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BEGINNER 30 / 30 HOMEWORK

WEEK #1

SIT: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog sit politely beside you.

Hold one treat under your thumb with your palm facing up. Slowly lure your hand over your dog's nose and up back over your dog's head. Keep your hand at dog's nose level to prevent your dog from jumping. As the dog's head rocks back, their behind should go into a sit. Immediately click & treat (now called C & T) when your dog sits. Repeat several times and try luring your dog to sit in several different locations around your house.

STAND: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog standing still.

With one treat, lure your dog into a sit (as explained above). When dog sits, do NOT C & T, instead quickly place your palm at your dogs nose, slowly luring the dog from a sit into a stand. C & T! Your hand should be flat at the dog's nose - and keep it close to your leg. We don't want your dog walking, but simply standing up in place.

DOWN: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog lying down beside you.

As described above, have your dog in a sit but do not C & T. With a treat in your hand and your palm facing down, slowly lure your dog's head down toward the floor by bringing your treat from his nose to his toes. When he is lying down, C & T!

ATTENTION: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog's attention on you.

Stand up straight. Touch a treat to your dog's nose and then move the treat between your eyes. When your dog looks up, C & T! Slowly increase the amount of time your dog is looking up at you by talking quietly to your dog. This will help keep your dog's focus on you!

RECALL: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog come when called.

Get your dog's attention on you by saying his name and "COME" in an excited voice. C & T on the FIRST step your dog takes toward you. Your dog should love to come to you, so make it fun, be exciting, and give lots of praise every time!

WAIT: The goal of this exercise is to teach your dog to wait for a command.

We'll start by teaching your dog to wait for food from your hand. Take your dog's collar with your left hand and hold a flat palmed right hand with treat & clicker about a foot away. When your dog stops pulling for the treat, C & T! We will apply the wait command to other situations.

TOUCH: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog's nose touch a target.

Offer a plastic lid to your dog. If your dog expresses interest toward the lid, click and treat. Repeat several times until your dog immediately touches the lid with his nose.

WEEK #2

SIT / STAND / DOWN: Work on sit first - ask your dog to sit. Instead of using a C & T right away, ignore your dog and stay beside your dog while internally counting to five. If your dog remains in the sit, C & T. If your dog gets out of the sit, tell them "Uh - Oh" and try again. Work this in the Stand & Down as well.

WAIT: Take your dog over to the door and ask them to sit. Put a treat and your clicker in your right hand and gently hold your dog's collar with your left hand. Begin to open the door, if your dog gets up or begins to pull, tell them "Uh Oh" and ask them to sit again. Repeat, and when your dog stops pulling to get the treat, C & T! Your dog not pulling at all? GREAT! Continue the exercise and add the command "WAIT."

ATTENTION: Stand up straight!! Touch a treat to your dog's nose and then move the treat between your eyes. When your dog looks up at you, don't instantly C & T. We want to slowly increase the amount of time your dog focuses on you so quietly praise your dog with "good watch" or "good look" or whatever you want to call this command. The goal for this week is a 15 second watch. If you aren't having success, lower your expectations and gradually increase time. Begin to add distractions to your dog - have someone walk by, play the radio, etc. If your dog looks away, tell them "Uh Oh" and quietly ask them to keep focusing on you.

TOUCH:

We are now going to teach your dog to touch your hand. Offer your hand to your dog (similar to your hand signal for stand). Have a cookie in your hand and when your dog goes to sniff that cookie, C & T! Once your dog understands to target your hand, start to move your hand all around your body - teach your dog to target your hand regardless of where it is. Repeat several times until your dog immediately touches your hand with his nose.

SURFACE TRAINING:

It is very important for your dogs to learn how to walk on various surfaces. Practice walking them on concrete, bricks, gravel, uneven surfaces, up ramps, stairs, etc. This week, work on exposing your dog to as many surfaces as possible. Work your obedience commands on various surfaces - make sure your dog will lie down on a tile floor, a wet floor, etc. The more you expose them to in a positive and gentle manner, the better they will be at agility and the more confident they will be in life!

LEAVE IT: This is an exercise to keep your dog safe and out of trouble! Your dog will never get these items!

Place an item such as a tissue, paper towel, or other tempting forbidden thing to your dog under your shoe. (No open toed shoes for this exercise!) Wait for your dog to stop trying to get it and then reward! Toss the treat a short distance away from your foot to give yourself time to pick it up. Then, start over again! Once your dog gets to the point where they are not paying attention to whatever is under your shoe, make it a little more difficult for them! Begin to drop your "leave-it" item - but make sure your dog CAN'T get it!!! Tell them "Leave-it" as you drop it - when it hits the ground, cover it with your shoe. If your dog ignores it, reward them!!!

