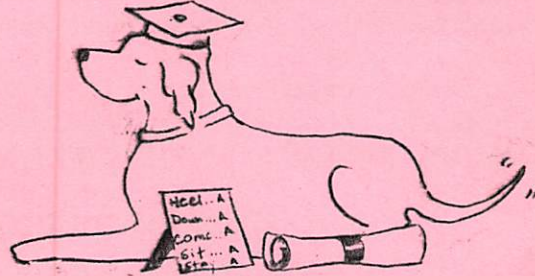


TEACHING THE COMMAND DOWN

by Terena Thomas

****When training over a period of time regress a step or two at the beginning of each session from where you ended up the last training session to help the dog remember what you want and to build their confidence****

1. Get the dog into a sitting position by either asking for a sit **ONE TIME** or luring the dog with the arc movement and treat. Put a dog treat on the dog's nose and slowly drop your hand straight to the floor. Pull the treat on the floor parallel to the dogs paws about 2-3 inches. The hand movement will be similar to a capital L. Hold the hand with the treat firmly to the floor as the dog will fuss and paw at your hand.



Wait quietly and patiently for approximately 30 seconds. If the dog gives up or loses interest put the treat back on the dogs nose and make the L shape again. Do this till the dog puts both elbows on the floor in an attempt to get the treat. Say the word down and Click then treat.

Repeat this 20 times. In the event the dog stands up start all over and only make the vertical movement to the floor thus eliminating the horizontal movement all together. Be sure to say the command down.

2. Most dogs respond to this method very well but occasionally a second method is needed. Do not try this if your dog does not have a clear idea of who the leader is. This technique works but takes longer to teach. Sit on the floor to the right of your dog facing the same direction as he is. Get him into a sit position using a treat or single command. Place your left arm over his back and gently hold his left leg above the knee but below the elbow. Put your right hand on his right leg above the knee yet below the elbow. Slowly pull the weight off his legs by lifting him gently up (so he appears to be sitting up pretty) then bend his elbows and place them on the floor. Say down. Click and treat while he's in the down position. Use your left elbow and body to keep him calm and quiet. Do this 20-30 times then start exercise 1. If he does not respond to the treat lure then repeat exercise 2.

3. With treats in the palm of your hand point slowly to the ground and say down. Give the dog an opportunity to think and comply while you stay quiet and still. **ONLY** say the down command once and wait for at least 30 seconds. If the dog loses interest or does not comply repeat exercise 1. If the dog lays down click and treat while petting and praising. Repeat this for 2-3 days 10 times daily.

4. Once the dog understands the down command with the hand pointing to the ground full of treats remove the treats from the hand and have them near you in a bowl. Point to the ground and ask for a down. When the dog complies click and treat. If the dog doesn't lay down repeat the last exercise. Do this periodically over a couple of days until your dog knows exactly what you want 100% of the time.

5. We will now start to eliminate the hand signal. Be sure to do this slowly and patiently with love and praise. Standing up facing your dog with the treats in a bowl near you point completely to the ground and say the command down. Because you've been practicing this he should immediately drop to the floor. Click and treat. Ask him again only point 2 inches from the floor. When he drops to his elbows click and treat. Ask again for a down but point 4 inches from the ground this time. Click and treat. Do this over and over lifting your pointer finger approximately 2 inches at a time until you can stand completely upright and still obtain a down position on command. If you are moving upward too quickly your pooch will let you know by not understanding and not complying. Give him time and patience. Do not continue to repeat the down command as this will only confuse him more but rather lower your pointer finger closer to the ground and wait for him to figure it out on his own. **ONLY REPEAT THE HAND SIGNAL NOT THE VERBAL CUE!!** Continue lowering your hand until he lays down. Click, treat and smother with love. Start at that point and move upward more slowly until you can stand upright and he'll lay down on the first command.

6. Weaning him from the clicker is the next step. Keep everything the same as before. Ask for a down and when he gives you the command **IMMEDIATELY** treat him and love on him. Do this 10 times a day for 3 days before moving on to step 7.

7. It is now time to vary the treat schedule. Instead of treating after **EVERY** down the dog gives you treat

him periodically so he never knows what to expect. Still praise him and love on him just don't give him a tidbit. Ask the dog to down periodically throughout the day . Treat him AT LEAST every three times but keep it a variable. Treat two times in a row then don't treat him once then treat him then wait three. We want the dog to never know if he'll be treated. Stay on this treating schedule for a week. If the down behavior begins to diminish in the dog, treat more often and follow with pizzazz and praise; extend your training by another week.

8. For the next month continue asking for the down command throughout the day. CONTINUE TO PRAISE AND LOVE ON HIM!!!!!! Gradually increase the amount of downs between treating until you only treat occasionally. It is important to always give the dog a paycheck for his work whether it's a treat, a pat or praise.

Canine Country School, LLC

Terena Thomas (970) 524-8724

www.caninecountryschool.com

****The Canine Country School is not responsible for any behavior problems you may experience with your dog****