



# Basic Obedience

## Week 1 Client Information & Homework Sheets

# Basic Obedience

## Basic Obedience Week 1 Information Sheet

Over the next 4 weeks you're going to learn valuable lessons that will not only better your dog's behaviour but will also strengthen your relationship.

Our training is based around play and positive rewards to create enthusiastic dogs that love to train and have fun doing so.

Let's start with talking about food.

### Why should I use food when training?

Asking your dog to do something just because you told them to is like your boss asking you to go to work for no money. You probably wouldn't want to go to work, would you? You could force your dog to comply, but that isn't going to help build your bond. Therefore, we need to provide incentive, especially in the early stages of learning or in unfamiliar environments.

Food releases dopamine which promotes focus, concentration and makes your dog feel good so will naturally increase the likelihood they will repeat the behaviour you are teaching! . It creates enthusiasm. Food is easy to work with and most dogs love it!

**But then my dog will only listen to me when I have food and I will have to 'bribe' him every time....**

This is a common misconception in dog training, but easily avoided using the following steps:

1. CUE the behaviour. ( Give the command )
2. MARK the behaviour with a clicker or marker word such as 'yes', to let the dog know they did the right thing and a reward is coming.
3. Present the treat or reward.

There is a *big* difference between a bribe and a reward -

The bribe comes before the behaviour and the reward comes after the behaviour. This is important to understand. Bribing is not effective training, however reward via reinforcement certainly is.

**Also note, after the learning phase, when the behaviour is 90% reliable, you can start to fade off the food rewards.**

For example, if you are teaching your dog to lay down, you would start off by reinforcing every lay down or good attempt with a food reward.

Soon enough your dog will start to lay down when you ask with little effort. This is when you can start rewarding every so often with rewards other than food such as pats, praise, play, going inside or outside, etc.

Food is not required forever if used correctly. Just remember you must train your dog to perform each behaviour reliably in different environments and around different distractions before fading off the food.

### **But my dog loves food so won't he end up fat?**

No, because what you use for training you will deduct from his main meal. If you train with lots of treats and give your dog his entire meal that day/night – he may indeed end up over weight.

Some dogs will train for kibble at home which makes meal times perfect for training. Or you can use a portion of their kibble for training throughout the day. But you may need extra yummy treats when in unfamiliar environments or where there are lots of distractions – but not forever. This is important to understand.

You may also be able to train your dog with a ball or play rewards. We also encourage these rewards in our training.

### **How do I know when I can stop using food?**

Once your dog will reliably perform the behaviour you're teaching in any environment around any distraction, then you can stop using food and transfer onto other rewards. But remember – don't ask for too much too soon. Gradually increase the distractions and different settings to ensure you set yourself and your dog up for success!

## Play is important for a variety of reasons!!

### 1. Physical exercise

We've all heard that a good dog is a tired dog, and that's certainly true. Dogs need physical exercise each day in order to feel fulfilled. If those needs aren't met quite often a dog will look elsewhere to find something to do – such as digging in the yard or chewing things they shouldn't. If you're short on time and can't walk your dog, each day you can supplement their routine with some interactive playtime at home.

Play is a quick and easy way to fit in some more physical exercise for your dog each day. Games like tug, fetch, chase and tag or similar are invaluable ways to give your dog a natural outlet.

### 2. Strengthens your bond

One of the best ways to strengthen the bond you have with your dog is to spend quality one on one time together. Recognising how your dog loves to play and having structured quality play sessions will also make your dog “love you” even more – which is essential for a good recall and successful obedience.

Playing elevates levels of **serotonin** and **dopamine**, which calm and relax. It has been found that pet owners have lower cholesterol levels (an indicator of heart disease) than those without pets. Heart attack patients with pets survive longer than those without.

### 3. Mental stimulation

Mentally stimulating activities (often referred to as brain games) are a fun way to enrich our dog's lives by giving them something meaningful to do. In addition to physical exercise I like adding in a few quick mentally stimulating games into my dog's daily routine. And because these activities alleviate boredom, they decrease the likelihood of our dogs developing behavioural issues such as excessive barking or chewing.

Some examples of brain games for dogs include nose work games, puzzle toys, snuffle mats, and stuffed kong toys. They're also an easy way to keep your dog entertained.

