

HAND TARGETING

Hand Targeting is a simple exercise that teaches your dog to touch the palm of your hand when it is presented in front of him. Targeting in general is teaching your dog to touch anything you present or point to when you say "touch". Targeting is simple to teach and has a myriad of uses in everyday interactions with your dog/ Here's just a sampling of what you can use targeting to accomplish with your dog.

- Teaching your dog to approach and interact with friendly strangers, without jumping.
- Obtaining a reliable and fast recall.
- Teaching your dog to "go to" something/someone, or "get" something you've pointed to.
- Teaching your dog that "touching" the hand is a 'button' of sorts to earn the things he wants, like, pets, quick sprints on walks, treats and access to other dogs.

You might wonder WHY hand targeting, why not just teach "come". The answer is that for most people and dogs, targeting is more fun to learn and practice, and therefore a more efficient way to achieve the best results from your pooch.

It's easy to get started. Begin with a handful of treats, and your pup. Present your empty hand [palm facing your dog's head] at your dog's nose level about 1/2 a foot away from the side of his head. The first moment you present your hand your pup will most likely check it out immediately by sniffing it. When his nose touches your palm, excitedly say "yes" and give him a treat from your other hand. Repeat this again and again until your dog is touching your hand rapidly and in succession.

Don't hold your treats so close to your pup's head that he is distracted by them. Refrain from prompting your dog by wiggling fingers or shaking your hand around. Allowing your dog to 'figure it out' uses more brain energy and gets the point across quickly and efficiently.

Progress to being able to hold your hand further from his head, higher and lower, forcing him to stretch toward the hand to touch it. Expect some relapse when the job becomes a little more difficult, just stick with it and let your dog 'do the math' to figure it out.

Practice using your empty hand and the word "touch" to have your dog come to you to touch your hand; in the house, on leash walks, before meals, to gain access to a toy and before you throw toys for him.

Using "Touch/Targeting" in this manner will improve your overall control of your dog at home and in public.

Make "TOUCH" the button that earns your dog everything he wants, and your dog's recall to "touch" the hand will be STELLAR!

TIME OUT!

How do players of organized sports learn to curb misbehavior in the game? Ejection! This principle of removing someone from a pleasurable activity to change future behavior works well in dog training too.

Curbing behavior using timeouts is nothing new. The timeout functions as a penalty marker of sorts for the dog.

Traditionally behaviors you are looking to suppress respond well to timeouts. Things such as: jumping up, begging at tables/plates, nipping at ankles and hands, and "gimme" barking can all be curbed using timeouts.

The following steps should be followed to train with timeouts.

SETUPS

The best way to begin using timeouts is to do them in the context of a setup. For example don't try to train a dog to leave you alone when you are eating by trying to practice it when you are hungry and trying to eat. Instead, produce a situation that looks just like dinner, but in reality is a training scenario where you are not hungry and the goal is not "to eat", but to train the dog.

DEFINE YOUR CRITERIA

This means decide before you begin which behaviors will earn the dog a timeout. For example, if you wish to curb begging at the table, decide WHAT exactly constitutes begging. BE SPECIFIC-some examples would be; paws on human, nose on human, paws or nose on table or within 1 foot of table and barking. Once you have done that, you have given yourself a mental picture of what you are going to be watching for, it will be easier to mark it and give your timeout.

LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION!

How and Where you deliver your timeout is important. Leash your dog before beginning. If your dog is leashed, you won't have to play "greased pig" trying to grab him to move him to the timeout area. Secondly, if he is leashed, you can give a timeout by slipping his leash loop end onto any doorknob in the house. Your timeout area should be sufficiently away from the action, to get the point across, but close enough to facilitate easy execution of the exercise. Don't plan on sending the dog to the yard, or kennel if it takes more than 10 seconds to get there.

"SORRY, TOO BAD, BUH BYE"

You'll need to pick a word or phrase to use to mark the behavior that earns your dog the penalty. Don't use simply "no". Your marker word need not be emotional, the WORD isn't the punishment, the social isolation that follows it is. The word simply says to the dog, "THAT(jumping, nipping, etc)", earned you "this(the timeout)"

Many people use "too bad", or "sorry", I use "Yucky!" or "buh bye", as it helps me relax and not be so serious. The word can be delivered deadpan or with *some* emotion, but shouldn't be scary to the dog, you don't need to shout.

REPETITION

For timeouts to be effectively they need to be of a short duration, one minute is quite effective, and they must be repeated numerous times in succession. Mark the dog's misbehavior with your Timeout Word, deliver the timeout...after one minute release the dog, and return to the setup area to allow your dog to try again, they normally will do the exact behavior again. You then deliver another timeout. It usually takes between 6-12 repetitions before you see the dog self-censor.