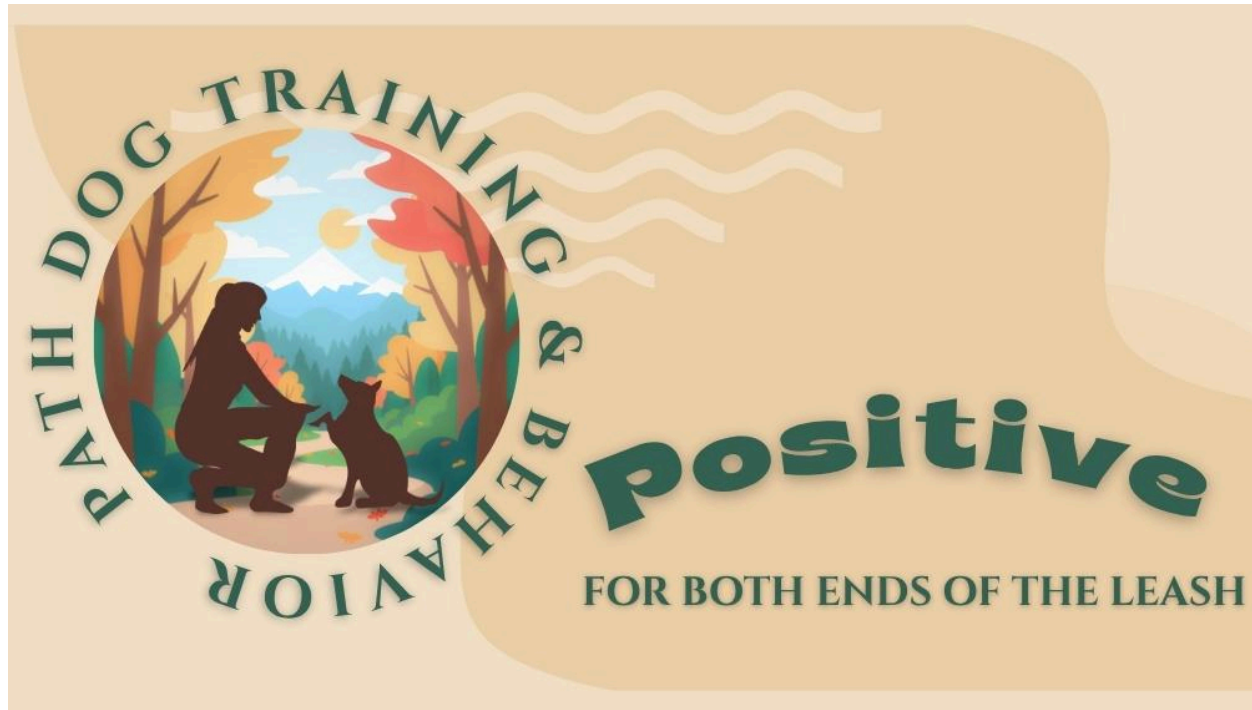


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LEVEL 1 OBEDIENCE WORKBOOK



Introduction

This Workbook includes instructions for the cues I generally cover as Level 1 or absolute basic obedience cues. I teach these to puppies and newly-rescued dogs who have no training background whatsoever. These cues are fabulous in their own right, but they also help dogs learn how to learn with positive-reinforcement “marker” training.

My hope is to provide my private-session clients with enough reminders in an easy-to-follow format that they can practice their homework with relative ease. If you’re having trouble, you can [email me](#) for a reminder at our next session or book a Zoom session to get more specialized instructions.

1 | The Mark

Applications: A mark is a consistent sound that is conditioned, so your dog knows a reward is coming. You may use a clicker, or I like to use the word, “Yes.”

Instructions:

1. When your dog does what you want during a learning process, always mark & reward.
2. If you oops and mark at the wrong time, too bad! A mark is a promise that a reward is coming. It's not as big a deal in positive-reinforcement training to have poor timing compared with corrections. Try to be better about timing on the next round. No harm, no foul.
3. Once your dog understands what to do, you could fade the marker at that point. However, I find that dogs enjoy “school” so much, the marker is part of the fun for them.
*I often continue using the mark & reward teaching system well beyond mastery.

