



Polite Walking

Exercise 4: Increasing Duration and Distractions

Goal

The goal is to ensure your dog can walk on a loose leash in a new place. This exercise will increase the duration and level of distractions even further to include new environments. This is the level that you should plan on repeating until loose leash walking becomes a lifetime routine.

Steps

1. Do a quick warm-up of polite walking. Click and treat every step or two.
2. Set up the normal level of distractions your dog can tolerate that you established in Step 3.
3. Cue “let’s go” and click/treat as the dog maintains a loose leash for 5, and then 10, paces down the length of the room.
4. Work on gradually increasing the distance you can walk (with your dog’s attention!) in the presence of distractions, using the same method as in Step 2. Alternate between longer and shorter numbers of steps. Don’t always make it harder. Set your goal duration to 50 steps with a loose leash.
5. Once you’ve reached 50 steps with a loose leash and your dog’s attention, practice in public places with higher levels of distraction. Remember to give your dog breaks and to treat

Reminders

- Click if the dog looks at a distraction and then returns his attention to you
- Walk farther away from the distraction if the dog is unable to remain focused
- Give your dog breaks and treat every set number of steps (vary this number)



Sit

Exercise 4: Add Distractions

Goal

The goal of this step is to teach the dog to respond and maintain the Sit when there are distractions. This step is an integral part of teaching the dog to maintain the position (Stay) despite distractions such as bouncing balls, approaching people, and unexpected noises.

Steps

6. Warm-up with a few repetitions of Sit while standing in various positions close to your dog. Click and treat all correct responses.
7. With someone approaching from a distance cue the Sit before that person arrives. Click and treat all correct responses. If the dog doesn’t sit, then have the person back up. Next cue the dog when the person is further away.
8. Repeat the process gradually decreasing the distance from the approaching person by a step each time before cueing Sit. Click and deliver a treat for every correct response.
9. When the dog can sit through a person approaching, begin training with another distraction such as a bouncing ball. Initially have another person give a ball a little bounce far away from the dog. Increase the size of the bounce and closeness of the ball slowly.
10. When adding sound distractions start with soft versions of the sound and slowly build the noise level.

Reminders

- Click when your dog’s rear touches the floor
- Reduce the intensity of the distraction if the dog is unable to respond to the Sit cue – move it away from the dog or make it something less distracting
- Deliver the treat to the dog quickly



Leave It

Exercise 2: Ignore Food on the Floor

Goal

The goal of this step is to get your dog to ignore food and objects that are on the floor and to increase the time your dog can resist taking the treat. You may have to jump between this exercise and exercise 1 several times – alternating between having the treat in your hand and on the floor – before your dog can reliably perform this exercise without the temptation to snatch the treat. While working on this exercise, reward your dog in different ways: sometimes let him take the treat from the floor, occasionally treat the normal way, and sometimes pick up the treat from the floor and give it to him. This exercise builds the Leave It so it works at a distance from both you and the dog.

Steps

1. Cue your dog to sit or lie down. Hold the food between two fingers and show it to the dog. Then hold the food a foot or two away from your dog, cuing “leave it”. When your dog looks away from the food, cue “take it” and treat your dog. Don’t click – use the “take it” cue as the release.
2. Sit a few feet away from your dog and slowly put the treat on the ground, but don’t release it. When your dog looks at you, not the treat, say “take it” and treat your dog. Repeat until the dog reliably ignores the food in your hand at floor level.
3. Now place the food on the floor and remove your hand. Cue “take it” after a second or two if the dog ignores the food. (If your dog does not ignore the food and tries to take it, remove the treat and go back to step 2. Practice step 2 several times, until your dog reliably ignores the food. Then restart this step, with a larger distance between you and your dog.) Gradually lengthen the time he has to wait before you let him have a treat. Increase the time you wait in small increments, like two seconds at a time. Don’t always make it harder. Aim for ten seconds before you let your dog have the treat.

Reminders

- Cue “take it” instead of clicking
- Cue “take it” when the dog looks away from the treat (preferably towards you)
- Increase the time slowly – in increments of two seconds (from 2 sec, to 4 sec, to 6 sec and so on)
- You can treat either by giving him food from the opposite hand or by letting your dog have the food on the floor
- Try this with toys and other objects as well



Down

Exercise 1: Follow a Target to a Down Position

Goal

The goal of this step is to shape the dog to lie down by following a target. We will further build this behavior into the standard behaviors of obedience, rally, and agility: the down stay, drop on recall, and table down, along with a variety of more complicated exercises in later classes.

Steps

1. Begin with the dog in a sit position.
2. Position your open hand (the target) so that the dog has to dip his head slightly to touch your palm with his nose; when he does, click and treat.
3. Gradually shape lower nose touches to the target hand, clicking and treating each correct response until the dog will touch the hand placed on the floor.
4. Move your hand an inch or two along the floor so the dog stretches to touch it. If the dog stands up, remove your hand.
5. Other methods include:
 - placing your hand between the dog's paws which will cause him to slide back into a down
 - drawing the dog under a chair or your bent legs by having it follow your hand

Reminders

- Click each nose touch to the target hand
- Click the dog's belly touching the floor
- Remove the target hand after every click
- Move the target hand out in small distances, like 1 inch at a time
- Remove the target hand if the dog stands up
- Focus on keeping your other hand on your thigh if you feel the need to push down on the dog



Down

Exercise 2: Add a Cue

Goal

The goal of this step is to introduce a verbal cue for the Down behavior.

Steps

1. Begin with a warm-up of the down with your target hand, clicking and treating correct responses.
2. When the dog is reliably offering the down when presented the target hand, begin saying "down" just before presenting the target hand.
3. Now, say "down", *then* present the target. Click/treat a correct response. Repeat several times.
4. Your dog will eventually start to anticipate you presenting the target – when you say "down", your dog's front legs will start to bend automatically. When you get to this stage, fade the target. Do so by saying "down", then pausing before presenting the target. As soon as you see your dog's legs start to fold, click. Reward when his chest hits the floor. If, when you say "down", he doesn't automatically start folding his legs, go back to step 3 and repeat it several times.

Reminders

- Click as the dog's belly touches the floor
- Remove the target hand if the dog stands up