

Room Service

Objective: A specific verbal cue to tell the dog “food is coming to you”.

Why:

This cue/behavior is our least arousing. The dog has little/no movement and so will learn to just chill and let the reward come to him.

It's not automatic and takes some training. As with any cue/behavior, start by teaching the behavior first before putting the cue on it. In this case, the behavior is “let the treat come to you”, and if your dog already knows the slow treat game, or some version of It's your choice, this will be easy. Then it's just a matter of adding the cue to the known behavior, and then generalizing to body position (both human and dog), other movements, environment, etc. I use a long, low “gooooood” to cue this behavior. I think a longer, lower sound helps generate a calmer state (check out *The Other End of the Leash* by Patricia McConnell for more cool info on this topic), compared to the faster, higher-pitched “yes!” that I use for Chasing or other reinforcement.

To train this behavior:

1. Start with a treat in one hand, held at about your shoulder height. If your dog tries to get to the treat, close your hand (so he can't get it), stay still, and wait him out.
2. When he stops trying to get the treat, pop it in his mouth.
3. Now, holding the treat hand up at shoulder level, start slowly moving the treat towards your dog. If he moves towards the treat, bring your hand back up to your shoulder. If he controls himself as you lower the treat, pop it right in his mouth!
4. See how slowly you can lower the treat and how close you can get to your dog's mouth while he controls himself. It may mean only lowering the treat a few inches at a time at first, but eventually you will be able to deliver directly into his mouth without the dog moving a muscle.
5. When the dog is very successful, begin to give your cue just *before* moving your hand towards the dog to deliver the treat.
6. Vary the starting position of your hand. If at any point, the dog loses control, return to the basic hand zen until he is successful.
7. Practice from all three stationary positions (sit/down/stand).
8. Vary your body position so that you can be sitting, kneeling or standing when giving the cue.