training. You don't want your dog to think there's a chance that he may get in trouble if he makes a mistake during training. Studies have shown that dogs will offer you less behaviors when trying to win a treat, if they believe that the wrong action may result in "punishment". This is counterproductive to our training goals, and some sensitive dogs will even shut down entirely. You want to keep the "training game" fun and interesting for your dog, like a TV game show, with a fun sound for winning a prize and a "buzzer" when losing the jackpot!

**Down:** Now that everyone is warmed up, we'll begin to learn the down command. Down, just means to lay down, and is great to use when greeting small children or those fearful of dogs, or for long stays, etc.

**Step 1:** Ask your dog to sit. As soon as she's sitting, put a treat by her nose and slightly lower it straight down towards the floor.

**Step 2:** At first, mark and reward the action of following the treat and lowering her head just a little.

**Step 3:** With each repetition, wait for her to follow the treat down just a little lower before rewarding.

**Step 4:** Continue until she is lying all the way down on the floor before rewarding.

**Step 5:** Begin saying "down" immediately prior to engaging her with the treat and start to gradually transform your hand motion until you reach the hand sign for down shown in class.

**Note:** If her rear end comes off the floor during this exercise, immediately use your non-reward marker and disengage with the treat. Wait a few moments before reengaging with a sit command. For dogs who have no problem sitting and keeping their noses on the floor, once she's learned to hold the sit during this exercise, try moving the treat from side to side on the

floor or push it towards her, so it becomes more challenging for her to keep her front legs straight. As soon as she drops to the floor, mark and reward with lots of praise! Never push your dog into a down. Keep it fun for her, and when she figures it out for herself (Eureka!), the job is done!

**Jumping Up:** Teaching your dog to sit when greeting you can be a huge challenge, unless you first try to understand his point of view. As you learned last week: **dogs will only do what works for them**, and everything they do is for a reason. Recognizing what your dog is trying to accomplish by jumping up, and consistently ensuring that he only achieves his goal when sitting nicely, will quickly turn greetings from a fiasco into a mutually enjoyable experience.

When your dog jumps up on you, he is trying to make something happen. Depending on the situation, he could be trying to get your attention, trying to get physical contact (play or petting), or trying to get what you are holding. What do most people try to do to stop this unwanted jumping? We immediately make eye contact (give attention) and push him off us (give physical contact that can be interpreted as play). Sound familiar? 😊

Now that we're thinking about it from the dog's point of view, it becomes clear that if we are ever going to discourage unwanted jumping, we must never give him what he's after while he's jumping. The last thing your dog wants to see while trying to get attention and physical contact from you is for you to act like he doesn't even exist. So consistently make your dog feel like the center of your universe while he's sitting nicely, and act like he just fell off the face of the earth when jumping up, and very quickly he will realize that sitting for greetings pays off big!

So it's a simple concept, but not so easy to implement. No one wants to ignore their dog when they walk in the door. We like the attention too! Also, it can be extremely challenging to ignore an excited dog who hasn't seen you in a while -- especially one who has learned that jumping up in this situation has paid off big in the past. But consistently follow these instructions every time you greet your dog, and soon you will turn a bad habit into a good one.

**Step 1:** Before your dog jumps up on you, tell him "Sit!"

**Step 2:** If he sits, \*calmly praise and pet him. If at any point he jumps up, say your non-reward marker, immediately turn your back, cross your arms, look at the ceiling and say nothing until he gets off you. Once he stops jumping, turn back and tell him "Sit!". Repeat step 2.

**Note:** When using this technique, be prepared for the jumping to get a little worse before it gets better, then ultimately extinguishes. Just like with leash pulling, your dog will likely throw the kitchen sink into doing what has been so rewarding in the past, before scrapping it and trying something else. It's called an "extinction burst". Don't give up!

Walking back out the door as soon as your dog begins jumping on you is a great way to get the point across, while protecting yourself from wild clawing on your back. Wearing heavy denim jeans or the like can also help you endure the onslaught of fevered scratching on you for

attention. Additionally, making a point on the weekend to leave the house and come back after a short absence just to do this exercise can go a long way toward achieving your goal. This way you won't have to work so hard at it when returning home after a long day at work.

If you sometimes like it when your dog jumps up on you, don't confuse him by sometimes petting him when he does it. How will he know when it's a good time? Instead, only reward jumping up after you've asked for it.

\* You only need to remain calm when petting during greetings while your dog is learning the new rules. If you get excited during the learning phase, it will likely trigger an excited jump.

