

The Sit Command

Obviously our dogs know how to sit. This is a method to get them to sit on cue.

Step One -- In a quiet area, put a yummy treat in your hand. Position your dog so he is directly in front and facing you. Put your hand directly in front of your dog's nose and then slowly move your hand up and over your dog's nose, and towards his tail. When your dog looks up to see the treat he should go into a sit. When his bottom hits the ground, say your reward marker ("yes") and give him the treat. Release him by saying the word "okay," move away so he gets up. Repeat this at least 5 times with at least 90% accuracy before moving on to Step Two.

Step Two -- Put your hand holding the yummy treat behind your back. Place your empty hand in front of your dog's nose, raise your empty hand as in step one, and when your dog sits, say your reward marker and then give him the treat from your other hand. During this step you are teaching the dog to follow your hand, not the smell of the treat.

Step Three -- After your dog sits, wait a few seconds before giving them the reward. By doing this, you are beginning the process to teach your dog to stay.

Step Four -- Work on these steps in an area with more distractions, such as a room with other people, other dogs, or outdoors.

Step Five -- Teach your dog to sit on your left side and right side. You will have to start again with a lure like you did in step one. While your dog is on a leash, take a step forward and go through the sit command while your dog is at your side. Then take another step forward and do it again. It is important to teach your dog to sit at your side as it is the foundation to getting them to politely walk on leash. If you don't teach sitting at your side, when you tell them to sit while you are walking, your dog will want to swing around in front of you and sit.

What if my dog doesn't sit when I put the treat over his nose? You can try to place him in a corner and when he backs up he will move into the wall and will often go into a sit.

What if my dog jumps up at the treat? If your dog jumps up, don't give him a treat, turn around and ignore him for one second, and try again. Also hold the treat lower while you are luring. Often dogs jump for treats held too high.