



Clicker Concepts: #1



Dogs learn best through positive reinforcement

- Use lots of TINY yummy treats (cat treats, cheerios, hotdog pennies, bits of meat or cheese, etc.)
- Present new things in short, clear units
- Set your dog up to be successful
- Be patient– don't try to rush learning
- Catch your dog being good and reward
- Make training the most fun thing in your dogs day!



Clicker Concept #2

Consequences control behavior

- A reward immediately AFTER a behavior makes that behavior likely to happen again
 - No consequence (i.e. doing nothing) AFTER a behavior makes that behavior unlikely to occur again
 - Punishment after a behavior can stop behavior in its tracks, but leads to NO learning of the correct response...and will make a dog hesitant to try offering new behaviors for fear of being wrong.
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Clicker Concept #3

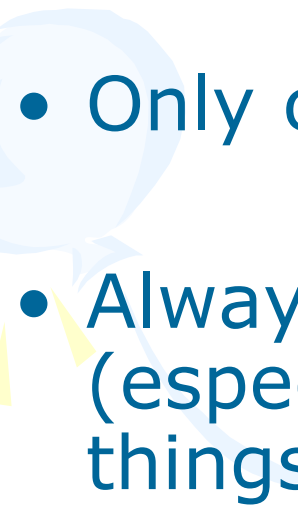

Primary reinforcers are strongest, followed by secondary reinforcers

- Primary reinforcers do not have to be learned, they = food, water, sex
- Secondary reinforcers must be “learned” = clicker, verbal praise, playing, toys, petting, free time to run, free time to socialize with other dogs, etc



Clicker Concept #4

Click means "that's right!"

- Click must come while they are doing what is right or just as they do it.
 - Only click ONCE! 1 click = 1 treat
 - Always follow a click with a treat (especially at first when training new things or young dogs).
 - Treat as soon as possible after the click
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Clicker Concepts: #5

Never say “no” or punish *while clicker training*

- The true purpose of punishment, is to stop bad behavior in its tracks.
- Punishment “inhibits” dogs—**not** what we want in clicker training. Punishment often has unintended negative consequences— dogs learn to be “sneaky”. Ex. Counter surfing...getting the food is very rewarding, but to avoid punishment given in the past, they will be careful to get up only when you are not around or not looking. They are not evil or “planning to cheat” or getting back at you – you have conditioned them through your behavior and the logical consequences of the environment how to be a successful sneak.
- Always follow necessary punishment immediately with leading the dog into the correct behavior, so you can end with praise and reward. **Then structure the environment so the dog can not practice “being bad” and you minimize the need to punish!**

Ex. pup chews furniture leg, say “NO”, immediately give pup proper chewie, and praise pup for chewing on it. Don’t leave pup alone in that room- crate when not supervised.



Clicker Concepts: #6

Shaping is our main training method!

- Think of it as baby steps toward the final behavior you want
- Have Patience! Be consistent.
- Catch and reward efforts at each stage
- Require 8 out of 10 correct before upping the ante
- If your dog is “failing”, stop...step back to an easier level of the behavior until he is successful 8 out of 10 times.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features a light green balloon at the top, a light blue balloon in the middle, and a light purple balloon at the bottom. Each balloon is connected to a streamer that ends in several small, yellow, triangular flags.

Clicker Concepts: #7

Timing is everything

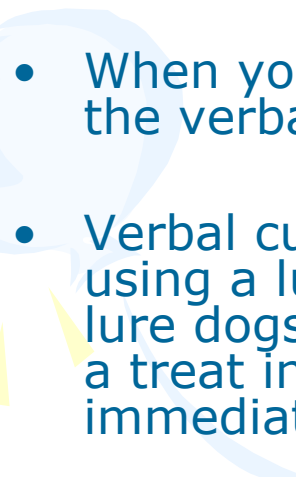
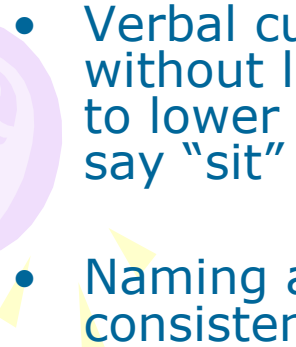
- Be fast to mark desired behavior with a click!
- If you have trouble at first, practice with a friend who is bouncing a ball for you– can you click every time just as the ball hits the floor?
- Clicking **too late** is the most common error.
- It's the timing of the click that matters...not how fast the food reward is given.

