This week is about Naming a Behavior by adding a Cue. Details for Naming a Behavior are located in the Appendix. Before you add the cue to a behavior you want to make sure your dog is preforming the behavior. Test your pup to see if they are deliberately doing the behavior to get you to click. There is a bit of "feeling" of knowing your dog's body language to determine this. As you and your dog progress in your learning this will become easier. Think of the 80% rule, if your dog performs the behavior 8 times out of 10 you are ready to name the behavior. It is important to follow this progression and use the same 80% rule before moving to the next step.

When naming the behavior you'll need to follow this process, say the cue:

- Step 1: **AS** they are doing the behavior
- Step 2: **JUST BEFORE** they are doing the behavior
- Step 3: **BEFORE** they do the behavior.

Release Cue

Teach your dog a release cue: A release cue tells your dog he is done doing what has been asked but is still on duty. The release word we use in class is Okay but you can choose a different word like "That'll do", Release, You're done, Free, etc. Be sure everyone in the family uses the same release word. The criterion for releasing is for your dog to take two steps towards you when given the cue. Click on the second step. Teaching a release cue is the beginning of teaching duration.

Steps

1. Start with dog in a Sit position.
2. Pat the inside of your leg and say "Okay"
3. The first few times this may mean nothing to the dog, so after saying the cue, pause to wait for the dog to move and if he doesn't you may need to lean or step backwards. Stepping backwards will instigate the dog to follow you, thus getting up. Click on his second step towards you.

Caution: Sequence of saying the cue, pausing for a response, and stepping backward is important as you don't want the dog to associate you moving backward as a release cue. If you step back to quickly after saying the cue, the dog will think your movement (not his movement) is the release cue.

Click Points

- When dog takes 2 steps toward you.

SIT - Add Cue "SIT"

When the dog is reliability offering a default sit and you have been able to capture them, introduce the verbal "SIT" cue.

Warm up

Get your dog engaged and readily offering default sits thru the Capture a Sit game.

Steps

1. Precisely as the dog is sitting, say "SIT." Click when his rump hits the ground. Toss a treat. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Praise and give your dog a break after each set by playing with them or working on a different behavior.

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2. Complete 3-4 training sessions over a period of a few days.
3. Next, begin to say the cue "SIT" earlier in the process so you are giving the cue *before* the dog starts to sit. Click and treat each time the dog sits. Perform many sets of repetitions over several days for the dog to learn the word "SIT".

Important to Note

As you bring the cue earlier into the process, **DO NOT** say "Sit" more than once (Sit, Sit, Sit…!!!) If you say Sit, wait for your dog to respond. If they do not respond, they lose the opportunity for a treat, release, walk away, come back and try again or stop the session and try later. Whatever you do, don't reward your dog for not sitting when cued. Be sure to follow the 80% rule, sometimes we get excited about what the dog is learning and they haven't quite learned the behavior enough to follow a cue. If you find you have to say the cue multiple times, then your dog hasn't associated the cue with the behavior. Go back to the beginning and capture the behavior without cueing. Then cue as it is happening and follow the process of **As** they do it, **Just Before** it happens and **Before** it happens.

Click Point

- When the dog's rump touches the floor

Targeting - Nose to hand Touch

The purpose of this activity is to teach your dog to target your hand with his nose. Teaching how to touch targets is a foundation skill for other behaviors. The goal of Level 1 is to get your dog to solidly touch your hand with his nose, on cue, by turning or reaching his head to your hand.

Steps

1. Treats and clicker in the same hand.
2. Hold a closed hand (fist) close but slightly off to the side of your dog's nose.
3. Click for any glances at it, any movement toward it or a nose touch. Use your target hand to take treat from your other hand and feed in position.
4. Let dog finish treat before presenting your target hand again.
5. Repeat several times.
6. Increase distance by an inch or two so your dog has to reach out to touch it the target hand.
7. Click for any movement toward it or a nose touch. Click and treat.
8. Repeat, several times placing your target hand in various spots above, below, and to the right and left of the dog's head. Click for touching your hand.
9. 10 reps at a time. Praise and give a break before starting a new set of reps.

Click Points

- Dog looks at target hand
- Dog's head moves toward target hand
- Dog steps toward target
- Nose touch to target hand

Add cue "TOUCH"

Add the cue "TOUCH" when your dog reliably performs the behavior about 80% of the time. Follow the process for Adding a Cue to a Behavior.

Steps

1. As the dog is about to touch the target hand, saying "TOUCH." Click when his nose touches your hand. Toss a treat for resetting the dog. Remove your target hand. Wait for dog to finishing eating

his treat. Present your target again and as your dog is touching the target hand, say TOUCH. Repeat. Do 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions. Praise and give your dog a break in-between reps.
2. Complete 3-4 training sessions over a period of a few days. Before moving to Step 3.
3. Next, begin to say the cue "Touch" earlier in the process so you are giving the cue *before* the dog starts to move towards the hand. Click and treat each time the dog touches your hand. Do many sets of 5-10 repetitions over several days for the dog to learn the word "TOUCH". As your dog is reliably moving toward the target hand, begin to move it in various positions, still holding it close to your dog's nose but requiring them to move their head or take a small step to touch the target. At this point, your dog shouldn't be required to take more than a couple steps to touch the target. Keep them successful at hearing the cue and looking for the target that is near them.

Click Points

- Dog steps toward target
- Nose touch on target hand

LEAVE-IT - Ignore treat on the floor

This is a great exercise for teaching self-control. Start with learning to ignore treats and eventually move to learning to ignore or leave alone an object or creature.

