Add Distractions

The goal of the exercise is for the dog to continue responding to cues and preforming the behaviors with the addition of distractions. Use very low distractions first and gradually increase to higher level distractions. Keep this exercise at a high rate of reinforcement to teach the dog responding the cues with distractions still gets him good things. Learn what the different levels of distractions are for your dog and work within the appropriate level that keep rewards at a high rate. If your dog does not respond to a cue under a distraction, lower the distraction to a level he is successful. Work at this level to an 80% success rate before moving to a higher level of distraction. Also, be careful of how long (duration) you are making your dog hold a position when adding distractions. Keep things at short durations. See Appendix for a list of distractions.

Sit - Add Distractions

Warm up

Do several Sit Releases

Steps

1. Cue for a Sit; add a mild distraction and then Release. Click and treat successful repetitions.

Click Points

- When the dog remains in the sit position as a distraction is presented
- Before the dog begins to move out of position when a distraction is presented

Down - Add Distractions

Warm up

Do several Down Releases

Steps

1. Cue for a Down; add a mild distraction and then Release. Click and treat successful repetitions.

Click Points

- When the dog remains in the down position as a distraction is presented
- Before the dog begins to move out of position when a distraction is presented

Targeting – Follow a Target

The purpose of this activity is to teach your dog to follow a target. Having your dog follow a target is part of teaching targeting with distractions. The emphasis here is on having the dog follow the movement, rather than actually touch the target.

Warm up

Begin with a warm up of nose touch to the hand target.

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Steps

1. Hold your hand target 1 to 2 inches away from your dog's nose; click any movement toward the target. Treat and wait to present the target again after the dog finishes the treat.
2. Begin to move the target slightly farther away; click any movement the dog makes to follow the target.
3. As the dog is reliably moving toward the target, begin to move the target in various directions and positions.

Click Points

- Any movement toward the target
- While the dog is moving

Wait

Wait is a self-control behavior, teaches duration and it is a great cue for teaching dogs to wait at doorways and other boundaries. The purpose is to teach the dog to wait at a boundary until given a cue for another behavior or is released. It is similar to a Stay as it allows for duration while your dog is in a Sit or a Down. However, a dog can also learn to wait while in a standing position.

Start with common boundaries that are clear and obvious to the dog. Things like doorways between rooms, front and back door, change of flooring like linoleum to carpet, gates in the yard are excellent choices. If you are in an area that doesn't have a natural boundary you can stretch a rope/leash across the floor, or use tape to mark a boundary on the floor. For safety, always keep your dog on leash when practicing the exercise when you are going through a door to the outside. If working at an open door to the outside make sure dog is still contained (i.e. fenced in) after going through the door.

Steps

1. While standing beside your dog with him on your left side, give him the Wait cue by drawing an imaginary line with your hand. Step away from him with your **right** leg.
2. If he attempts to follow you, just step back to starting position. Be sure you have a loose leash so that you are not tugging on your dog when stepping forward. Also, make sure you are not holding them back with the leash. Wait is teaching them to learn self-control and they need to learn to hold themselves back.
3. Count 1-2-3, cue him with your release word, and click as he moves forward. Treat in position in front of you.
4. Increase your time by one second as your dog is able to stay in the Wait position. If your dog releases himself before you do, you are making him wait too long. Reduce that time.

Click Points

- Before stepping across boundary, click dog for being in position on the inside of the boundary
- Hesitation or stopping at the boundary, treat in position
- Stepping across boundary upon release

Loose Leash Walking (LLW)

The exercise for LLW will help you teach your dog to walk nicely on leash beside you. It is important that as you are going through the learning process over the next several weeks that you do not allow your dog to pull on leash during off-training walks for exercise. If your dog pulls when walking, it is recommended

that you use a training collar such as a Gentle Leader head halter or an Easy Walk or Freedom Harnesses when walking your dog. Talk to your trainer about these tools.

When teaching your dog the position for walking nicely beside you, the instructions assumes your dog walks on your left side, if you have him walk on your right side, just replace left side instruction for right side. There are a couple exercises to teach position for walking nicely on leash.

Establish the Connection

Walk backwards, establishing connection using a high rate of reinforcement.

Steps

1. With your leash and clicker in one hand, and a handful of treats in the other, begin to walk backwards.
2. As your dog "connects" with you click and feed them a treat while continuing to move backward. Don't stop moving!
3. It is preferable that you feed your dog in position but if they take treats with a hard mouth, you may place the treat right next to your foot on your **left** side
4. Keep moving backwards maintaining a high rate or reinforcement. Click and treat often to keep your dog's attention!
5. If your dog becomes distracted, use kissy noises or another attention getting noises and click when they connect with you again.

Rotating into Forward Movement

Steps

1. Rotate into dog. This mean you are going to turn to your right, which is your leash hand and your dog will end up on your left side. Keep moving forward with them, click/treat for position.
2. If your dog moves out of position (too far forward) and is no longer able to see you, walk backwards in the opposite direction. Make attention getting noises until they connect with you again, and then click and treat as you move backward together.
3. Walk backwards with your dog until you've established a connection using a high rate of reinforcement.
4. Once you've reestablished a connection, turn to your right and click/treat as you walk forward together.
5. Continuing along the same path, so that your dog is on your left side, and you are facing forward. Click and treat as your dog walks by your side.
6. A high rate of reinforcement helps to keep your dog in position.
7. Depending on how well your dog stays in position beside you might have to continue to repeat walking backwards, re-connecting, and turning to the right for forward motion.

Leave-it – Drop Treat on the Floor

The purpose of this exercise is to continue building upon the dog's skill of ignoring treats. Increasing self-control will be required for treat dropping on floor and by ignoring treats placed on the floor or in handler's hand for a length of time.

Warm-up
Practice a couple Leave-its, rewarding and picking up treat.

Steps
1. Cue Leave-it; drop a treat from one foot off ground. Block any attempts with hand or body as needed.
2. Reward and pick up treat
3. A repeat step 1 and 2 gradually increasing distance the treat is dropped and handler is standing tall.

Optional Click Points
- When your dog looks at you

Settle on a Mat
This activity will teach your dog to go over to a mat or bed on cue, and relax there until you release them. Before starting, decide what you would like your finished behavior to look like. Would you like your dog just stay on the mat? Or should they be in a down as well? Use a mat big enough for them to fit their entire body on, and treats large enough that they can see them on the mat.

Anchoring on the Mat – *this level is a clicker-free activity.*
Positioning for this exercise is: Dog-You-Mat, position yourself so that when you place the mat on the ground, you will be between the mat and the dog. Also, position the mat so it is parallel to the dog and not perpendicular so it is easy for the dog to get all four paws on the mat when it walks on to it.
1. Count out 10 treats and hold your mat up and away from your dog.
2. Place the mat on the ground and place a treat on it. As your dog eats the treat, place another treat on the mat. Do this fast enough that your dog's head stays down and adjust where you place the treats so that your dog eventually has all four feet on the mat. Continue until you have only one treat left.
3. Toss your last treat away from the mat, as your dog retrieves the treat, pick the mat up.
4. Prepare to start again with another set of 10 treats.
5. Repeat this process until your dog is automatically goes to the mat when you place it on the floor AND has all four feet on the mat.
6. Be sure to provide breaks in between your sessions. One session equals 3-5 sets.