



# Manners

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# Default Behavior

In order for your dog to have the best success in our Manners program it is vital that you practice his new found skill at home!

A default behavior is something that you would like for your dog to do when you are not directly interacting with them. This is a useful skill to have that makes taking your dog out in public much easier and more enjoyable for all involved. For example, if you wanted to go somewhere to eat with outdoor seating, and take your dog with you, or even just waiting in the lobby at the vet's office, wouldn't it be wonderful if your dog was just sitting or lying down at your feet? You can then enjoy your meal or flip through a magazine to pass the time without having to worry about your dog trying to steal food, bother people for attention, or go visiting with other dogs. Like any behavior, this is something that we have to teach our dogs and practice regularly in order to keep it fresh.

## **Some Tips for Success:**

Practice this in a variety of distracting situations. Some examples include a park bench, the pet store, places with outdoor seating, at a sports game, the playground, etc.

Another great time to practice this is while watching television. You are displaying the same disinterested body language that you would be in public and it is easy to integrate a training session into your weekly schedule.

We want this to be an automatic behavior (something that we do not have to ask our dogs to do, they just do it automatically), so we are not using verbal commands to ask for our dogs to go into the Sit or Down.

## **How to Teach It:**

Pick a Sit or a Down as your dog's default position. You want to choose the position that the dog would be physically comfortable holding for a longer period of time. For most dogs that is a Down, but it varies based on the structure and size of the dog as to which they find more comfortable.

Have a good amount of small treats ready and pick a location to practice.

Begin by using a piece of food to lure your dog into the chosen position (Sit or Down) and continue feeding as often as it takes to keep your dog in that position without getting up.

To start off, you will most likely need to feed very frequently, but the time in between feeding should increase with practice. If they get up, lure them back into position, and start over!

Try not to look at, pet, talk to, or pay any attention to the dog during this exercise. You should be simulating disinterested body language. This teaches the dog that when you are not paying attention to them, they should assume their default position.

When distracting or stimulating things happen in the environment (person, dog, car, bicycle, loud noise, etc.) feed the dog more frequently to insure success, as well as reward the dog for making a good