

It's Yer Choice

Level 4: Ignore Dropped Food and Other Dropped 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 dropped near 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 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. Stand in front of dog, say 'mine' and drop a low value treat a bit away from dog (be prepared to cover it with your foot if you need to). 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. Repeat.
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 dropped food or other dropped 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:

Continue to work with the 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.