

Training Your Pet

The following is an outline of sequential obedience commands used by the behavior department at the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Hospital to help clients train their pets.

TOUCH

- * hold thumb out and say "touch", when dog touches thumb with nose, reward with treat
- * change to using the palm of your hand with "touch" command, reward with treat when dog touches your palm with its nose.
- * then use an inanimate object such as a plastic lid, can then place the lid and command the dog to "touch", dog needs to go to lid to receive reward

LOOK

- * tell dog to "look", when makes eye contact, give treat. May initially need to hold treat up by eyes to establish eye contact with command.

SIT

- * begin with using a treat, hold the treat over the top of the dog's nose to get the dog to naturally sit back and then reward the dog
- * don't physically push the dog into the sit position, it needs to learn on its own
- * don't use the "sit" command until dog successfully masters the behavior, otherwise may associate the command with behaviors it was doing before it learned to sit

STAY

- * praise correct response to "stay" command with a single finger scratch - don't overexcite dog with praise or will break response

HEAL

- * use "touch" command and hand held to your side to have dog touch palm with nose, reward with treat
- * dog will have to "heal" in order to obey "touch" command

PUNISHMENT

- * when dog behaves inappropriately, disassociate yourself from the dog, ignore the dog, do not yell or physically intimidate the dog
- * inappropriate punishment can lead to behavior disorders or worsening of current behavior disorders

TABLE SCRAPS AND TREATS

- * do not give a dog any sort of treat with out first instructing the dog to "sit" or do something else it knows how to do
- * only reward proper responses to commands
- * excessive treats and human food can lead to obesity and obesity-related health problems

DOGS THAT "JUMP UP"

- * attention seeking behavior
- * redirect the behavior à ask to sit before can exhibit behavior
- * ignore and step back when dog jumps up - disengage from dog
- * don't physically engage with dog to get it down
- * if you don't seem exciting to the dog, it will stop

CATS ON COUNTERS

- * leaving food on a counter that a cat has access to is like a reward for the cat to get on the counter
- * try placing an upside down carpet runner on your counters, cats tend to dislike the feel of it on their feet
- * be consistent with your discipline - if you are only their reprimanding the cat 30% of the time when it jumps up on the counter, it won't be enough to discourage the cat the 70% of the time you are not there.