#### 4. It makes training fun

Playing with dogs is fun, but it's also a great way to work on some basic training and improving manners. Playtime is one of the ways puppies start learning basic manners, as an example if they play too rough, they often get a nip from their littermate or mother, or they might stop the game altogether. You can use similar rules when you play with your dog.

#### 5. Relieves boredom and stress

One of the biggest benefits of play for dogs is that it relieves boredom and keeps them occupied. When dogs get bored, they'll come up with their own ways to entertain themselves — and that often involves undesirable behaviours such as excessive barking.

By playing with your dog as much as you can, you can decrease the likelihood of them developing destructive habits. When you add more playtime to your dog's routine, you're giving them something meaningful to do.

#### 6. Biological fulfillment

Every dog on the planet has natural drives, some are stronger in some dogs than others. more so than others. Understanding this and utilising it within your training will make training not only more fun but more successful.

#### 7. Confidence building

Some dogs are more timid or unsure than others and need a little extra encouragement so they realise they 'can do it '. Play and games motivates your dog and allows them to think, process, work through minimal stress and most importantly – WIN ! Each win instils a small amount of confidence and is invaluable in all aspects of training and daily life.

## Prey Drive

The different parts of the prey sequence represent different games you can play with your dog to ensure they are 'biologically fulfilled'. There's no point trying to get your dog to chase a ball if they would rather tug a rope as an example, just like if you prefer tennis over cricket – no amount of playing cricket will make you feel as satisfied as a good game of tennis.

### The Prey sequence consists of:

Seek – Sniff and find

Stalk – Get ready to chase it/catch it, or round it up

Chase – Go after it

Catch – Grab it

Kill – Thrash it around once we have it

Consume – Pull it apart

Celebrate – Run around with it

Naturally some breeds prefer lap time over a lot of games, but this is why it's important to understand the different breeds and what they were originally bred for... because it will more often than not, dictate what games will be more motivating to them.

## What will I learn during the course?

**Stay** – Remain where they are - sit/stay, down/stay etc or a geographical stay – not necessarily within a position.

**Name recognition** – To grab your dogs attention before a command.

**Recall** – To return to you from wherever they are. Important for safety when out and about.

**Relax** – Settle on the spot.

**Impulse Control** – Around other dogs and people.

**Lead skills /Loose lead walking** – Walk nicely on a lead. (We have tools to assist if needed but prefer teaching this on a collar)

**Focus** – Teaching your dog to pay attention to you.

**Perform these behaviours adding distance and distraction.**

## Words or 'Markers' we will use during the course.

**Yes** – You've done the right thing, a reward shall follow.

**Let's go** - Walk with me.

**This way** – Im about to change direction.

**Uh uh** – That's not quite right. Re-command or reposition if needed.

**Look** – Focus on me.

**Relax** – Settle down.

**Free or Go Sniff** – You're released to do as you like / end of exercise.

**Paws** – put your paws here.

## RELAX or FOOT ON THE LEAD

Introduce your dog to an off switch – that you can take anywhere with you.

This is intended to help you manage your dog when they are overexcited or too boisterous. This should be seen as a positive exercise not as a punishment. Watch your tone of voice when you are giving the command.

We want to stand on the lead at the point where the dog can very comfortably stand and raise their head but not jump up or walk off. Starting to train this to cue works best if the dog isn't above threshold (so excited they can't listen to you), and this is not supposed to create a negative association with the lead, mat or close proximity.

First, we cue the behaviour by saying 'Relax', then place your foot on the lead.

As soon as the dog relaxes, we say either 'yes' and reward with our foot off the lead AND a treat or 'ok' and simply take your foot off the lead. Use your 'Let's Go' cue to move into another area/practice loose lead walking and repeat at various intervals.

Once this can be done without hesitation, we can ask for longer periods of time in relaxed mode. This is something that needs to be heavily reinforced with verbal encouragement and treats.

This can be something that can be practiced at different intervals during training, so it can help in times when the dog gets over excited. It's essential that if this cue is given, that it is followed through consistently.

## What should I bring to each session?

Food reward and a treat pouch – we have pouches for sale if needed.

A harness and a good fitting buckle collar.

Your dog's favourite toy.

A strong lead – no bungee or retractable leads.

