



Clicker Training

Credit to Karen Pryor and Karen Pryor Academy

What is Clicker Training?

Clicker Training is a form of reward – reinforcement–based Training. Trainers provide consequences “rewards” that are desirable by the dog in exchange for the behavior we are working to create.

The clicker used in training, strengthens the association of an action with the consequence. The specific sound made by the clicker directly associates with the idea that a reward will be coming. The sound of the clicker creates an automatic response and the dog is enthusiastic because they expect those consequences to be their reward, whether it be food, toys or even praise.

Why use a clicker?

A clicker is used because it solidifies and shows the dog the exact behavior that we are marking and rewarding for. The clicker has a distinct and unique sound which the dog creates a positive association with. It becomes the pattern of Click, Treat and Repeat.

How does Clicker Training Work?

The trainer clicks the moment the desired behavior occurs. For Example: The Dog sits, trainer clicks, food reward is given to the dog.

After a few repetitions of using the clicker, the dog will associate the sound with something they like, like food or a toy being thrown.

1. Get the Behavior
2. Click (Mark) the Behavior
3. Reinforce the Behavior

When clicker training, we want to wait until the desired behavior is understood before adding a “cue” (the name for the behavior). For example: Before naming “sit”, we first want to lure them into a sit, use a hand signal then we can name it once the dog knows what behavior we are asking. Dogs are visual learners first, then auditory so they look at our body language before listening to what words we are saying. If we start saying random words, the dog does not know what we are asking.

Once the dog confidently repeats the behavior, and understands what behavior we are looking for, then we can “introduce the cue” and name the behavior.