



## Clicker Training Basics

Clicker training is a powerful and enjoyable force-free method of training your dog to perform the most basic of obedience cues all the way through to complex tricks. The click marks a behaviour and tells your dog that what they have just done is great. It also tells the dog they are about to get a reward (treat, tug toy etc) for their awesome effort!



Timing is everything when you are training your dog. You have about a ½ second window to reward your dog for a behaviour so that behaviour is reinforced. Any later and your dog may not realise why they are being rewarded. A clicker allows you to be more precise and gives you time to scuffle around in your treat pouch for their reward.

Other markers such as a dog whistle or a unique verbal marker can be used but a clicker is a specific and consistent marker, easy to use and every member of the family can use one!

## Steps to Clicker Success

### Step 1 – Charging the Clicker

- 🐾 You will need your clicker, plenty of treats and a willing (and hungry) dog!
- 🐾 Get used to using the clicker in both hands and this will also get your dog used to the sound.
- 🐾 Take a seat with your clicker, treats and dog. Simply feed your dog a treat and as they take it, click! Swap your treat and clicker hand around every now and again.
- 🐾 You can then start to add in a delay. Click – wait a second – then treat! This helps for when you start training and are digging around in your treat pouch. It also helps for training things at a distance like recall! You can slowly increase the delay to a little longer. Remember to use both hands!



BOO'S  
TIP

You can use dinner time as the perfect opportunity for clicker charging. Simply use your dog's meal as the treats!



## Step 2 – Marking Behaviour

Now that your pooch associates the sound of the clicker with a tasty reward, you can use the clicker to reinforce any type of behaviour you want to train your dog to do. You can even reinforce calm behaviour.

You can also teach behaviours in sections. Reinforce any attempt to towards the final behaviour and then give an extra yummy treat or lots of treats when your pooch achieves the full behaviour. I have found this a great way to teach “drop”, “come” or recall! The possibilities are endless!

## Example – Sit

- With a treat in one hand and the clicker in your other, lure your dog back into a sit by moving the treat from their nose back over their head towards their tail. Your dog should naturally sit to follow the treat.
- Don't be too quick to click! Be ready to click the moment their rear end hits the floor! Once you have clicked, deliver your treat!



**Almost but no click!**



**CLICK!! Then treat!**

## Targeting

Another great way to hone your clicker skills is to train your dog to target, either to you hand or an object like a target stick. Targeting is a valuable foundation behaviour which can be used for training a whole range of more complex behaviours or tricks. Not only are you setting your dog up for future training but you're

- Have your treats handy and clicker at the ready. Present your hand (flat or a fist) to your dog near their face. If your dog moves and touches your hand with their nose, click and reward. Repeat this a few times.
- Gradually start increasing the distance between your hand and their nose and change the position of your hand to above, below or to the side of their face.
- Remember to switch hands every now and then.

