



---

## **Training Tips for the dog owner**

### **Training Session 1: The Leave Command**

Begin in the house where there are fewer distractions.

Hold a treat in a closed fist in one hand and the clicker in another.

Your dog will try and get at the treat and paw and gnaw at your hand. Use the command word 'Leave', and then, only when it looks at you and stops trying to get the treat, do you 'click' and release your fist, allowing the dog to get the treat.

You can then try placing a treat on the floor and one in your fist. When you place the treat on the floor say 'Leave'. When he/she makes eye contact with you 'click' and give him/her the reward in your hand then remove the treat from the ground.

You can also try this on the table. Place a treat on the table within the dogs reach and say 'leave'. When the dog jumps back down again and makes eye contact you must 'click' and give a reward and lots of praise.

Try the first technique outside too, this will broaden the generalisation. It will take time to build up this training technique so that the dog actually leaves objects it walks past on pavements, especially food items which may be extremely tempting and hard to ignore. Just be patient and eventually your dog will learn that ignoring treats and objects equals a greater reward.

### **How do I stop my dog from jumping up?**

To prevent this behaviour you need to stop inadvertently rewarding your dog for jumping up. Every time your dog jumps up and you stroke them you are rewarding them for this behaviour. When you enter the same room as your dog, try just standing there and show it no affection. Only when the dog stops jumping up at you, should you bend down and stroke it. When you return to an upright position the dog will probably continue to jump up. He/she is just testing this new situation, so continue to ignore the dog until he/she stops again. Eventually the dog will jump up less and less.

It is extremely important to let anyone who interacts with the dog know that you are implementing this technique. If the dog jumps up at your guests/other family members and they stroke it then the dog will become confused. This will be due to the fact that sometimes he/she is rewarded for jumping up (your guests/other family members stroke it) and sometimes he/she is not rewarded (you ignore it or shout 'down'). The dog will



# CHANTRY VETS

*A Passion for Pets and their People*



ALVERTHORPE · WAKEFIELD · OUTWOOD · OSSETT · MIDDLETON · NORMANTON · CASTLEFORD · PONTEFRACT · HEMSWORTH · FEATHERSTONE

not understand your expectations and as a result may become aggressive, not out of dominance but out of confusion and fear. A dog needs to be given reliable expectations to prevent it becoming fearful. You must remember that dogs are rarely ever dominant; aggression tends to stem from fear because dogs tend to be the omega of the household.

## **Training Session 2: Teaching your dog to heel**

### **The Method**

The key to keeping a dog by your side is to reward them for being there, thereby making it beneficial for them to stay by your side. Whenever your dog is behind you, you must 'click' and then give a reward. Give the reward at the base of your ankles as this is where you want the dog to be.

### **What if she pulls?**

If your dog pulls on the lead you must stop. Do not pull the dog back as this is punishment and will only cause the dog to become more highly aroused and less likely to learn.

By stopping completely you are using the training technique 'negative reinforcement'. With negative reinforcement you are preventing a reward being given and therefore removing something positive. This is opposed to punishment where you apply something negative.

By stopping, the dog cannot go where it wants to go until it is walking at your pace and the lead goes slack. When the lead goes slack again, and the dog stops pulling, you can continue to walk the dog.

If the dog pulls for some time, even once you have stopped walking, then encourage her back by tapping your leg and calling her name, once he/she is back by your side you can continue to walk.

Never walk along with the dog whilst it is pulling. Walking your dog whilst it is pulling reinforces the behaviour because the dog is getting to go where it wants at its own speed and this can be dangerous, especially when approaching roads.

### **Change direction**

You can also try a change of direction to prevent pulling; if your dog starts to pull on the lead, you must let out the tension of the lead, change direction and walk the other way. When the dog feels the pull you are already some feet away and so it should hurry to be



# CHANTRY VETS

*A Passion for Pets and their People*



ALVERTHORPE · WAKEFIELD · OUTWOOD · OSSETT · MIDDLETON · NORMANTON · CASTLEFORD · PONTEFRACT · HEMSWORTH · FEATHERSTONE

by your side as that is where it is safe. When the dog catches up with you, give a reward and lots of praise.