STAND FOR EXAM: The goal of this exercise is to have your dog tolerate you or a stranger giving him an exam.

Your dog should be comfortable being examined by a groomer, the vet, or by you & your family. This will help when you have to clip your dog's nails, wipe off his feet, etc. For this exercise, ask your dog to "Stand." Have a really great treat in your hand and allow your dog to nibble on it. While they are focusing on your hand, take your free hand and gently run it down your dog's back. Once he is comfortable with this, begin to gently lift his leg, touch his ears, face, stomach, tail, etc. Make him feel very comfortable and confident in your motions. Keep your hands very slow and calm - it will make your dog feel more secure.

WEEK #3

WAIT BEFORE OBSTACLES: We are now going to add a hand signal for "Wait." Take your dog over to the obstacle and tell them to sit. Give the command "Wait" and use your hand signal. Only have your dog wait for a split second before releasing them to complete the obstacle.

AUTOMATIC SIT / DOWN: **The goal of this exercise is to have your dog automatically sit or lie down instantly when you ask.**

To be successful in agility, your dog will need to instantly sit or lie down on the table. It's also a nice lesson to teach your dog - so when you ask them for a behavior, they instantly complete it! To practice, ask your dog to go up on something raised above the floor. As soon as they have their feet on the object, give them your hand & verbal signal for "Sit" or "Down." Reward as soon as your dog gives you the behavior! It will take no time at all for your dog to realize that they need to do the behavior as soon as you ask!

ATTENTION: Practice your eye contact with your dog while there are many distractions. Take your dog onto a busy sidewalk and practice having them focus on you while people, other dogs, traffic, etc. passes. Reward any small amount of eye contact your dog offers you - remember, it is very difficult for them and goes against all of their instincts to not focus on what is going on around them! Reward their effort, and gradually start to increase your amount of distractions. Practice keeping your dog's eyes on yours in class while another dog does agility obstacles. This will help your dog understand that everything good and positive comes from keeping his eyes on yours!

RECALL: Your dog needs to be able to come to you the first time you call him, even if there are other distractions around. REMEMBER - your command for this is your dog's name and the word "Come" - ONE TIME! So, "Fido, Come!" Is your command for calling your dog to you. If your dog doesn't come to you immediately, regardless of how tempting it is to repeat yourself, DON'T DO IT! If you repeat yourself, you will teach your dog that they can ignore your command - they don't have to come to you and you'll just keep calling them. No one wants a dog with this behavior, so if you call your dog and they don't immediately come to you, GO GET THEM!!!! Remember, if you call your dog to you from the end of their leash and they don't come, they will NEVER come from the other side of a field! Start your recall work off very slowly and positively. If your dog doesn't come to you the first time you call them, every time, they should never ever be off-leash in an unsecured area. Recall work takes a lot of diligent time and effort on your part.

This week, we will work on calling our dog to us with added distractions. Have your dog on-leash and in a sit. Have someone stand near your dog, but don't allow your dog to interact with them. Your distraction person should ignore your dog - no matter what! Tell your dog to "Wait" and give them your hand signal. Walk to the end of your leash, and call your dog to you! Hopefully, your dog will come right to you instead of running to that person. If your dog ignores you and runs to the other person, take several steps backward and excitedly talk to your dog - encourage them to run right over to you!

MEETING & GREETING / OFF: **The goal of this exercise is to have your dog politely meet people.**

Set your dog up to politely meet strangers! No one wants a dog to jump all over them! Make sure no one in the family is rewarding your dog for jumping - if anyone pats your dog or even touches your dog when they don't have all four feet on the floor, they are being rewarded for jumping! We also need to teach our dogs "Off" - get off of me, the furniture, etc.

Remember, be consistent!! If you allow your dog to jump on one person, they will try to jump on everyone!

Not jumping on people: Ask your dog to sit when someone approaches. If your dog goes to jump on the person, tell them "OFF" and immediately ask for another sit. When your dog sits, reward them! If your dog doesn't jump, reward them with a lot of praise - great job! Getting off of furniture: If your dog is up on something he shouldn't be on, drop a treat on the floor. When your dog jumps off to get the treat, tell him "OFF" and click, allowing your dog to get the treat.