

# Basic training: Sit & down



In the following exercises, treats are used to lure your dog into position and to reward them. You will not need to physically manoeuvre your dog into position. When you start taking your dog out and about to areas that have a lot of new sights, sounds and smells (parks and training classes); it will be very hard for them to concentrate. You may then need a 'special treat' such as sausage, chicken or ham in very small amounts to encourage the dog to focus on you.

## Sit

- Get a treat ready and hold it just above your dog's nose. As they look up at the treat, slowly move it backwards over the top of their nose and head. They will naturally go into the sit as their head straightens up to get the treat. As soon as they are in position, reward.
- Repeat the exercise a few times, giving lots of verbal praise when your dog responds correctly.
- At the next training session, your dog should remember the sit as soon as you move the treat into position.
- When you are confident that your dog understands what you want and is responding without hesitation, introduce the verbal cue 'sit' when they are in this position. Give lots of praise and reward with a treat.
- Once your dog is doing this confidently, start to withhold the hand lure. Start by saying 'sit'; if your dog doesn't sit, go back a step, luring them into the sit.
- With practise your dog will be able to sit for the verbal cue only.
- Practice this in different places and in different situations so your dog can generalise this learning to 'sit' means the same thing wherever they are.

## Down



- For this exercise, start with your dog in a sit. Hold a treat just below your dog's nose, and slowly lower it towards the ground and then along the ground towards you in an 'L' shape. The treat acts as a lure, and your dog will follow it, going down on their forequarters as they try to get the treat.
- Make sure you close your fist around the treat and keep it on the ground so your dog has to work out what they need to do to get the reward. It is important to lower the treat directly beneath your dog's nose – and not too far forward – to help them go into the correct position. Reward your dog once in the down position.
- When your dog is consistently following the treat and going into position, introduce the verbal cue 'down' when they are in this position.

## Down (Continued...)

- In most cases, a dog will learn to go into the down by following the lure, so you will need to transition this lure into being a hand signal—we use our finger pointed towards the floor.
- Once your dog is in the down position, reward them by placing the treat under their nose on the floor, so they get the treat for remaining in the down. If you reward directly from your hand, you can end up with a dog that goes into a down but then immediately gets up again.
- Once your dog is confident with basic training exercises, children may want to get involved and have a go at 'teaching' them, this can help boost self confidence and give children an activity to focus on.

