

behavior. Dogs can get very enthusiastic about training and step on or bump into things.

Take a Bow

Teach your dog to “take a bow” in small steps. Breaking it down into tiny pieces makes it much easier to teach. Using the Clik-R, you will mark successive steps toward a “final product.”

Start with your dog standing near you. Have your Clik-R™ ready in one hand and a tasty treat in your opposite hand.

If you have already taught the dog to target your hand you will be able to use the target behavior instead of using a treat to lure your dog.

or

Hold your hand (or the treat, if necessary) in front of the dog’s nose and move the treat down toward the floor.

When the dog is eagerly following the target/treat, start moving the target/treat down to the floor and then away from your dog a few inches. This should encourage your dog to move his nose down and forward following the “L” shape you made with the target/treat. As you pull the target/treat forward, click and treat at each time your dog follows it.

You are trying to get your dog to lower his elbows to the floor. Be sure to click the moment he first lowers his elbows to the ground. If your dog is always lowering his entire body to the ground, click at the moment his elbows touch the floor and then move the treat up so he has to stand to take it. This will encourage your dog not to lay down but to stand after the bow. This also “resets” the dog’s position for another attempt.

NOTE: If you have only been using the hand target you won’t need to do this step. Once your dog is following the treat about eight out of ten times, stop using the treat to lure him into the correct position and instead use only your empty hand as a guide. Click the bow and then treat from your pocket or the other hand. This will allow you to fade out the use of the treat as a lure. For now, you should continue to click and treat your dog each time he performs the behavior correctly.

When your dog is bowing as you give the hand signal without the lure about 80% of the time you are ready to add the cue or name the behavior. Choose one word like “bow” and say the word immediately before

the hand signal. Be careful to use the word before the hand signal, not during or after. The word will predict the hand signal for your dog and he will begin to start performing the behavior after the verbal cue, rather than waiting for the hand signal. Once he begins to do this consistently you can fade out the use of the hand signal.

Now that your dog can “take a bow” have some fun with it! You can add the words “take a” to the cue “bow” and ask your dog to “take a bow” after showing off his new Clik-R trained tricks and skills to your friends!

Don’t forget to take your own bow at the same time for enriching your dog’s life with fun Clik-R training!

Wave

Teaching your dog to “wave” is a super cute way to wow your friends. As a bonus, the same steps can be used to teach shake. Having a dog who will willingly hand you a paw is great when you need to examine or dry off feet, too!

Have your Clik-R and high value treat rewards ready. You will start by standing in front of your dog and asking your dog to sit. Lay your hand palm up on or very close to the floor just in front of your dog’s front paw. Either paw is fine. Your dog may paw at your hand and if so, click and treat that movement. A dog who likes to paw often learns this trick easily. If your dog doesn’t paw at you, try lightly touching the side of the paw. This can encourage them to raise the paw and get the training started. Continue to offer your hand and move it slightly higher as long as your dog continues to be successful at touching your hand with a paw. Don’t forget to click and treat each attempt. Once you are able to get the paw reaching up level with the dog’s upper chest you can begin clicking just before the paw touches your hand. This will communicate that the paw raise is the behavior you are now rewarding. Once your dog is performing the behavior about 8 out of 10 times you are ready to add the name/cue and fade out the hand signal.

Pick the word you will use, something like wave, high five or if you are teaching shake instead, you can use that. Say the word immediately before the hand signal. Be careful to use the word before the hand signal, not during or after. The word will predict the hand signal for your dog and he will begin to start performing the

behavior before you start the hand signal! Once he begins to do this consistently you can fade out the use of the hand signal.

With any of the tricks, train your dog to the point of reliability with the cue before moving to random reinforcement.

Teaching people with a clicker --Really? Yes, really!

We often teach other people by telling them everything they are doing wrong and using lots of words to say it. Can clicker training be a more positive experience and clear up the communication? Absolutely. Marking a correct behavior and then rewarding it can make learning fun for both the learner and the teacher. This allows the teacher to give the student precise feedback about the behavior being worked on at the moment it happens. The student is motivated by the instant feedback



Photo: Michelle Mullins

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and rewarded by earning the clicks, which can be easily counted and redeemed for rewards. This technique can be particularly helpful in animal training, sports, arts and education.

