



10 Step Guide to Positive Training

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1. Reward behavior that you want to recur and reward it generously and often. This practice is the key component of reward-based training. It's a tricky idea to work with because we are more likely to give attention to an undesirable behavior, but waiting for the right thing to happen and then rewarding it will make it more likely to happen again.
2. Dogs learn by association. Your reward has to follow the correct behavior within a second or so. To take it a step further, the words you are going to use to tell the dog what to do need to be closely associated with the correct performance at first, and only later used before to trigger the behavior. Words alone cannot make behavior happen.
3. Use the power of extinction. A behavior that doesn't receive a reward becomes far less likely to happen. Dogs get automatic, biological payoffs for some behaviors they exhibit, so preventing those behaviors is a way to get them to become less prominent in the dog's repertoire. Ignoring a behavior you don't want will help to extinguish it as long as you take steps to keep the dog from getting some other kind of payoff for it.
4. Positive reinforcement must be positive for the dog. Watch your dog's responses to the rewards you present and don't be timid about experimenting to find food, toys, words and actions your dog finds extra special.
5. Learn to present a jackpot. A jackpot is something highly valuable and way above the usual rewards. An example of a jackpot is saving the meat patty out of your burger and giving it to your dog, without advance notice, when he or she does something especially well.
6. Raise the standards for performance very gradually, a task which is easier said than done. Reliable behaviors are built on successful repetitions of each step of the task. Don't go to the next level until the first one is 90% rock solid.
7. Behavior is not dependent upon food being present if the behavior is trained correctly. There are many people, professional trainers included, that are afraid to use food reward training. Phase food out gradually by replacing it with real-life rewards. Associate praise and petting with food treats before using praise and petting alone as rewards. Remember that you are giving your dog information about what is good to do and what isn't.
8. Find an alternate behavior. When you want your dog to stop something that you consider naughty or unpleasant, think what you would want him to do instead, and train an active, positive behavior in place of the one you don't want. For instance, if your dog mobs visitors when they arrive, you could teach your dog to go get a toy to present to the visitor. This takes

the dog away from the most exciting action and brings him back into it calmer and with something to do. You could add a sit to that presentation to make it special.

9. Training should feel relaxed and fun!

- Keep a relaxed, observant attitude when training.
- Try for calm assertive energy on your part
- Quit the session when you start to feel cranky or frustrated.
- When teaching a behavior, think of the ways you can use it in real life.
- Once a new behavior has been accomplished, put it to work your daily routine.

10. Remember, behavior will always drift to where the reinforcement flows.