Note: Use a verbal marker for this exercise; the clicker is too close to their ears. Also, if it is too uncomfortable to sit on the floor to do this exercise, put your dog up on a bed or a couch to teach this level.

Steps

1. Keep and hold extra treats in one hand and use opposite hand for blocking.
2. Place a low value treat on floor a few inches within range of dog.
3. With hand, gently block any attempts of dog getting the treat.
4. The instant the dog looks away or moves back praise your dog and give a reward with another treat from your other hand.
5. Pick up treat on the floor and put away.
6. Repeat steps 1-4 again.
7. After several trials, increase the value of the treat on the floor and repeat the process.

Cautions: 1) if having difficultly, use a low value treat on the floor and have a higher value treat as the reward, 2) the dog shouldn't get the treat on the floor as the reward, 3) when performing this activity; you stand/sit on the leash or anchor it to a table leg if needed, 4) DO NOT pull back on leash; the dog needs to learn to hold back on its own, lastly, 5) keep the rate of reinforcement high.

Click Points - Verbal Marker, "yes!"

- When your dog looks at you

Add the Cue "LEAVE-IT"

1. Because you are actually doing the work, you can put this on cue right away. Use a soft gentle voice when saying the cue, you want it to be nice - this isn't a command!
2. Warm up with 2 reps of body blocking for a leave it.
3. As you are blocking with your hand, say "Leave-it".
4. The instant the dog looks away or moves back give dog praise your dog and give a reward with another treat from your other hand
5. Repeat several times. Pick up the treat and put it back into your bag and try again. Try to get 50-100 reps spread over 5-6 days.

DOWN - Get the Behavior

Teaching the DOWN behavior is done through luring, capturing or using a target (hand touch). In class, you are shown how to lure using a treat to get the behavior. This is because the classroom environment is typically too distracting and it can take considerable time to capture a down with a dog. Therefore, to jump start the behavior we use a lure or a target to begin the process. It is very important to fade the lure quickly and move to only using a target or capturing the behavior. You can quickly fade out a target when putting the behavior on a hand signal cue. At home, in a quieter environment, you will be able to strictly capture the behavior and put it on cue.

Warm-up

Do a quick warm up by clicking and tossing a treat a few times so the dog becomes engaged and focused on you.

Capturing a Down

Steps

Go to a quiet distraction free room of the house with your dog, clicker, treats, leash and a good book.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair and tether your dog to the chair with the leash.
2. Pretend to read your book keeping a small part of your attention on your dog.
3. Keep your treat hand in a neutral position on your book.
4. When your dog finally gets bored and lays down click then toss a treat so he has to get up to eat the treat.

Click Points

- When dog Downs

Targeting a Down

1. Begin with the dog in a sit position. The completed target movement will be in an "L" shape. Drawing an "L" from the dog's nose to the floor and out as he follows the target. To start, position the target so that the dog has to dip his head slightly downward to nose touch it.
2. Very slowly, lower the target straight down to the floor from the dog's nose. Click and treat (CT) in position for dog's nose following, each time getting dog's nose closer to the floor.
3. When the dog's nose is almost touching the floor, move the target out away from the dog (in an "L" shape movement) an inch or two so the dog stretches to touch it and his paws move out as well.
4. CT in position, a couple of times and then click and toss a treat to reset the dog.
5. If the dog stands up, remove the target and start over.

Click Points

- Head lowers
- Head stretch toward target
- Front Paw stretch movement
- Tummy on floor

Luring a Down (without a target)

1. This way of getting the behavior follows the same steps above to get the behavior. Instead of using a target you just use a treat to lure the movements.
2. Use the same Click Points as above.

3. It is very important that if you are using the technique to get the behavior that you fade the lure out quickly. Only use this method two or three times to get the behavior and then change to other ways of "getting a behavior" such as capturing, targeting or shaping.

Add Cue "DOWN"

At this point, luring and targeting should be faded out if not already done. You can change the lure or target into a hand signal. When the dog is reliability offering the Down position without a lure and you have been able to capture it, introduce the verbal "Down" cue. (See Appendix for theory on adding a cue)

Warm up

Focus Game to get dog engaged. Target or capture Sits and then Downs

Adding a hand signal

Steps

1. Present the DOWN hand signal. A vertical sweeping motion of your face-down palm from chest high to pointing to the ground.
2. Follow this with a lure or target in the same motion as above to get your dog into the down position.
3. When tummy touches the ground, click and treat in position. Then toss one treat away to reset the dog.
4. Repeat the above steps. 3 sets of 10 repetitions offering short breaks with praise.

Click Points

- When the dog's tummy hit the floor

Adding a verbal cue

Putting DOWN on a verbal cue is optional if you are using a hand signal.

Steps

1. Precisely as the dog's elbows are about to hit the ground say "DOWN." Click and treat when his tummy touches the ground. Do 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions, offering short breaks with praise.
2. Next, begin to say the cue "DOWN" earlier in the process so you are giving the cue *before* the dog starts to lie down. Click and treat each time the dog downs. Do many sets of 5-10 repetitions over several days for the dog to learn the word "DOWN".

Click Points

- When the dog's tummy hit the floor

Canine Enrichment

Make it fun for your dog! Find some fun puzzles or other canine enrichment tools to use to get your dog thinking and exploring. Teaching your dog to problem solve and use their senses to explore is a fun activity for them to do. Also, using puzzles for feeding their meals helps to slow down eating.
There are many resources on the web to learn more about canine enrichment, here is a favorite of ours: https://www.facebook.com/groups/canineenrichment/