Here are some national organizations that can refer you to classes and trainers:

Association of Pet Dog Trainers – www.apdt.com
Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers – www.ccpdt.org
National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors – www.nadoi.org



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Clik-R™ Training Tool



Training Guide

Training with a Clik-R™ Behavior that gets rewarded gets repeated.

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Introduction

We all want to have well-behaved pets, and to maintain a wonderful relationship with them. Clicker training is an effective method for training, and is very safe and humane. When your pet learns to offer behaviors you like in exchange for a reward, it is a win-win situation. Training will become a fun activity you both enjoy!

The Clik-R

With clicker training, a sound is used to mark the exact behavior we like, and then followed immediately with a reward. The reward is usually a tasty food treat. Soon, the sound begins to predict the reward – the pet begins to understand that when he hears that sound, it will be followed with a reward.

Why use a Clik-R sound instead of your voice?

Using a consistent sound has several benefits over a spoken word when teaching your pet a new behavior.

The sound is unique when used only during training, unlike our voice which the pet hears all the time.

The sound is consistent. It sounds the same every time and has the same meaning – a reward is coming – every time. Our voice can say the same word in very different ways and often does due to our emotions and meaning.

The sound is clear. We often string many words together like, “Oh, what a good doggie!” making it difficult or impossible for an animal to pick out a clear marker to indicate the correct behavior.

The sound is precise. The sound is short and can mark the smallest and most subtle behaviors like a

glance or turn of the head. The precise sound can improve our timing when marking the exact behavior we want.

All about rewards

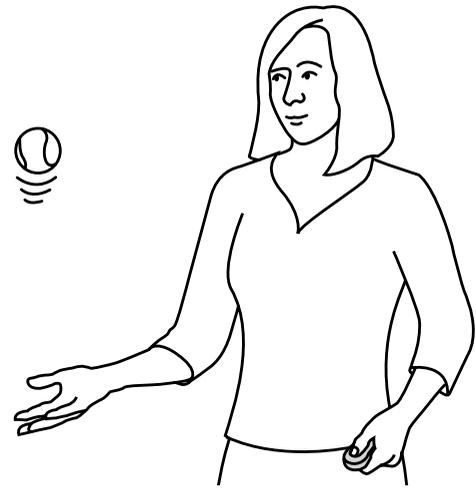
During clicker training, we often use a small, tasty food treat as the reward promised by the clicker sound. However, each animal will determine what is rewarding to them. One animal may find a small piece of Liver Biscotti® a very high-value reward, while another may prefer a bit of cheese. The reward you use must be reinforcing to the animal you are working with, and each animal will have a hierarchy of rewards. As the trainer, you will want to experiment and find several things your pet likes, and determine which he or she likes best and least.

Always prepare for a training session by gathering a few different types of rewards. Small, semi-moist bites of cheese, hot dog, liver, etc., are good choices to try because many pets find them very yummy and they don’t require much chewing. Remember to consider your pet’s diet, calorie count and any allergies when choosing food rewards. Plan the food as part of their daily allowance to maintain a balanced diet.

Don’t forget “life rewards” such as a chance to fetch a ball, play a game of tug, toys, petting and praise. These can be very valuable and useful as part of your training. While the tasty treat is often easiest and thus best choice for clicker training, don’t rule out the life rewards!

Practice your timing

If you are new to clicker training you will want to practice your timing away from your pet before you do any training.



You will need your Clik-R™ and a tennis ball (or similar ball) to practice.

- Hold the Clik-R in one hand and the ball in the other.
- Toss the ball and click at the exact moment it hits the floor.
- As your timing improves try to click the first bounce and the second bounce, etc.
- The next step is toss the ball and click when the ball is at the highest point in the air. This is more difficult as there is no sound of the ball hitting a surface to help you.

How is your timing? Practice these until your timing is good.

Some people prefer to hold their Clik-R in one hand versus the other, but we want to suggest it is helpful to practice with the device in each hand. Becoming ambidextrous with the tool will make it easier to accommodate different exercises as you train.