2 | Teach Your Dog Their Name

Applications: Dogs who know their name are more likely to pay attention to you when you ask. It also makes it easier in multi-dog households for the dogs to understand when you want one dog's attention, but not another.

Instructions:

1. Say your dog's name until they look at you. I like to say it in an exciting way at first, especially for nervous dogs.
2. When they look at you, even if it's not directly in your eyes yet, mark & reward with yes/treat.
3. Repeat steps 1-2 until your dog is consistently responding on the first try when you say their name.
4. When your dog is consistent with a very exciting tone, start to vary it. As humans, emotions will win over in the moment. Get your dog used to you saying it when bored, frustrated, angry, extremely happy, quiet, loud, etc.

Note: When you're experimenting with tone, if your dog shows signs of even mild distress, back off the intensity significantly. You can work your way up to where you were very gradually, perhaps over days and even weeks.

3 | Tag AKA Touch

Applications:

1. Recall & interactive refocus
2. Redirect from distraction or trigger
3. Overcoming fear of a scary object
4. Polite way to greet people (or decline)
5. Positioning for loose-leash walking/heel work
6. Service dog alert “boop”
7. Close cupboards
8. Flick on/off a light switch

Instructions:

1. Form your tag hand so that your first 2 fingers are extended and the rest are tucked under your thumb.
 2. Hold your 2 fingers out for your dog to touch with their nose, thumb and other fingers facing your dog.
 3. When your dog makes contact (can be on any part of your hand, we’re not picky) with their nose, mark, and treat from the OTHER hand.
 4. Remove your tag hand.
 5. NEVER combine the treat hand and Tag hand. Those should *always* be separate, so your dog doesn’t do it just to beg for treats, or eventually refuse if they don’t smell treats in your hand anymore.
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4 | Release

Applications: To allow the dog to end a sustained and/or stationary behavior. That could be getting up from a sit or down stay, moving out of a stand stay, or giving the dog permission to stop holding eye contact, heel position, etc.

Instructions:

1. When the dog is doing the behavior you wish to end (for example, sit), say “ok” and toss a treat away from you and the dog.
 2. Ask the dog to repeat the behavior when they return.
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3. Repeat the “ok” release+treat toss until the dog gets up without the treat being tossed.
 4. You can encourage dogs who don’t get up without the treat toss by patting your legs, moving yourself, making funny noises, etc. Then offer a treat, so they understand ending the behavior was the goal.
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5 | Sit

Applications:

1. Prevent jumping up from excitement
2. “Say please” behavior for play, going on a walk, coming out of a confined space, getting a treat, etc.
3. Required for CGC testing, therapy dogs, service dogs
4. Beginning of self-control and calming behaviors

Instructions:

1. Put a treat to your dog’s nose and create an attraction to lure them into position.
 2. To lure into a Sit, play with moving the treat up and back slightly. The dog’s head will go up, the rear end will go down. Physics. If the dog loses interest, you’re going too fast. If the dog backs up, you’re too low.
 3. When the dog sits, say “Yes!” and treat.
 4. Treat them again for staying even a split second.
 5. Release with “ok”, and you can toss a treat to get them up if needed.
 6. Repeat the lure process until the dog can do it quickly with very little effort on your part.
 7. Now you can add the cue. As they get into position, say “sit”. When they do, say “yes” and treat like before. Then treat for staying, and release.
 8. Fade the lure entirely until you can just say “sit”. Then you can start to build a longer stay.
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6 | Down

Applications:

1. Help the dog learn to relax after being excited or upset
 2. Help the dog learn to wait patiently
 3. Required for mat work
 4. Required for Therapy Dog certification
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5. Required for Service Dog Public Access testing
 6. Help children or fearful people feel comfortable greeting and petting your dog
 7. Emergency stop cue in an urgent situation, such as chasing an animal, going toward a road, etc.

