

## Pivot Platform Step 1

<https://youtu.be/bfCQ02k-s4>

This is a foundation behavior that will be the basis for heeling. One of the biggest challenges for the dog is the rear end control and the balance needed to stay aligned with the handler, and remain in position, as we go through starts, stops and turns...particularly in rally.

I prefer that you work your dog on both sides because true rear end control and body awareness require the ability to balance... and that means being able to move freely in both directions. In addition, even if you are not going to do rally, where heeling on the opposite side is required, this skill will also be helpful in teaching "front" where the dog must land straight... and straightness is a balance of leftness and rightness. So it's easiest to teach both directions of pivoting from the very beginning.

### The general steps are:

1. Paws up on the platform.
2. Stay facing the handler as she moves around the platform.
3. Offer hind leg steps independently (handler stationary).
4. Pivot around platform in a full circle past handler.

### To train this behavior:

1. Start by placing the platform between you and the dog.
2. Click for any attention to the platform (sniffing it, pawing it, etc), and deliver the treat over the platform. Most dogs will put a paw up to get to the treat, which gives you something to click right off the bat.
3. Continue to click any effort to put one or both paws up on the platform, delivering the treat high over the platform, until your dog is comfortable stepping right up onto it with both front paws.
4. Multiple rapid fire c/t when dog is on platform.

### When dog immediately returns to platform after being released, start adding movement:

1. Start moving one small step sideways around the platform. Since you are holding food, the dog will likely try to turn to face you. Click any attempt to move the hind feet (even if he falls off the platform), and deliver the treat in front of you.
2. Keep working one step at a time, clicking hind foot movement, and delivering the treat over the dog's head and **centered over the platform (THIS IS CRITICAL)**
3. Once you've made about half a circle in one direction, switch and do the same thing stepping the other direction.
4. At this stage, you will always be reinforcing a single step. No need to move rapidly around to get multiple steps at a time. **Thoughtfulness before speed!**