

## Training your dog to touch and item

### **Touching with their nose**

When you are training your dog to touch something first you will need to figure out what they will use as the command. For this lesson to keep it simple we will just use "TOUCH" as the command. Take the item or object that you are wanting them to touch and place it in front of them. For this we are using a placard with a handicap symbol on it. (later we will use this as a tool to teach them to touch the access buttons.)

- Put the placard in front of them (holding it) and say "TOUCH", if they are curious they will lean in to smell it. When they do this, tell them "GOOD TOUCH". This will start them on the path of understanding what you want them to do.
  - Repeat this several times until they completely understand and can replicate it on command.
  - Always commend them on a job well done with lots of love and treats if you use them. This will reinforce the progress that you have made thus far.

When they are able to do this on command begin to put the placard in other locations, again repeat until they are comfortable doing this.

### **Touching with their Paw**

Now, when you and your dog are getting the hang of these steps we will change it up by having them touch with their paw. Using their paw for some can prove to be a challenge. This can be difficult for some due to them not being used to using their paw to touch, now if they already use their paw then it won't be that difficult.

- Place the placard in front of your dog and say touch, when they give you the look of not understanding, take their paw and touch the placard with it.
  - Continue this exercise and commend them for touching it with their paw everytime until they understand the process.
  - When they understand that they are to touch it with their paw and can do it on command, begin to move the placard up to a higher location that they can still get to it.
    - I use cheap double sided tape that can easily peel off.
- When they are at a point that they are unable to touch it without standing on their rear legs you will or may have to teach them to stand up. To do this you may need to assist them with the command up or use a treat/toy to lead them up to the placard.
  - Again on every successful attempt commend them for a job well done.

Now that you and your dog have learned how to "touch" an item, continue to practice with other items. Try and mix it up, we like to have them touch a specific toy or object that we tell them to, for example we will have them touch the ball or touch the squeaky toy instead of retrieving it. Always remember to reward successful attempts and redirect bad ones so that you and your dog don't get overly frustrated.