**Leave It:** "Leave it" means move away from it. It is one of the most important behaviors you can teach your dog, as it has the potential to save her life. If you drop a pill, or if your dog is approaching a snake, dead bird, alligator, or anything else that's dangerous or disgusting, the value of a strong "leave it" becomes clear.

**Step 1:** Hold a treat in a closed fist and stick it right under your dog's nose. Keep your fist closed and wait for your dog to do anything, except for trying to get the treat out of your hand (be patient).

**Step 2:** The instant your dog gives up, gets distracted, or in any way stops trying to get the treat out of your hand, mark that moment and deliver the treat.

**Step 3:** Once your dog begins to quickly give up at pawing or mouthing at your closed hand, start initiating each repetition by saying "leave it".

**Step 4:** Begin waiting for your dog to look, or slightly move, away from your closed fist before marking and rewarding her. As you progress, gradually increase the distance you wait for your dog to look or move away from your fist, before marking and rewarding her.

**Step 5:** Once successful with a closed fist, start practicing the same way, but with the treat in an open hand. Quickly snap your hand shut if she tries to get the treat. Reward only when she moves away from an open hand.

**Note:** Timing is particularly important with this exercise. Make certain that you catch her at the moment she stops pawing or while she's moving away, otherwise she may think she earned the treat for returning to it. Make sure you always deliver the treat to where your dog ends up after she leaves it. You want to reward her for moving away, not for coming towards the treat.

**Time Out:** From grabbing socks, to knocking over the garbage can, to digging up your potted plants, the time out is a powerful tool that teaches your dog to stop indulging in challenging, unwanted behaviors around the house. But unlike with children, we can't explain to our dog why he is being put in, nor can we tell him how to get out of time out. That's why the time out must be performed in a specific way, in order for your dog to make the necessary connections.

**Step 1:** \*Pick a boring place without toys and away from everyone in the house to use as your time out spot. A bathroom or laundry room can be used, but put a puppy gate inside the closed door if you're concerned about the door becoming damaged.

**Step 2:** Each time you catch your dog in the act of performing the unwanted behavior, mark that behavior by saying "Time out!" (or "Busted!" or whatever unique signal you choose).

**Step 3:** Calmly walk over to your dog and take him to his time out spot. Put him inside, walk away and completely ignore him.

**Step 4:** Wait until he is completely quiet and calm for at least 20-30 seconds before coming back to let him out. Don't pet him when he first comes out and remain a little aloof for a bit. Repeat with each offense of the unwanted behavior.

**Note:** Make sure you say your time out word before moving towards him. You want him to learn that the word means you're coming to get him to put him in time out. If you start moving towards him before saying the word, the word won't mean anything to him, and you won't be able to use it to mark the bad behavior. Do not quickly chase him or try to make sudden grabs, as this can be misinterpreted as play or cause him to become frightened or defensive.

You must remain completely calm and methodical throughout this process. Any excitement can muddy the water and distort the message. But once you say the word, keep coming until you get him, no matter what. Time out doesn't mean "stop that", it means you've already broken the law and now you're going to the slammer. He will soon learn which behaviors to avoid.

If you know your dog gets excited or more energized at certain times of day (known as the "zoomies", or the "witching hour"), and he is more likely to commit the unwanted crime during these periods, you can connect a drag leash to his harness. This will make him much easier to catch – just step on the leash as he runs past. Entrapment is allowed -- It's ok to set a trap by leaving taboo items out, while you lay in wait. Get creative with webcams or security cameras.

Once he's in the time out you have to completely ignore him until he stops going ape (if he does), and quietly settles down. Otherwise, instead of teaching him that quietly calming down is the way to rejoin the family, he will learn that throwing a fit is the way to get your attention and get out of time out. But don't worry, he will eventually settle down. However long it takes for him to relax the first time, the second time will be about half as long, and so on.

\*Never use his crate for the time out, but its ok to get a second crate to use just for time out.

**Homework:** Continue mastering the week one lessons in new, more challenging locations. Practice down and leave it in less distracting areas for now. Build up your leave it until your dog is moving at least a foot away each time. More is better, because next week we are going to continue building and strengthening the leave it behavior with more challenges. We are also going to learn drop it, so make sure to bring a favorite tug toy with you to class. Remember to contact your trainer during the week with any questions or concerns. Happy Training! 🐾🐾



**Week 3:** Welcome back! Just like last week, let's get everyone warmed up by practicing our loose leash walking techniques. Remember to never move even one inch in the direction your leash is pointing, if it's in a straight line. Occasionally ask for a sit, down, and watch me. Vary the order. Keep in mind that a superior treat is likely needed to maintain focus in challenging situations. Also, get further from the distraction, and require a shorter duration for your watch me, when the distraction is difficult.