Tip - Keep your movement to a minimum and your voice quiet. The pet should focus on the click. Extra movement and noise by you, the trainer, will be distracting.

Before you begin

Start by setting everyone up for success:

- Train when your pet is somewhat hungry.
- Ensure any “potty needs” have already been met.
- Work in a space that is not too exciting or over-stimulating.

- If necessary, restrict the pet’s movement with a harness or leash, or even using a crate to manage the pet’s movements.

If the pet is not interested in interacting with you, be patient and take it slow. If progress doesn’t pick up within a few minutes, take a break and come back to work again later.

Give the click meaning

We need to make an association between the click and the treat reward for the pet. Once your pet learns the click predicts a reward you will have a powerful training tool.

Note – don’t wave the Clik-R around or point it at the pet. The sound is the marker and the pet does not need to see it to hear it. Hold the Clik-R by your side and don’t draw attention to the device.

To make this association, along with your pet, you will need:

- The Clik-R
- Some tiny, very tasty treats (consider daily caloric intake and allergies)
- An indoor space free of distractions. Use a lead to keep your pet from wandering if necessary.



This exercise is only to make the association, not to train a specific behavior. However, you don’t want to inadvertently reward a behavior you don’t like, so wait until the pet is simply standing or sitting near you.

To begin simply click and then immediately give the pet one treat. The treat should follow the click within a second. Repeat this six to ten times, one click followed by one treat.

The pet will start to notice the click predicts a treat very soon. You may notice the pet becomes excited just from hearing the sound. It is important to remember the click is a promise. If you click, you should treat. Don’t worry if you make a mistake. Your timing and skill will improve quickly.

To Capture or to Shape?

If your pet already does a cute behavior you would like to practice so you can get him to perform “on cue,” we would call that “capturing” the behavior. Put the pet in a situation where he is likely to perform the behavior, and then click at the moment the behavior happens to “mark” that behavior. As always, follow the click with a treat. Because behavior that gets rewarded gets repeated, the pet is likely to offer that behavior again.

Once you can get the behavior reliably, you start to add a word or hand cue just before the behavior is likely to happen. Before long, that cue will indicate to your pet that you are willing to “pay” for the behavior. Practicing the cue and behavior followed by the click and treat will solidify the behavior.

If you are looking to instill a new behavior in your pet, you may need to “shape” the behavior if the pet is not already offering it. In “shaping” a behavior, the trainer will reward the pet for increasingly better attempts (also called “successive approximations”) of the desired behavior. Choose small or preliminary steps toward your end goal, then little by little, reward better and better attempts. Your pet should learn quickly if you repeat a few sessions each day.

One example of shaping behavior would be to invite the pet to lie on a mat. At first, the trainer could click/treat when the pet looks at the mat, then steps on it, then sits on it, then lies down.

Set criteria when shaping

When shaping new behaviors you will need to set criteria for each of the small steps on the way to the final behavior you will reward. Don’t be intimidated! You make these kinds of choices every day as you drive, cook dinner or multi-task at your desk. You want to move through the process at good rate so don’t worry about perfecting each step along the way. Each step is a temporary criterion and if the pet is getting it right 7 or 8 times out of 10, move on to the next step. You don’t want the pet to get stuck performing the intermediate steps because they have been rewarded so highly for doing so.

You also don’t want to move too fast. If you up your criteria and your pet gets too frustrated or loses interest, back up a step.

Sometimes a pet will leap ahead and perform the final behavior early in the training. Yeah! Click and treat! Don’t be so set on your plan that you don’t recognize a

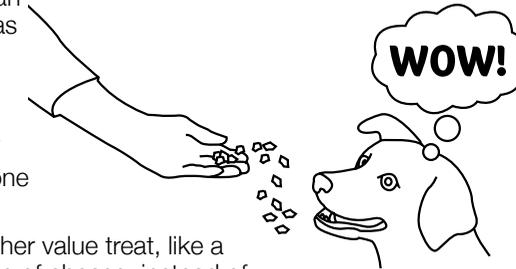
breakthrough like this. Save a jackpot for those special moments.

Jackpot!

Many trainers use a jackpot to reward an especially well done behavior or a training breakthrough.

