

## Tricks

### Training Tips

Tricks are a great way to develop skills while having fun with your dog. The more you and your dog work together on new behaviors, the stronger your relationship becomes.

Think of the end product you're trying to accomplish, then break it down into tiny steps. Train each step separately, then combine a couple of steps, add another step and so on until you have the final behavior or trick.

"Shape" a behavior by clicking and treating even small efforts in the right direction. Use a food treat or toy to lure your dog a little closer to the final behavior.

Some tricks require many, many repetitions before your dog understands what you want her to do. If you get frustrated, go back to an easier behavior that she does well and end your training session on a positive note.

### Shake

Start with your dog in a sitting position. If your dog naturally raises or lifts her paw when you're working with her, such as when holding a treat in front of her, click, praise and treat this behavior. Repeat several times. Gently hold her paw when she raises it. Another approach is to hold a food treat or toy slightly above your dog's head toward the right ear. As she leans toward the treat or toy, she'll shift her weight. Gently lift her left front paw, click, praise and treat. Repeat several times and she'll soon be raising her paw without the food lure.

### Rollover

Start with your dog in a down position. When relaxed, most dogs will lie down with their weight on one hip or the other. If your dog is in a sphinx position (weight evenly distributed between both hips), stroke one side or the other to help her relax. Whichever side she's laying on will be the direction you'll guide her to rollover. Hold a treat in front of your dog's nose. Move the treat down and around to her elbow, then over her shoulder. As her nose follows the treat, she'll roll over onto her back. You can help her roll completely over and give her the treat and lots of praise. If she's laying on her right hip, bring the treat over her left elbow and left shoulder. She'll lean farther on her right side as she follows the treat with her nose. Help her to continue to rollover by bringing her legs over or toss the treat out of reach so she'll complete the rollover herself to get the treat.

### Find It

Place a treat on the floor a few feet away from your dog. As she goes to get the treat, say, "find it." Repeat several times. Ask your dog to sit-stay, then place a treat on the floor. Go back to your dog, praise and release her from the sit-stay, saying, "find it" to tell her to get the treat. Gradually increase the difficulty by placing the treat farther away. Always return to your dog to release her from the sit-stay before she can "find it." Increase the difficulty again by hiding the treat behind a piece of furniture, around a corner or in an adjacent room. If your dog isn't ready for you to walk away while she's in a sit-stay, have a helper hold her or have her on a leash looped around a table or chair leg. If you don't want your dog to look for food on the floor, use a toy instead of a treat. Instead of "find it," you can say "find the ball" or "find the toy."

## **Jump Through a Hoop**

Hold a hoola hoop so the bottom touches the floor. With your dog on one side of the hoop, hold your hand or a target stick on the other side. Tell your dog to "touch." Click and treat when she steps through the hoop. Wait until your dog easily steps through the hoop before you start to gradually raise it off the ground. If your dog is younger than one year of age, keep the hoop close to the ground, so she doesn't damage the growth plates in her legs.

## **Wipe Your Nose**

Stick a small piece of tape on your dog's nose. When she paws at her nose to get the tape off, click and treat. Repeat several times before adding the cue "wipe your nose." You can also add a hand signal, such as scratching your nose. Repeat several times with the tape before trying it without the tape.

## **Push the Ball**

Some dogs, especially herding breeds, love to push a large ball around the yard. You can teach your dog to push a ball by transferring the "touch" command to the ball. Touch the ball with your finger or target stick and say, "touch". If your dog touches the ball, click and treat. Repeat several times. Then, instead of you touching the ball, just point and say, "touch." Click and treat when your dog touches the ball. Repeat several times. When your dog reliably touches the ball on cue, click and treat only those nose-touches that move the ball, however slightly. Continue to praise every touch. Soon your dog will be pushing the ball just for the fun of it! If your dog won't touch the ball initially, spread some peanut butter on the ball. Click and treat when she sniffs at the peanut butter.

## **Bang!**

Teach your dog to "play dead" by clicking and treating when she lays on her side. Similar to a rollover, start out with your dog in a down. Hold a treat in front of her nose and lure her into a position flat on her side. As soon as she lays on her side, click and treat. You may need to rest your hand on her head or shoulder to help her relax in this position. Repeat several times. Add a verbal cue or command, such as "bang," and a hand signal, as if you were pretending to shoot a gun, when she begins to offer the behavior.

## **Curtsy**

Dogs naturally go into a "playbow" position, front legs down and hind end up, when they want to play. To teach your dog to bow or curtsy, hold a treat in front of her nose and bring it straight down between her paws. As her nose follows the treat to the floor, and before her hind end goes down, click and treat. Repeat several times before adding a cue or command, such as "curtsy."