

Treat Dispenser

Exercise 5.1

The first step to clicker training is being efficient with treat delivery. This exercise focuses on delivering treats from a variety of neutral positions. You will practice returning the treat hand to a neutral position prior to delivering another treat. Varying the hand that delivers the treat and the position in which the hand is held prevents a dog from drifting toward the treat source.

You'll need

Cup

Table to set cup on

Hand towel

Treat bag

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

Video recorder (recommended)

The exercise

Video record the session in order to review the exercise from “the dog’s point of view.” Alternatively, practice the exercise in front of a mirror or an informed observer.

1. Hold five treats in your right or left hand.
2. Place one treat into the cup on the table.
3. Return the treat hand to a neutral position prior to delivering another treat.
4. Complete five repetitions with the treat hand returning to the following neutral positions:
 - a. Treat hand at your side
 - b. Treat hand held behind your back
 - c. Treat hand held at the navel
5. Switch hands and repeat (**see video “Delivering Treats from Your Hand”**).

6. Repeat the above exercise with treats located inside a treat bag on the waist at the navel (front).
 - a. Return the treat hand to your side (a neutral position) between repetitions.
 - b. Alternate between the right or left hand for reaching into the treat bag.
 - c. Complete five repetitions with the treat bag located in front, right side, left side, and small of the back (**see video “Delivering Treats from a Treat Bag”**).
7. Repeat the exercises above but instead of delivering the treat into a cup, toss the treat onto a hand towel on the floor (**see video “Dropping Treats onto a Mat”**).
8. Other variations: consider trying the following variations of the exercise:
 - a. Deliver the treat into a cup on the ground (this simulates a puppy or small breed dog)
 - b. Trainer sits in a chair
 - c. Trainer kneels on the floor (**see video “Delivering Treats Low to the Ground”**)

Take-home message

Vary the location of the treat bag and the hand that delivers the treat. This changes the picture from the dog’s point of view.