

Basic training: Teaching wait

This is useful in many situations, such as when putting their food on the floor, for safety reasons to prevent the dog rushing through doorways or down stairs, when teaching road safety with children or pausing while you wipe muddy paws. Wait can also be used when entering a room to help with jumping up and mouthing to help children feel in control of the situation and give the dog time to calm down.

Your aim is to teach your dog to hold their position until instructed otherwise.

- Start with your dog sat in front of you, have your treat bag on ready to reward.
- Reward them for sitting, build up the time they are able to remain in that position by periodically giving them a reward while in the sit.
- Once they are sitting for a short length of time, ask for a sit, reward for sitting, say 'wait' and reward.
- Start to move away from your dog. To begin with this may just be a slight weight shift away from your dog and immediately going back to them and reward if they have remained in position.
- Gradually build on this by taking half a step away and returning to them for a reward, then a step away etc.
- If your dog breaks the position go back to where they were confident and build on it slowly from there.
- Once you are able to move away from your dog, continue to go back to reward them, rather than calling them to you as your dog will start to pre-empt this and break the wait. Once you have returned to your dog and they are free to go off and wonder again, introduce a release cue such as 'ok off you go' and throw them a treat. This will allow you to release them from the wait e.g. through doorways, out of the car boot or when having their feet wiped.
- Start to introduce the wait in everyday situations so again they start to generalise the cue e.g. before eating, asking for a sit-wait and giving the release cue once their bowl is on the floor. Make sure you don't expect too much too soon e.g. the first time you do a sit-wait in the car boot should be in your driveway before attempting it somewhere exciting like at the park. Set them up for success and remember your rewards.

Child development

- Once your dog is confident with this, children may want to practice it with the dog. Your dog may need you in the background helping them out with what is expected and redirect children onto another activity if you feel it is going on a bit too long and the dog is becoming frustrated.
- This can be incorporated in activities like hiding treats or toys for your dog around a room, with children asking for a sit-wait while they hide things (you may have to put a finger through your dog's collar as they are likely to find this very exciting). Once they are ready they can then give the release cue for the dog to go off to hunt for what has been hidden. This activity is great for mentally stimulating young dogs as they need to focus and concentrate. It is also useful to encourage siblings working together e.g. one hides things and the other times how quick the dog finds them, and also encourages children's vocal skills and boosts self esteem. Children that like their dog to be active and excitable can be encouraged to do this activity rather than run about with the dog as it still gets the same excited response from them.

(See **scent work training handout** for more information).

- The ready, steady, GO game is also popular, where a treat/toy is placed on the floor and your dog waits until the 'GO' before running to get it. This takes a bit of behind the scenes training on your part but again can be a useful activity for children that like their dog to be active, to work on verbal and turn taking skills.