Your dog and a smile 😊

(Remember don't feed your dog before coming to class)



## Basic Obedience Week 1 Homework

### *Client take home sheet.*

1. Condition your dog to the word 'YES'.

Say YES and follow by giving your dog a treat as much as you can over the week.

Say YES before presenting any food including meals.

Your dog should eventually come straight to you or look at you when you say YES in anticipation of food. Once this is occurring, we can use it for training.

Remember, do not present the food before saying yes - it must be presented after!

2. Practice FOOT ON LEAD as much as you can to promote calm. ('RELAX')
3. Practice the focus game. Add in 'LOOK' cue once they are looking at you reliably.
4. Practice saying 'FREE' as your release marker. Remember the tone in your voice will dictate an excited FREE or a calm FREE.
5. Practice basic lead skills in your yard or a neutral area. Allow your dog to follow the lead pressure so there is no tension in the lead and then reward with 'YES' and treat. A tight lead means you stop walking ! At this stage you will be rewarding liberally !
6. Practice PAWS on any raised surface or item, such as a pot plant base, a book, raised bed or similar. Remember to use your YES marker so your dog knows they are doing well and FREE to release your dog from the item.

**We look forward to Week 2**



# Basic Obedience

Week 2 Homework Sheet

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## Basic Obedience Week 2 Homework

### STAY from platform

1. Practice the stay command - from your platform, stepping out in different directions from your dog. Don't forget to use your hand signal.
2. Remember don't ask for too much too soon, work up to distance, always on lead at this stage, and then add in low level distractions, performing the behaviour in different areas of the house etc.
3. Your dog should perform each step reliably before moving onto the next.
4. Remember to offer encouragement without sounding too excitable or your dog will struggle to stay in position.
5. Always step back to your dog, release with 'YES' and reward. Release with 'FREE'.

### LOOSE LEAD WITH DIRECTION CHANGE

1. Practice rewarding your dog when the lead is loose, using your 'LETS GO' cue.
2. Reward with 'YES' and treat.
3. As you are going to change direction, add the cue 'THIS WAY' and remember talk to your dog as you turn.
4. Release with 'FREE' so they can have a break.
5. Reward for focus also. Add in a 'LOOK' at any time.
6. Remember don't keep walking if the lead goes tight! A gentle reminder nudge should be sufficient. Not a tug on the lead.

### RELAX OR FOOT ON THE LEAD PRACTICE

1. Try aiming for longer periods of time relaxed before releasing.
2. Practice on walks and in different areas. Release with 'FREE'.

### NEAT SIT

1. When loose lead walking lure your dog into a neat 'SIT' beside you. Remember keep your reward hand right by the seam of your pants so your dog is nice and close.
2. If your dog swings out, use a wall or similar to assist.
3. Add in a 'LOOK' after a 'SIT' or anytime when you are walking.

Remember!!! – If you can't follow through, don't ask!

We look forward to seeing more progress in week 3 😊



# Basic Obedience

Week 3 Homework Sheet

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## Basic Obedience Week 3 Homework

### LOOSE LEAD WALKING around distractions.

1. Start loose lead walking incorporating neat 'SIT' outside of your home environment but keep the distraction levels low.
2. Remember to offer encouragement without sounding too excitable or your dog will struggle to stay in position.
3. Include many changes of direction, using 'LET'S GO' and so TALK TO YOUR DOG so they pay attention to you and you can use less food. Every now and then, stop, ask for 'RELAX'. Release with 'FREE'.
4. Add a 'LOOK' at any time. If your dog won't look at you, move further away from the distraction.

### Practice PAWS around distractions ( Impulse Control )

1. Take your platform out and about and practice 'STAY'. Add 'LOOK' at any time.
2. Try 'STAY' without your platform. Move further away from the distraction if you need too.

### Practice RECALL

1. Practice recall around minor distractions. Increase distance or add distraction if your dog is doing well. Remember you must be able to back up your recall and ALWAYS reward !

### USE YOUR 'FREE' release command on walks to combine with RECALL

1. When you want your dog to have a sniff and a wee, say your release word of 'FREE' and let them 'be a dog'. They may sniff, search, toilet...whatever they like. Then use your RECALL word and call them back to you, before you say 'LET'S GO' and keep walking.

Remember – If you can't follow through, don't ask!

We look forward to graduating in week 4 😊