

Basic Dog Training – Positive Motivation - Andrew Ansenberger

Positive Method: 1) Handler asks the dog to do a task; 2) The dog performs the task for the handler; 3) The handler rewards the dog.

Training Order: A. BASIC EXERCISES: 1. Ready and Stay Combo, 2. Down and Stay Combo, 3. Sit and Stay Combo, 4. Recall with and w/out and Sit Combo; B. 2ND LEVEL EXERCISES: 1. 1,2,and 3 step heeling w/out leash, 2. Stand and Stay Combo, 3. Stand for Exam, 4. On-leash heeling and figure 8, 5. Retrieve; 6. Recall with Sit; C. 3RD LEVEL EXERCISES: 1. Finish, 2. Turn in place, 3. Jumps, 4. Go outs, 5. Scent discrimination

1. All POSITIVE, no NEGATIVE. Lead, don't boss. Don't force things. Trying to force the dog will cause the dog to resent training. Experience should be happy. Directions should be given consistently otherwise dog will be confused.
2. The "READY" Command and the REWARD are both part of the exercise. Establish and train for FOCUS before starting any and all exercises. Watch for the EYE to EYE contact. Before an exercise at a dog trial, the judge will always ask if you are READY. If you answer READY in a clear, positive, and assertive manner, and your dog is trained and conditioned to focus on you whenever a READY command is heard, the exercise is most likely to start out in a positive manner with your dog focused on you and ready to expect your next command. In training, when your dog is in proper position, give a READY, and reward your dog when his/her focus is given. No command or award should ever be given if your dog is not focused on you. Ready tells the judge you are ready; tells the dog that he/she will get a treat if he/she focuses on you; and sets up the dog for the next command.
3. 1 minute training sessions. 1 to 5 a day is routine conditioning. Keep things short and sweet.
4. Break down exercises into components, "BY THE NUMBERS." Assign a number for each "stage" of the exercise. Go up and down the numbers as needed. If the dog gets up to the seventh level and then begins to fail or develops problems, drop back to 4 or 5 and train up the numbers again. In training regression is normal and does happen.
5. LURING only for initial presentation of a new exercise. Luring can establish bad habits like lagging and/or kill motivation and energy. The Treat is NEVER given in advance to stimulate positive behavior. Treat only AFTER the dog performs the deed.
6. REWARD only after proper response to a single command. Must be given in proper position. Reward often. Never tease with reward. The REWARD is part of the exercise. The READY starts the exercise, and the REWARD ends the exercise.
7. Never give 2nd or multiple commands. And NEVER, NEVER, NEVER reward a second command. May cause lagging and bad habits.
8. Training part 1: initial introduction to an exercise; Training part 2: conditioning. This may be lifetime.
9. Food motivation: establish feeding routines to keep dogs food motivated for training. Increases the power of food rewards.
10. If all is falling apart, quit for the session. Try again later. Watch for "stress." Some days nothing goes right. NO TRAINING is better than BAD TRAINING.

Lagging caused by one or more of the following: Luring with food; inconsistent rewarding; teasing with food; rewarding after multiple commands; training sessions are too long in duration and/or are too infrequent. Getting angry at your dog during a training session will shut down your dog.

Heeling Tips: Teach “ready” command as step one to heeling. Heel 1 then 2 then 3 steps, rewarding at each halt. Give sit commands then reward until sitting happens naturally. Begin with no leash and at home. No negative corrections. No multiple commands. Heel along walls; Train in varied locations and environments. Inside, outside, around other people and dogs, fun matches (with food for awards and on leash). Lots of fun matches.; Avoid uncomfortable weather such as too hot or too cold.; keep training about one minute max. Give lots of rewards. Have patience – will take some time for you both to master. The dog must Focus, Focus, Focus. Breaks from training are good and are needed from time to time. Dogs train themselves. The handler sets up scenarios, the dog performs the event, and then gets a positive reward.