

Zen Bowl

Objective: On cue, the dog runs to a bowl with food in it.

Why:

The Zen Bowl game is both a tool to build motivation and teach self-control. It's also very helpful in allowing us to place our reward very specifically when working with **reinforcers away from our body (which we want to do VERY early)**.

1. The dog does not go to the bowl until cued
2. The dog goes instantly to the bowl when he is cued
3. The dog looks away from the bowl
4. The cue is verbal only, no hand signal or body language

To train this behavior:

With any of our zen games, you **may not** tell the dog "leave it" or similar, and you may not correct the dog physically, verbally, or by intimidation. The only "correction" will be removing the bowl. **If the dog moves before being cued, you can pick up the bowl, you may not stop the dog.** If you are not fast enough, the dog gets a free cookie... no big deal! Just remind yourself to set him up for success more clearly the next time.

Eventually, make sure to practice this in all 3 positions (sit/down/stand).

Phase 1 – Pair bowl with cue

1. Restrain the dog in whatever way he is comfortable. Hold the collar, chest, or harness.
2. Place the loaded zen bowl in front of the dog, give the cue and release the dog. He should go straight to the bowl right away.
3. Pick up the bowl to reload.
4. Repeat several times. Remember to give the cue, then release the dog to the bowl.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPmYd0LFumQ&list=PL3iB_cmFKZ17yhTFprm3Y1dcp9TAbbjNz&index=2

Phase 2 – Wait for the cue (control around the bowl)

1. No restraint this time. The dog **may offer** any position to start.
2. Lower the bowl, and cover with your hand. If the dog dives for the bowl, pick the bowl up. Say nothing. When the dog backs off, lower the bowl to the ground again.
3. If the bowl gets to the ground without the dog diving, give the cue and remove your hand. The dog might pause or seem unsure about going to the bowl. If it's more than a brief pause, return to Phase 1 for a few reps. Then come back.
4. Repeat, this time wait for the dog to look up away from the bowl. He doesn't necessarily need to make eye contact, but many dogs will offer it at this stage. When he looks away from the bowl, give the cue to send the dog to the bowl.
5. Repeat, gradually hovering less and less over the bowl, until you can stand up entirely. When the dog looks up at you, give the cue to go to the bowl.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ND0I-4UUvek&list=PL3iB_cmFKZ17yhTFprm3Y1dcp9TAbbjNz&index=3

Phase 3 – Vary the position of the bowl

1. Now we are going to play around the clock. Stay quite close to the dog, so that you can remove the bowl at any time.

2. Place the bowl, starting at 12. When the dog looks up at you, cue him to go to the bowl.
3. Repeat, working your way around to his side.
4. Work up to being able to place the bowl right behind the dog. When the dog looks up at you, give the cue to go to the bowl.
5. Make sure to practice all bowl positions in all three dog positions.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3shB-zblrDI&list=PL3iB_cmFKZ17yhTFprm3Y1dcp9TAbbjNz&index=5