Note: It is best to start off trying this technique near to the house, as the dog will be less excited by all the novel stimuli.

## **Training Session 3: How to stop your dog barking at other dogs**

### **Exercise One**

Put a piece of food down on the ground at a distance where the dog cannot reach. You will feel the dog pulling to get to the treat. Click when the dog gives into the pressure and stops lunging forward.

The timing of the click is when the dog stops lunging forward and chooses to come with you.

If the dog does not turn to come with you, briskfully back up and when the dog turns to come towards you 'click' and 'reward'.

The food is acting as a distraction just like another dog would be. You are teaching the dog to come with you and ignore the distraction.

### **Exercise Two: If the dog barks**

Barking is reinforcing, so the more the dog barks, the more likely it will continue to do it in the future.

If you and your dog are surprised on a walk and come across another dog suddenly then your dog is likely to bark. If this happens simply say 'Let's go' in a high tone and move quickly in the opposite direction. Click when the dog turns to come with you.

If your dog doesn't come with you, pat your leg or make a kissy noise to encourage it to come with you. Click when the dog chooses to come with you.

You can do this whenever you need to change direction unexpectedly from an area where your dog is highly aroused.

### **Exercise Three: Reward the dog for calmly looking – A change in emotional response**

The aim of this training technique is to reward the dog when it is being calm around distracting stimuli and being calm when looking at distracting stimuli. By rewarding the



# CHANTRY VETS

*A Passion for Pets and their People*



ALVERTHORPE · WAKEFIELD · OUTWOOD · OSSETT · MIDDLETON · NORMANTON · CASTLEFORD · PONTEFRAC T · HEMSWORTH · FEATHERSTONE

dog you are classically conditioning the dog to be calm around these distractions and thus creating a change in its emotional response during such stimuli. You are training your dog to enjoy the presence of the distractions without becoming aroused.

Feed the dog a treat in its mouth whilst looking at the person or alternatively 'click' and calmly put the treat on the ground. Doing this action in slow motion will help the dog become relaxed.

It is best to start some distance from the stimuli and move closer and closer as your dog succeeds in staying calm.

Other top tips:

**My dog is scared of the Vets:** As lovely as the staff here at Chantry are, many of our patients do not seem too pleased about coming! Who could blame them? We do not like going to the Doctors or Dentist, being examined and having the fear of what else may come. If you have a new dog, bring it to your local branch before any appointments. Let your dog have a walk around the Reception (as long as he/she has had their vaccinations), give treats, and let them meet as many staff as possible so they can fuss your dog. Getting your dog used to the practice before any potential unpleasantness prevents your dog associating the practice with bad experiences. If your dog has already created this association then speak to our staff. They will be more than happy to inform the vets who will do their best to encourage your timid pet and make the experience as friendly and rewarding as possible.

**My dog is scared of the car:**

The best thing to do if your dog is scared of the car is to build up the experience slowly. Begin by just sitting in the car with your dog without the engine on. Reward the dog for being there and sitting calmly, so the dog begins to associate the car with good things. Next try this with the engine running. Once your dog is acting more calmly in the car start taking it for short journeys, building up the distance the dog travels over time. If your dog appears to be suffering from travel sickness speak to your Vet or our helpful Nursing Staff, as there are remedies available to treat this.





# CHANTRY VETS

*A Passion for Pets and their People*



ALVERTHORPE · WAKEFIELD · OUTWOOD · OSSETT · MIDDLETON · NORMANTON · CASTLEFORD · PONTEFRACT · HEMSWORTH · FEATHERSTONE

---

## **Useful terms:**

**Counter-conditioning:** This is a technique used in order to alter an undesired emotional response by repeatedly associating the stimulus with something nice, such as a treat. For example when a dog hears the doorbell (this is the stimulus) he associates it with a threat (ie the postman) which causes the unwanted behaviour of barking. By distracting the dog when the doorbell rings with food or toys, you are replacing the association of the doorbell and threat, with the doorbell and treat. Over time the barking should cease.

**Desensitisation:** This is often used alongside counter-conditioning and involves weakening the strength of a response to a particular stimulus. Desensitisation is useful in animal phobias and involves exposing the animal to the feared stimulus in small amounts.