

TRAINING TIP 3: Wait ...

HOW to train

1 Start with your dog in a sit or a down—even four paws firmly planted on the ground will do. Say the word “wait” and make a small movement, like a foot shift or glance away. If your dog stays in position, offer a reward. Mark with a word, like “yes,” or a click when your dog remains in place during distractions.

2 If your dog breaks the “wait” make it easier the next time with less distraction.

3 Slowly build up until your dog can remain in place even while distractions happen. For example, you can lower the food bowl or open a door.

4 Work up to adding in petting and handling your dog’s body parts as your dog stays relaxed. Reward her for letting the handling and touch occur and for remaining in a stationary position.

5 Build in a release cue by saying a word like “OK” to let her know the exercise is finished.

HOW it helps

This behavior teaches your dog to remain in place until she’s released. Your dog may feel frightened if veterinary team members handle her body and she isn’t sure why they’re touching her or what to do about it. But if your dog has been trained to remain in place and knows a reward is coming, she may stay calmer. You can also use wait in combination with prior handling and associated rewards to help your dog remain calm when she’s handled in myriad ways.

BONUS:

During the exam you can ask your dog to wait while the veterinarian examines each body part or performs each procedure. Then you can release and reward your dog afterward.

There are many benefits of training the “wait” behavior. For example, it can help you get your dog to remain on the exam table rather than jumping or help your dog remain calmly on her side for handling until you release her.

Think we’ve waited long enough yet?

