



Treats and Training Aids for Positive Reinforcement

Working with your dog on a **6 foot leash** made of leather or cotton web material is ideal for training. Nylon leashes, though inexpensive and colorful, are often easy to accidentally slip from your grip and somewhat uncomfortable (you can get a rope burn if you try to grip and the dog pulls hard). For your convenience, I sell very soft and easy to grip moccasin leather leashes (made by hand in USA and tanned in England) They never stretch out and stay soft and supple, better with time. Retractable leashes have many drawbacks for training.....tension on the collar at all times and hard to “reel a dog in”. If you accidentally let go, it frightens the dog to have this object chase it down, etc. **A 30 foot long line (training lead) is also a very useful tool for practicing recalls and distance downstays outdoors.** These items are available at your local pet supply and at **PetEdge.com**. I sell long lines as well (it is difficult to find a longline for a little dog, so I special order them). I recommend that you buy one before our 3rd lesson.

Ideally, you will have a **variety** of healthy treats mixed together so the dog doesn't know what he is going to receive. This way, the training becomes less about “I am going to get cheese” and more about reward. Also, dogs who love string cheese can tire of it and become less attentive.

If your dog(s) is/are not super food motivated, do **not feed them before a training class**, lesson, or training session (or **give them a very small portion of their meal**). Even if your dog/puppy is food motivated, do not feed them a full portion before training, give half or less until after training. If a lot of treats are given during a session, such as when a dog is learning a new behavior or working around distractions, you will want to downsize their next meal so they don't over indulge.

Cut treats **tiny**, about the size of a tictac. You can keep them in your pocket (not ideal because it takes too long to fish them out and you may not want a pocket that smells like dog treats), fanny pack, nail pouch, or a training bait bag available at your pet store or catalog. The best treat pouch I have found has a hinge and you can open and close it with one hand Karen Pryor Terry Ryan Treat Pouch call your petstore or order on amazon \$14.95. The inexpensive alternative is a nail apron, from your hardware store, not fashionable :O) but only a few dollars and does the job and machine washable!

High Value Treats: Absolutely invaluable for working outdoors and with dogs that are highly distractible. Roast beef, cooked liver, string cheese, chicken, turkey, lunch meat, chicken hot dogs, hamburger bits. String cheese and Natural Balance cut in long strips are very useful for loose leash walking training.

Medium Value: Freeze dried lamb lung or liver, Carnivore Cuisine Dog Treats, Natural logs -comes in a tube like a sausage (check ingredients) great to cut up for treats (dogs LOVE beef)! Also, **Ziwi Peaks**, Real Meat soft treats, Solid Gold jerky, Wellness soft treats, Zukes, Simon & Huey. Chicken jerky (great to keep in pockets of jacket) or salmon Jerky, soft training treats from your local pet store. Costco has off and on Nature's Domain Grain Free Bison and Yummy Chummies Wild Alaskan Salmon.

Very Low Value: Kibble (either a different flavor, same brand or same flavor, different brand) Cheerios or whole wheat tortillas (cut or tear into little pieces), hard tiny treats such as Wet Noses.

NOTE: A spoonful of **plain whole milk yogurt** or cottage cheese helps with digestion, as does pumpkin. If your dog is prone to loose stools or has a sensitive stomach, this is especially helpful.

Please avoid treats from the grocery store and read the label at the warehouse/big box pet stores to avoid sugar, corn syrup, corn, artificial colors and flavors. If wheat is the main ingredient, avoid. Wheat is a filler, sometimes an allergen and not super tasty. Hard treats are usually less desirable because they are low value (won't motivate a distracted dog) and crumble (dog stops training to sniff crumbs on the ground, and take a long time to eat (crunch, crunch, crunch). Also, dogs are more likely to get them stuck in their throat. Dogs get very excited about positive reinforcement training and swallow or inhale large pieces, then cough them up. Eventually, treats will become random for behaviors that become well established or fluent. But we all like getting reinforced for good behavior and hard work! What motivates your dog? Praise, petting, play, food and access to where they want to go. Don't give it away for free, let them earn it!

Using Food in Training: **The Difference between Lures, Rewards & Bribes** ¹

Using Food as a Lure - The food *lure* is presented before a desired behavior to help guide the dog into positions like Sit or Down by having him follow the visible food lure in your hand with his nose. (At this point the dog smells and follows the treat but is not eating it). During the initial stages of training you may have to lure your dog into position any time you start working in a new environment (i.e. indoors vs. outdoors; around ever increasing levels of distraction, etc.) till your dog learns how to execute the cue in any situation. However, lures used in any single environment should be eliminated as soon as possible so they don't become a permanent crutch for your dog and so your dog does not come to depend on the visible presence of food to obey you.

Eliminating the food lure - After your dog will readily perform a behavior when you lure him, begin to make the same luring movement, but with an empty hand – when your dog performs the behavior, immediately click and reward him from your other hand. Be sure to keep the treats out of sight in your other hand, pocket or fanny pack.

Using Food as a Reward - In contrast to food lures, food used as a reward is kept out of sight before the dog performs a behavior, then given to the dog immediately afterward, as a reward for that behavior. Food rewards should gradually change from being offered every time the dog gives a correct response to being given on a random schedule.

Food Rewards - Schedules of reinforcement—When your dog is first learning a new behavior, you should reward on a continuous basis—in other words, reward every time he performs the requested behavior.

Moving to a random schedule – When your dog is responding well to a cue, you can stop rewarding for every correct response and move to random schedule. **How**--Begin to reward at irregular intervals. Let your dog's behavior guide you in how fast to proceed in cutting down on the frequency of rewards. If your dog's performance weakens too much, drop back to a more frequent reward schedule. **Raise your criteria**—Since you are now only rewarding some of the time, try to reward/reinforce for the best performance, i.e. the fastest or most enthusiastic responses.

Rewards other than food - Once your dog is responding well to a cue, you should also begin offering rewards other than food. Use praise, play, and other 'life' rewards as your dog's paychecks!

Using Food as Bribe - You are using food as a bribe when you dangle it in front of the dog before getting him to perform a behavior that he has already become proficient at. To prevent the food from becoming a bribe, keep the food out of sight until the dog has given a correct response and offer the treat immediately afterwards as a paycheck for a job well done.

¹ Cynthia Ederly, owner and operator of Bingo! Dog Training holds a certificate in Canine Behavior Counseling from the San Francisco SPCA's Academy for Dog Trainers, directed by renowned author and dog expert, Jean Donaldson (*The Culture Clash* and *Dogs Are From Neptune*). For more info visit www.bingodogtraining.com