



Manners

Impulse Control

In order for your dog to have the best success in our Manners program it is vital that you practice this new found skill at home! Impulse Control exercises are pre-requisites to learning and adding the cue "Leave it".

Impulse Control is a skill that is often taken for granted, but is a very important part in having a well behaved dog. It is a skill that has to be learned and developed. It is the building block for a dog that doesn't steal things off of the counters, doesn't try to take things that don't belong to them (socks, pillows, etc.), and doesn't dive across the kitchen floor to get that piece of food that you dropped. These exercises teach your dog that not everything belongs to them and that waiting and being patient is heavily rewarded. We also don't use any words for these exercises because we want them to be automatic behaviors, meaning something your dog just does naturally without you having to tell them to.

With Food in Your Hand:

Start with one cookie in your hand and show it to your dog

If your dog moves towards the food or tries to get it in any way, immediately close your hand so that the dog cannot get or see the cookie

Your hand should remain shut until the dog is no longer actively trying to get the cookie

At this point you can try opening up your hand again and see how the dog reacts

Repeat opening and shutting your hand as needed until the dog is making no movement towards the food at all

If there is no movement towards the food, you can take the food in your hand and give directly to the dog. The key is to not be "released" to the food, but rather be rewarded for pausing before taking. All reinforcement should come from the person.

Food on the Floor:

Show your dog that you have a cookie and place it on the floor so that your hand is covering the cookie

Your dog will most likely attempt to get the food under your hand by licking it, pawing at it, barking, sniffing your hand, etc.

Once the dog is no longer actively trying to get the cookie, you can open up your hand so that your dog can see the cookie again

If your dog makes any move towards the food, your hand shuts and you repeat the process until your dog is not making any move towards the cookie on the floor

Once your dog is able to look at the cookie and not move towards it, you can reward the dog by handing them the cookie that was on the floor. The reinforcement should come directly from you, rather than releasing them to the food.

Food in a Bowl:

This exercise is best done kneeling or sitting on the floor as it helps you to be more accurate with your timing.

When practicing this you can use your dog's breakfast or it can be done with treats in the bowl you typically use for their food. You are going to put the food or treats in the bowl and get your dog's interest.

Now attempt to place the bowl on the floor

If your dog makes any move towards the bowl, you immediately pick it back up to where the dog can no longer easily reach it

Repeat attempting to put the bowl down until you are able to place the bowl on the floor without your dog moving towards it

Once they stop moving, you may take food from the bowl itself and reward.