

It's Yer Choice

Level 3: Ignore Food and other objects

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to further build the dog's skill of ignoring food or other items in response to the "mine" cue. In this level, food or objects will be placed closer to and be fully visible to the dog.

Dog Skills

Self control
Offer behaviour
Respond to a cue
Give attention

People Skills

Shaping
Reinforcement
Cueing

Progress in small enough increments that there is no need to pick up or cover the food or object to prevent grabbing. If the dog is unable to resist the item, place it at a greater distance and try again.

As the dog's skill increases, be variable in how you reinforce: sometimes reward from your hand, sometimes allow him to eat the food from the floor or play with the item upon hearing the "take it" cue.

Steps:

1. Ask the dog to sit or lie down. Give the "mine" cue and place a low-value food treat or object on the ground 4 feet from the dog; move your hand away. When he hesitates and/or looks at you, cue "take it" and reinforce either with the food/object on the ground or a higher value treat from your opposite hand.
2. Begin to place the desirable item a little closer to the dog after the "mine" cue, and when the dog ignores it, give the "take it" cue.
3. Continue practicing until the dog can resist food or items on the floor in response to the "mine" cue.

Click Points

None: "take it" replaces the click

Good for developing these other behaviours:

Ignore inappropriate food or objects that are dropped on the ground; ignore inappropriate items encountered on walks; "drop it" or "give" (release a toy or other item); retrieve; focus on handler; wait with anticipation (useful in dog sports and working dog skills); redirect from distraction.

At home fun:

Introduce a new "drop it" cue using toys instead of food: Use two identical toys (or two favorite toys). When the dog has picked up one toy, give the "take it" cue as you offer him the other toy. When he drops the first toy, reinforce by giving him a chance to play with the second toy. When the dog is reliably releasing the first toy in order to get the second toy, begin to introduce a new cue, "drop it," just before offering the second toy.