Instructions:

1. Puppies don't understand how their body works yet. I always begin by luring with a treat from both a sit and standing position. The easiest way for me to do this is to sit on the floor with the dog. I am also modeling being close to the ground, which speeds up the learning process for your dog. Eventually, though, you do need to stand up and be able to cue this without bending over to the ground, pointing exaggeratedly, etc.
2. Once your dog lies down, mark & reward.
3. Release with "ok" and toss a cookie away to reset.
4. Once your dog is fluent in the luring, it's time to get them to think more independently. I will lure down from a sit (then a stand) 3x in a row. This is called priming.
5. Then I will release and say nothing, cue nothing, do nothing, just wait patiently. Eventually, your dog will, at least, offer something on the way to lying down; and you can reward this in the beginning, if needed. Very often, though, within just a few minutes your dog will think to offer lying down of their own accord.
6. Repeat step 5 until the dog can lie down quickly. This indicates they understand the expectation.
7. Only at this point will I begin to name the behavior, "Down." As the dog lies down, say "down" once. Mark & reward.
8. Do this a handful of times before changing the game by standing up. Remember, when you change the game, it's a new game. Go back to step 5, and be patient while your dog generalizes that offering a down with the human on the ground is the same as offering a down when the human is standing up.
9. Then you can put it on cue again.
10. From here, practice in lots of places and also with each member of the family.

7 | Stay

Applications:

1. Built-in to stationary behaviors like sit, down, and stand
2. Required for all CGC tests
3. Required for the public access test

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4. Part of settling in public places, such as outdoor cafes
 5. Good for avoiding conflict in an overstimulating environment until the trigger can be removed
 6. Great in case of emergency escape scenarios, where the dog needs to let you catch them

Instructions:

1. Ask the dog to sit, down, or stand
2. Build duration by stacking distractions
 - a. Move one foot, treat
 - b. Move the other foot, treat
 - c. Lean left, treat
 - d. Lean right, treat
 - e. Clap your hands, treat
 - f. Clap your hands continuously in a circle, treat
 - g. Be creative with behaviors you can do that keep you close by
3. When your dog can hold still for 3-4 distractions, start combining 2-3 quick ones at a time between treats, and start saying “stay” before you do the distraction series.
4. DO NOT ADD DISTANCE until your dog can handle at least 4 distractions for 1 treat
5. Begin challenging with distance by taking a step to the side, not backing away. We NEVER want to make the dog question if they should come to you or if they should stay. Ensure they thoroughly understand Stay prior to backing away, turning away, etc.
6. Add more steps in any single direction in *random* order. For example:
 - a. 1 step
 - b. 2 steps
 - c. 3 steps
 - d. 1 step
 - e. 2 steps
 - f. 1 step
 - g. 3 steps
 - h. Doing it 1 step, 2 steps, 3 steps, 4 steps, etc., the dog eventually figures out it's just getting harder and will likely disengage from the game.
7. From here, you can vary directions, you can add hopping, jogging, running, galloping, etc.
8. Generalizing is key for a super solid Stay. Make sure to practice everything your dog might see and be tempted by.

8 | Yield to Leash Pressure

Applications:

1. Help your dog understand what to do with leash pressure, so their opposition reflex doesn't take over.
2. Helps with loose-leash walking, so they understand pulling doesn't work.
3. Help your dog understand how different tools work: harness, collar, head collar.
4. Gently introduce puppies to basic walking manners.

