

Teaching Your Dog To “Leave It”

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Definition

“Leave it alone and look at me instead.”

Practical Uses

Leave it is useful when you want your dog to stop doing something, such as sniffing at someone or something, barking, licking or puppy nipping. The dog should immediately stop what she is doing and look to you for guidance.

How to Teach “Leave It”

Put a treat on a chair or stool at the dog’s nose level. Let the dog see it, then cover it with your hand. The treat should be tempting enough that your dog is trying to push your hand away to get it. *AS SOON AS* she pulls her nose back from your hand, *click and offer a treat from your other hand.

Comments

When your dog consistently backs off, add the cue “leave it” as you show her the treat on the chair.

When your dog reliably leaves the treat on the chair, try the exercise with the treat on the ground. Cover the treat with your foot or hand if she tries to take it. When she backs off, click, praise her and give her a treat.

Be sure not to let your dog succeed in grabbing the treat or she will be rewarded for the wrong behavior!

ALWAYS praise your dog when she leaves it. You need to be more rewarding than whatever you are asking her to leave!

Another Way to Teach “Leave It”

Place a treat on a paper plate on the floor. With your dog on leash, approach the paper plate, but stay far enough away that your dog cannot reach it. **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR DOG TO GET THE TREAT.** Your dog will probably strain toward the treat, but be patient and stand still without saying a word. Wait for her to look back to you as if asking why she can’t have it. The second she looks at you, click and offer a treat from your hand. Repeat by approaching the treat from different directions until your dog automatically looks at you when she sees the treat.