A jackpot can be applied as follows:

- Give a small handful of treats at one time.
- Give a higher value treat, like a small piece of cheese, instead of the dry kibble you are using.
- A slightly larger piece of a treat can be a jackpot.
- Have a party – toss a few treats and add some play, favorite toy or a belly rub.



Many people like to end the training session if a jackpot moment happens. It ensures the session was successful and keeps the pet eager to keep training.

Keep the sessions short

The best training sessions are only 3 to 5 minutes in length. Take breaks in between the sessions. During the breaks relax and play with your pet. You can string a few short sessions together with short breaks in between.

You can train a longer session if your pet is still focused and enjoying the session. However you don’t want your pet to become uninterested or full of treats. Stop training while your pet is still interested in doing more.

One marker – one reward: Three rules to keep in mind

- If you make the click sound, you must reward. Always.
- Make only one click sound per appropriate behavior. In other words, do not use multiple sounds to try to convey your excitement at a particularly good behavior.
- If you make a mistake, forgive yourself. Reward the pet (following rule #1), and move on. Either take a break to collect yourself, or refocus and continue on with the training from there on.

Teaching “Look at Me”

Training your pet to focus on you is not only easy to do with the Clik-R™ but can be very helpful in training other skills later on. This simple skill will enforce the association with the Clik-R sound and give you a chance to practice your timing.

Now that you are ready, watch your pet. If she looks at you, click and treat. She may not understand what she did to earn the reward yet.

When she makes eye contact again, click and treat. After a few repetitions she will start thinking that may be just looking at you earns a treat? She will probably like that and start looking at you more often.

Keep rewarding every time she makes eye contact. Eye contact = click = reward!

Once the pet is performing the look behavior consistently you can add a cue.

A cue can be a hand signal or a verbal signal to perform the behavior. For example, the cue for a pet to place their butt on the floor is usually “sit.” Your cue for eye contact could be “Look” or “Watch Me.” The choice is yours – because pets don’t speak, you can call it anything you want. Another option is to use a hand signal or movement.

Teaching to Target

We will start by teaching the dog a nose touch to your hand which will not only establish a target for teaching spin but can later be used for a variety of behaviors where you need the dog in a certain position.

To teach this target, place your hand about 4 or 5 inches in front of your dog’s nose. Most dogs will sniff your hand. When your dog’s nose touches your hand, click and treat. Repeat this several times. If your dog shows little interest in touching your hand practice a couple times with a treat in the target hand to get the game started.

As the dog begins to quickly touch your hand for the click and treat, begin moving your hand slightly farther away and to different heights and sides. Each time the dog touches the hand target, click and treat. If the dog is slow to respond (more than three to four seconds), remove your hand target for a couple seconds and offer it again a little closer. Focus on getting several quick repetitions in a training session.

You will quickly see how establishing a target behavior will

aid in teaching recall, loose lead walking and much more, including some of the fun tricks found in this booklet.

Teaching Fun Tricks! Spin – A Fun and Easy Trick

Get your Clik-R ready and some super tasty treats. We are going to use our already established target hand to teach a spin.

Practice your target a couple of times to get your dog excited to do some training with you. On the third or fourth time place your target hand about a quarter of the way around toward your dog’s tail. Click and treat as your dog targets your hand. Place your hand slightly farther each time until your dog is spinning about half way around the “circle”. Don’t forget to click and treat for each successful target. Once your dog is doing this quickly each time begin to move your hand all the way around so your dog has made a complete circle – Click and treat. Giving a jackpot of several small treats on your dog’s first successful spin is a great way let him know the spin is what you wanted! You can begin starting the hand target around the circle faster and slowly fade it to a simple circle with your finger as the dog gets better at the spin.

When your dog is performing the spin as you give the small hand signal, you are ready to add the cue or name the behavior.

Choose a word to call this behavior — spin, twirl, tornado — and say the word immediately before the hand signal. Be careful to use the word before the hand signal, not during or after. The word will predict the hand signal for your dog and he will begin to start performing the behavior before you start the hand signal! Once he begins to do this consistently you can fade out the use of the hand signal.

Always be careful to check the environment for obstacles and space before asking your dog to perform any

