

Click Then Treat

Exercise 5.2

After practicing treat delivery, the next step is to become proficient at clicking and treating! This exercise builds on the mechanics practiced in exercise 5.1, but adds the clicker.

You'll need

Cup

Table

Hand towel

Treat bag

Practice treats (dried beans, Cheerios, pea-sized dog treats, or dry dog kibble)

Clicker

Video recorder (recommended)

The exercise

Dogs are visually oriented. Repetitive movements (such as moving the treat hand) just before clicking, interferes with the learning process and the salience of the clicker. The click should be “invisible” to the dog; he should hear it but not see it. Video record the session in order to see what the dog will see when clicking. Alternately, practice in front of a mirror or an informed observer.

1. Place the clicker and treat hands in a neutral position (side, back, or navel).
2. Click.
3. Deliver the treat.
4. As soon as both hands return to the neutral position, repeat.
5. Complete 5 repetitions with the following neutral positions (**see video “Click Then Treat: Varying Locations”**):
 - a. Both hands at the sides
 - b. Hands behind back
 - c. Hands at the navel
6. Vary whether treats are preloaded (treats held in the hand) or obtained from the treat bag (**see video “Click Then Treat: Varying Locations”**).

7. Vary the treat delivery location.
 - a. Deliver the treat to the cup
 - b. Deliver the treat to the hand towel
8. Here are some other variations to consider (**see video “Click Then Treat: Switch Your Clicker Hand”**):
 - a. Switch hands—become comfortable clicking with both hands
 - b. Sit in a chair
 - c. Kneel on the ground
 - d. Deliver the treat to a cup on the floor

Questions

Was it more difficult to maintain neutral still hands when changing one aspect of the exercise?

Do you have a preferred clicker hand?

Do you have a preferred neutral position?

Take-home message

The click should precede movement of the treat hand or intention to deliver a treat. Remember to vary the location of the treat bag and the hand that delivers the treat. The picture should vary from the dog’s point of view.