**Leave It Part 2:** Over the past week, you practiced teaching your dog to move away from a treat you were holding in your hand. Today, we're going to begin shaping our "leave it" into a more usable behavior.

**Step 1:** Practice leave it the way you did over the past week, until warmed up.

**Step 2:** Place a treat on the floor and say: "leave it!" Be ready to quickly cover it with your hand if your dog makes a grab for it.

**Step 3:** Wait until your dog moves away from the treat on the floor before marking and rewarding with a different treat from your hand. Continue practicing until your dog is consistently moving away, without you needing to cover it.

**Step 4:** Toss a treat out of your dog's reach and beyond the range of your leash. Approach the treat and say: "leave it!"

**Step 5:** Wait until your dog backs up or turns away from the treat before marking and rewarding. Have your dog return to you for the treat.

**Note:** Use the leash to stop your dog from grabbing the treat, but don't use it to yank her away. Wait for her to give up or become distracted by something else before marking/rewarding. Once successful, begin to practice leave it using other treats, toys, objects and people in many different areas and environments. For the best results, always reward with a better treat than was left, and never allow your dog to get ahold of what you asked her to leave.

Once mastered, if you ask for a leave it in the house and your dog does not comply, immediately follow up with a time out.

**Drop it:** Drop it just means let go of what you're holding. If you did not catch your dog in time for a leave it, or just want him to spit out what's in his mouth, the drop it command is useful.

**Step 1:** Hold a treat behind your back, say: "take it", and with your other hand immediately engage your dog with a favorite tug toy. Play for a few moments.

**Step 2:** Say: "drop it!", immediately stop pulling on the toy (but don't let go), and with your treat hand put the treat right up to your dog's nose.

**Step 3:** As soon as your dog releases the toy; mark, reward, and take away the tug toy. Repeat steps 1-3 until your dog quickly releases the toy on command.

**Step 4:** Begin practicing by saying: “drop it!” but waiting until he releases the toy before engaging him with the treat.

**Note:** Make sure you are no longer pulling on the toy after you say: “drop it!” Your toy arm should go completely dead, so there’s no more action in the game. Once your dog has learned drop it, continue to reinforce the behavior by instantly tossing the toy for him or immediately reengaging with another game of tug.

Playing tug is appropriate as long as the human is the one who initiates and terminates the game. To teach your dog to be very careful with his teeth, immediately say: “Ouch!!”, drop the toy, and get up and walk away from your dog as soon as he makes contact with your skin (even if it doesn’t hurt). Ignore him for a few minutes each time this happens and he will quickly learn that we humans have very sensitive skin, and that if he contacts it, its game over.

**Greeting Others:** Last week we went over how to teach your dog to greet members of your household without jumping up. If every friend or stranger who encountered your dog at your door or on your walks did those techniques, your dog would already be sitting whenever a person nears. But that didn’t happen 😊 so now we’ll learn how to teach your dog to greet others.

**Step 1:** For now, always have your dog on a leash when greeting others, and always have a very high value treat on hand (the more excited your dog gets during greetings, the more valuable the treat must be).

**Step 2:** \*Always approach the person using your loose leash techniques, never allow them to come to you, and make sure they are following your instructions. Make sure the leash is hanging loosely the entire time, or your dog is the one calling the shots.

**Step 3:** When close to the person and before your dog jumps, engage her with the super-treat and ask for a sit. As soon as she sits, instruct the person to pet her, while keeping the super-treat under her nose in a closed fist or while allowing her to nibble at it.

**Step 4:** Allow the petting to go on for just a moment before leading your dog away with the treat and rewarding, when out of jumping range. You can repeat the drill multiple times with the same person. Gradually increase the duration of the petting before leading away and rewarding. If at any time she takes her nose off the treat, reengage with it and draw her head down with the food. If she jumps up, immediately use your non-reward marker and pull her away.

**Note:** When guests come to your home, it’s best to keep your dog on a leash until she calms down. This way you can break this bad habit by preventing the jumping from occurring unchecked, and by stopping it from being reinforced if she decides to jump during the drill (by immediately pulling her away). You can practice the greetings multiple times with each guest

until she settles down. It shouldn't take longer than about 10-15 minutes before you can remove the leash.


