

Basic Adolescent Homework week 5

Sit/down/stand

Continue to work on mixing up your hand signals in as random an order as possible to prevent your dog from just offering a sequence (sit/down/stand).

Practice having your dog hold the requested position by heavily reinforcing (rapid fire treating) while he stays in position.

Also, your hand signals should look quite refined, with you standing upright for 'Sit' and 'Stand' and being able to raise your hand at least 6 inches off the floor for the 'Down' signal.

Installing the verbal cue

When starting to call these behaviors by their name it is important to follow the guidelines below

1. verbal comes first (and only said once)
2. pause for 2 seconds
3. give hand signal
4. mark with 'yes' when dog guesses right
5. give treat

Recalls

Take a long lead (a nylon or cotton training lead of 25 +ft, or a strong clothesline with a knotted hook on the end- tightly) out to a quiet park or large area. Have a partner practice back and forth hand targeting recalls with you and your puppy. Now move to a new location and repeat (20+ repetitions). If possible go to a fenced in dog park, at an off peak hour when fewer dogs may be present and practice off leash recalls there - from a short distance (10ft-15ft) and only increase distance if your pup is very reliable at this distance. Use sips from water bottles and ball tosses as rewards in the dog park.

Impulse control/stay

Using treats/ toy or pacifier kong practice the following

- Calling the puppy to hand target in the opposite direction of the treat, once he touches the hand, allow him to access the reward by saying 'okay, get it'
- Moving yourself around the dog while he holds a stay.
- Crouching down near the dog then releasing him.
- Adding your verbal and hand signal for this stay exercise. Must have very reliable eye contact for this to go well.

Hand Targeting

Practice hand targeting AWAY from distractions and REWARDING EVERY time he comes away from something for the hand target.

If he cannot focus (excitement and lack of practice) simply resort to luring him away with a treat (like a magnet). He'll get more reliable at hand targeting and leaving stuff alone by default. When practicing this exercise outside on walks reward your dog with treats or short sprints. Cue sprinting with 'okay, let's go'.

Loose Leash Walking

If you have found the proper motivator and have been using it relentlessly, you should be seeing improvement in the loose leash walking. If you are not seeing improvement, examine the two aforementioned points.

Also, REMEMBER, your dog will continue to perform behaviors that work. Therefore it is extremely important to never move forward if the leash is taut. Forward motion is a reward! If you allow forward motion for pulling, you are rewarding it just as surely as if you flipped the dog a cookie for it.

This week, start trying to get a little MORE from your dog, for less food. This doesn't mean getting rid of the treats altogether. Just lengthen the amount of time between the treats. Mark every 2 eye contacts with a click and a treat and every 10 steps with a click and treat.

Begin by asking for 'Sits' at your side when you stop at doors or are crossing the street. This is where your refined hand signals come in handy.