Instructions:

1. It is important that your dog first be fluent in the Come cue, so they will gladly come to you.
2. Begin with your dog wearing their chosen tool. Puppies should exclusively wear a harness until their body matures to around 5-6 months old. Attach the leash and give a treat, so this is a good thing.
3. Back up just a couple steps and slowly apply more and more pressure until your dog takes even half a step toward you.
4. Immediately relax the leash, and give your dog a treat.
5. Repeat until your dog will come to you with the slightest, lightest, gentlest pressure.
6. Apply the same principle, but apply gentle, slowly-increasing pressure to the left.
7. Repeat to the right.
8. When you are going to work on the dog pulling ahead of you, toss a treat away and let them pull, but don't let them have it. (Shorter leash = less momentum = easier control.) Do not pull back; any pressure on the leash should come exclusively from the dog pulling to get the treat.
9. When your dog stops pulling and/or looks at you, mark & reward by backing away from the treat a few steps. This sets you up to walk toward the treat again.
10. Walk toward the treat until the dog starts to pull. Then repeat steps 8 & 9.
11. Eventually, your dog will stop trying to go for the treat entirely. At this point, you can pick up the treat or let them have it. If you're working on Leave It while doing this exercise, you MUST pick up the treat. If you have not cued Leave It, you can release them with "ok" or "take it" to have the treat.

9 | Loose-leash Walking

Applications:

1. Stop pulling on the leash
2. Increase offered attention on walks
3. Aid reactivity behavioral modification
4. Learn how to wait patiently, such as at a crosswalk

Instructions: There are 2 basic rules for loose-leash walking. (1) I reward the dog for being near me and/or offering me eye contact, which is most easily done next to me. (2) I stop moving if the dog pulls. I always begin a walk anywhere by rewarding the dog for focusing on me.

1. Begin by practicing in your home with your dog either on- or off-leash. If on-leash, use a Balance harness with the leash clipped to the front.
2. I always begin a walk anywhere by rewarding the dog for focusing on me. Ideally, the dog is sitting next to me; but it can just be standing in front of me in the early stages.
3. Walk in a direction your dog isn't headed, so they have to catch up to you.
4. When they catch up to you, mark & reward right next to your leg. To slow them down, you can reward on the ground, so they have to find it before moving more.
5. Keep walking. If they start to get ahead, turn so they catch up to you. If they offer you eye contact, mark & reward.
6. When they're focused on you with right and left turns while walking, add in a stop and ask them to sit.
7. Repeat #5 until they will sit automatically when you stop.
8. Begin practicing outside on walks, but steer clear of major distractions while your dog is learning. We don't learn algebra at Disneyland.
9. If your dog is a severe puller, you can stop and back up when they pull to get them to reorient to you. Having already taught the cue "Come" and/or "Tag" is essential to help address this.

Bonus: Drunken Walking Game

To get your dog's crazies out, without competing for their attention and focus, let them sniff an area for a while and then be a Magic 8 Ball of directions. Whichever way your dog goes, go another – gently, but suddenly. Within just a few minutes (which can feel like forever), your dog will start to look at you – as though you're crazy. Mark & reward for this focus until they can walk with you nicely. Don't plan to go very far... you'll definitely get your steps in, though! Then begin walking somewhere.

10 | Come

Applications:

1. Get your dog close to you for a fun/loving activity. (NEVER use a recall for something unpleasant!)
2. Avoid a dangerous situation by having your dog come back to you, away from something hazardous – like a prey animal they shouldn't chase, a prickly plant, a rattlesnake, or the street.
3. Help your dog learn to not pull on walks or to learn boundaries for off-leash hikes (in a legal, safe area).
4. The 3rd step for teaching Fetch —> Bring it. This can be for a fun game of ball tossing or for service-dog tasks, like bringing water, medication, or help.

Instructions:

1. Solo game: Start by treating your dog for sitting in front of you, then toss a treat or run away for your dog to chase or go get. They will automatically start to come back to you. When they get to you, mark & reward really close to your leg, so they have to come all the way.
2. You can make the recall bigger when on a leash by running backwards away from your dog as they come. The game of chase is often an extra reward!
3. Family game: When at least 2 people (more is great!) can play, Pass the Puppy is a super fun variation to help make sure your dog listens to everyone in the household eagerly and willingly. Randomly call your dog's name in any order; and when they start coming, mark & reward right next to your leg, so they come all the way.
4. Once your dog has the hang of coming to you, I like to incorporate an automatic sitting behavior. From here, I will include things like collar grabs and putting on the leash, so these sometimes less-fun activities don't result in playing Keep Away.