

Food motivation

Firstly, be aware that lack of desire can be related to serious gastrointestinal issues. Please make note of any odd eating patterns, food sensitivities or vomiting or diarrhoea.

Deprivation is not the answer. Though you may not want to over feed dogs before a training session, not feeding can lead to frantic behaviours.

Things that you can do to encourage food motivation include keeping your criteria extremely low. If there's any confusion or the criteria is too difficult your dog is likely to check out very quickly early in the session. Likewise, when increasing the difficulty in criteria of the behaviour, do so slowly and reward easy behaviours as well. Try an *easy > easy > hard > easy* pattern.

Even with puppies who have really sharp teeth, if you offer food, you must give it to them. With these pups, we often pull our hand away from sharp the teeth, but this can either cause confusion or lead to the puppy jumping up for the food. Do not do training exercises that involve offering and then covering up food.

Practice feeding in stimulating environments. This is extremely important if your puppy is able to take food at home but then loses that ability when away from the home. Practice taking them to places but not with the intention of going for a walk. Sit down with them and layout a few options of food in front of them on the ground. Then just wait. Give your puppy time to look around and get bored by the environment then if. If they stay in a heightened state of stimulation or become frustrated, leave and try again in a less stimulating environment.

Try a variety of different foods, but also textures and delivery.

Do not pair food with scary things, for example do not lure puppies into the bath tub with treats.