



Building Your Relationship: Positive Training Using Watch Me's, New Names, Sits

The first step in training is building your relationship with the dog. Then, we try to motivate the dog to behave in ways that we want him to and to get his attention. We use these premises:

1. We must first gain the animal's trust
2. We have to have their attention
3. We have to be really interesting or have something they want

Getting His Attention with Watch Me's

Teach Him to Look at Your Eyes to Build that Relationship

We choose to use food as lures. Take your hand with the treat in it, pass it by the dog's nose so he can smell it and take the treat to your forehead between your eyes (of course, the dog's eyes should be following that treat!). Use the treat like a refrigerator magnet from his nose to your forehead. Make sure he's been able to smell the treat. As soon as his eyes meet yours, treat him (within the count of 2). Remember you need to give him the treat within the count of 2 seconds. After he can do this with the treat and hand signal to your forehead, you can add the command "watch me". As he's able to hold his gaze at your eyes longer, you can stretch out the time before you treat him. I also use my pointer finger at my forehead center as the "hand signal" for "Watch Me.

Watch Me's are so important for your dog and you for so many reasons:

1. Looking into your eyes is scary for a dog. By pairing a positive reward with the scary action by the dog, he learns to trust you
2. It also builds his confidence
3. It mentally stimulates him and helps him to calm himself
4. Best yet – it's the cornerstone of all our training. A dog who can do a solid watch me with his handler can be more easily managed, socialized and is easier to train!

Besides, potential adopters love it when the dog can look into their eyes! It makes the dog more attractive to them!

To help him to remain focused on your treats, you can cut back on his morning meal - if you're working him after breakfast or even the evening meal. If he's a little bit hungrier, he'll be more receptive to the treat. Also, if he's a picky eater, you have to use higher value treats. If you are in a situation that is either stressful or distracting to the dog, you'll need to also use higher value treats (more yummy to the dog). Or, if your dog prefers a toy or ball, you can also use those items as lures!

Teaching the Sit

A Sitting Dog is Not a Dog in Trouble!

We use food lures to teach the dog what we want them to do for all behaviors. Using a food lure as a magnet, let the puppy sniff the food lure to let him know it is there. With the food close to the nose, slowly lift your hand over the top of the head toward the dog's back. As the nose lifts, the rear end will automatically drop into a sit. Say "Good" and reward with a treat. You are teaching the hand signal for sit. After a couple of days, the puppy will not need the food lure and will recognize the hand signal. After the puppy learns to sit with your hand signal (raising your palm up to your chest), put the food lure in your other hand and use the signal with one hand and immediately treat the puppy with the food in the other hand. ALWAYS use a verbal reward also of "Good"!

If the dog does not respond to the signal, don't get angry and don't punish. Also, don't repeat the command multiple times (sit, sit, sit,). ONLY SAY A COMMAND ONCE. Say "Wrong" to indicate they are not doing something correctly. Wait a few seconds, then start over. Remember, we also use a separate command for each action or behavior we want the dog to do~

Getting Your Dog to Recognize His Name

Ah, He Responds When I Say His Name! He's so Smart!

Again, we choose to use food as lures. To get your puppies attention, and get him to recognize his name, say his name in a pleasant, regular tone and IMMEDIATELY give him a reward (a small tasty morsel of food).

Try to smile and say "GOOD". Keep doing this until you get an instant response when you say his name and he turns to look at you and acknowledge you. If you say his name and he doesn't acknowledge you, NO treat. Remember, the treat must be given within 2 seconds to be effective until he learns to expand his attention. Otherwise, he won't understand what you want from him.