\*Explain that you are training to become a therapy dog, or because you have an elderly, or very young relative who your dog is injuring/frightening. Even if this is not quite the case, it will get the person to stop and follow your instructions. Otherwise, they will say they don't mind jumping, etc., and will unknowingly sabotage your training. If they aren't following instructions, kindly say your dog isn't ready yet and take her away. Your dog will never learn not to jump on others if the jumping up is sometimes being rewarded.

**Homework:** Continue your leash training by consistently moving in the opposite direction your dog is pulling, until he realizes that he's with you on the walk, and not the other way around. Make sure to bring high value treats with you out on the walks. Remember that high value treats will only remain high value if used sparingly. So only use them when outside the house, or when dealing with the most challenging or distracting situations. Make sure to practice all the commands you've learned when out on the walks. Teach your dog that it always pays off to listen to you... especially in distracting environments.

Continue practicing new behaviors, and drilling learned behaviors, for 10-20 minutes at a time, maximum. Always start in areas with few, if any, distractions, then build up to more distracting and challenging environments. You can have a few training sessions a day if you like, but also remember to surprise your dog with some commands and rewards outside of your training routines. This teaches her that it's important to listen, even when she doesn't think you have a treat.

Work on your leave it a lot. Because this could save your dog's life, you should build up a very strong leave it reaction. Your dog should love hearing "leave it!" because it always means something good is on it's way if he moves away.

As always, don't hesitate to contact your trainer as soon as any questions or concerns arise.

Happy Training! 

**Week 4:** Welcome back! Let's warm up by practicing watch me and leave it, while keeping a loose leash as you walk around. Try and get your dog to leave various objects and distractions, without having to rely on the leash to keep him from getting to them.

**Greeting other Dogs:** There is a time and a place to let your dog play and roughhouse with other dogs. While you are holding the leash when out on the walk is not that time. Greetings when on the leash should be calm, brief and peaceful. If you have taught your dog not to pull on the leash and can achieve watch me's and leave it's in distracting environments, then you are now ready to greet other dogs on the leash.

**Step 1:** Calmly approach the other dog on an entirely loose leash. If your leash becomes straight, as always, move away.

**Step 2:** Stop before the dogs are in range of each other and have them sit.

**Step 3:** When both dogs are sitting and paying attention to their pet parents, tell them: "Say hi" and direct them toward the other dog.

**Step 4:** Allow them to sniff each other only for a brief moment, before using your reward marker to bring them back to you. If they do not respond, say "leave it" and reward with a high value treat\*

**Step 5:** Walk away and repeat steps 1 through 5.

**Note:** Always make sure any dog you are introducing to your dog is **very** comfortable meeting dogs like yours. Any hesitation by the other pet parent when being questioned about greeting your dog is a big red flag. If they say "it **should** be ok", or anything similar, do not continue. They have likely seen their dog have issues with greeting some dogs, and it won't take many bad greetings (sometimes only one) before your dog starts acting up when greeting other dogs.

\*Watch the body language and facial expressions of both dogs closely. Look for a hard stare, stiffening of the body, or hair standing up. It's always better to get the dogs apart quickly, rather than waiting to see what happens. Use your reward marker, or tap him on the side behind his ribs to break his attention and get his focus back on you. Only pull your dog away by the leash (quickly) as a last resort, as many dogs will react aggressively when being pulled away by the leash.

**Come:** Like leave it, come is one of the most important behaviors your dog can learn. If your dog gets loose and his heading toward danger, come can save her life. Come just means come here.

**Step 1:** Let your dog smell your treat and back up a few steps.

**Step 2:** Bend over and wave your arm while saying: "Come!"

**Step 3:** At the moment your dog gets to you, stop waving your arm and deliver the treat.

**Step 4:** After a few repetitions, do this exercise without letting your dog smell the treat at the beginning.

**Step 5:** Get further and further away from your dog before calling her.

**Note:** For best results, your dog should think nothing but “treat” when you say “Come!”. This means, for now, do not call your dog to you to do anything she finds unpleasant (including nail trims, baths, brushing, confining, etc.). For those things, it’s best to go get her and take her to where you are doing the unpleasant deed. This way, she will not hesitate to come when you call her and won’t associate coming to you with anything unpleasant.

Once your dog is great at coming to you in the house, start practicing in the yard, or outside on a long training leash. Remember to use a higher value treat in distracting environments. Having family members hide in the house, then call and reward your dog, is a great way to get her some exercise while providing mental stimulation.

Begin calling your dog away from distractions, reward with a high value treat, then let her immediately return to the distraction. This will teach her that come doesn’t mean treat or fun. Instead, it means “hang on fun, I’m going to grab a treat and be right back!” You never want your dog to have to decide if coming to you is worth it. It could be the difference between life and death.

**Good and “Eh”:** Everyone show off a behavior that your dog is really good at, and one that you are having some trouble with.

**Homework:** Practice many greetings when out on the walks, making **sure** to follow the guidelines above. Keep in mind that it’s much better to meet fewer dogs, than to have even one bad encounter.

Practice lots of comes inside and outside of the house. Pay close attention to the notes above. When using a long training leash, if you call your dog and she doesn’t come, reel her in. But only give your dog a treat if she comes on her own.

Continue mastering all the behaviors from previous weeks, making sure to vary the order and to ask for them at random times throughout the day. Remember to follow the “Nothing in Life is Free” philosophy to ensure reliable behaviors outside of treat time.

As always, contact your trainer immediately with any questions or concerns.

Happy Training!



**Week 5:** Welcome back! Let's begin by practicing the watch me, while trying to get closer and closer to distractions (each other). If at any time your dog gets too interested in the distraction and fails to perform the watch me, say: "leave it!". If your dog does the leave it, reward and then immediately do some watch me's. If your dog fails to perform the leave it or watch me at a given distance, immediately take your dog away via the leash and start over at a greater distance from the distraction. After a few successful watch me's, try to gradually get closer and closer again.

**Come with Sit and Collar Grab:** It's important to get your dog used to having you reach for, and grab, her collar each time you call her. If you haven't practiced this, and the first time you make a sudden grab for your dog's collar is when she's off leash in a dangerous situation, she may interpret the grab as a game of "catch me", and run back into danger. So now that your dog is coming reliably for a treat, it's time to add a sit and collar grab to the come exercise.

**Step 1:** Just like before, bend over, wave your arm and say "come!"

**Step 2:** When your dog gets to you, immediately say "sit!"

**Step 3:** As soon as she sits, grab her collar/harness.

**Step 4:** While holding the collar/harness deliver the treat, then immediately release her.

**Step 5:** Repeat until your dog loves having her collar/harness grabbed (because it means a treat is on the way!)

**Stay:** Stay just means don't move until you are released. It's great for things like keeping your dog safe and away from distractions while you move away from him or tend to other business. To be effective, your dog must learn to stay for a decent Duration while experiencing Distractions, with you at a Distance from him (the three D's)

The best way to teach him stay is by working on only one "D" at a time, before combining them. We'll begin with the easiest one, Duration.

**Step 1:** Have your dog sit, then say "stay" one time, while briefly showing your dog the "stop" sign with your hand.

**Step 2:** Wait just a moment before rewarding, then immediately release your dog with your release word ("okay", "free", "release", etc.) and encourage him to move.

**Step 3:** With each repetition, wait a couple extra beats longer than the previous repetition before treating and releasing, until you can consistently accomplish a 30 second stay. At that point you can add greater chunks of duration each time.

**Note:** If your dog gets up at any point before you release him, immediately say your non-reward marker ("oops", "uh oh" etc.), turn your back, and look away. Wait a few moments before reengaging.

When doing the exercise, do not say “stay” over and over or hold your hand up for more than a brief moment. If you do, your dog will get used to hearing the repeated command or seeing the continuous hand sign, and will get up and walk away when you are no longer standing in front of him repeating “stay” and holding your hand up. For best results, say “stay” once, flash the hand sign once, then stand in a casual way in front of your dog, until you reward and release.

**Trick!:** Now it’s time to learn an amazing trick that will impress your friends and family! Pick a trick (sit pretty, paw, roll over, crawl, bang, etc.), and your trainer will show you the steps to teach your dog how to do it. Practice your trick and show it off next week at graduation!

**Homework:** Practice your stay in an area with no distractions, until you can consistently achieve 30 seconds of Duration before releasing. Add the sit and collar grab each time you call your dog with a come.

Continue to drill your watch me, sit, down, leave it, drop it, and come in all environments and situations.

Each time your dog greets someone else, keep her on a leash and only allow her to be petted when sitting. Work on strengthening your new habits that replace the old ones when dealing with jumping and leash pulling. Once your habits have changed, so will your dog’s, and the pulling and jumping will be a thing of the past. Each time your dog meets another dog, insist that he does it your way, and he will soon stop trying to do it his way. Remember, **dogs will only do what works for them**, so stop letting the bad behaviors work out for your dog.

Next week is graduation, so be prepared to perform some of the behaviors we learned in class and show off your new trick to earn your diploma!

Keep up the great work and don’t forget to contact your trainer right away with any questions or concerns. Happy Training! 