But...clicker training is forgiving. Mistakes in timing mean the dog may be confused for awhile and will take longer to learn, but no harm is done.



Clicker Concepts: #8

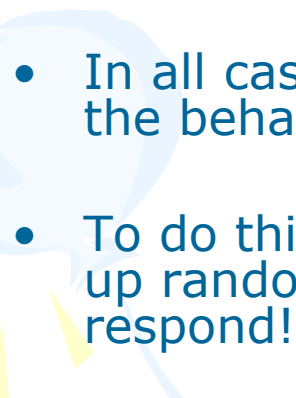
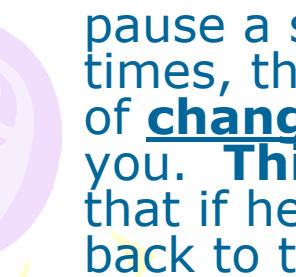
Get the behavior first...then name it

- Work silently at first whenever possible—our babble confuses dogs and worst of all...lets them practice ignoring our cues when they are not sure what we want them to do.
 - When you start adding verbal cues like the word “sit”, only say the verbal cue ONCE. **(the cue is “sit”, not “sit-sit-sit-sit”!)**
 - Verbal cues come a fraction of a second BEFORE **the lure** (when using a lure to teach something new). Ex. Say “sit”, immediately lure dogs nose up and back into the sit using your hand signal and a treat in your hand, click the second his butt hits the floor, immediately reward with the treat.
 - Verbal cues come just BEFORE **the click** when capturing behavior without luring. Ex. Watch dog carefully. The moment he starts to lower his butt into a sit as a freely offered, normal behavior, say “sit” just as he does so, immediately click and treat.
 - Naming a behavior “freezes it”, so don’t start naming until you are consistently getting exactly the behavior you want.
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Clicker Concepts: #9

when to fade the food lure

- Remember, fading means you continue to use the same hand motion, just no food in the hand. Treats stay in your pocket until after the click.
 - In all cases, fade the lure as quickly as you can, while still getting the behavior 8 out of 10 times you ask for it.
 - To do this, alternate food luring with empty hand signals– mix it up randomly...but be correct to click and treat on time when they respond!
 - If you try to fade the lure, and the dog won't respond because he does not see a treat, ignore him, **turn to face a new direction**, pause a second or two, get his attention again, then lure for 2-3 times, then try to fade the lure again. Keep repeating this pattern of **changing position and direction** as needed if he ignores you. **This is very important.** We don't want the dog to think that if he holds out and doesn't perform, you will give in and go back to the lure immediately.
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Clicker Concepts: # 10 Jackpots

- A jackpot is a special reinforcer = a VERY delectable treat you don't usually offer or a big handful of the usual treats fed one at a time for a full 15-30 seconds of "fine dining".
(This means think ahead and have a special jackpot treat available, or always carry plenty of treats, when training!)
- When giving a jackpot, your dog still only needs 1 click immediately after performing!
- Use jackpots to reward initiative or a very good performance under distracting circumstances.

Ex. You are shaping your dog to lie down on a mat. He has learned that walking over to the mat and standing there gets him a click and treat. Suddenly he runs to the mat and flops down with gusto. JACKPOT!!!! Reward that initiative big time with fine dining, all the while telling him how brilliant he is! This is one time to gush verbally! Party!!



Clicker Concepts: #11

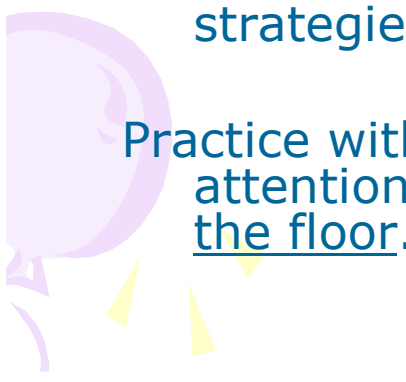
Real World Consequences

- Whenever possible, be aware of real world consequences and how they shape your dogs behavior. Structure your dogs world to make the environment work to your advantage.

Ex: dog jumps on people when they come in the door.

Think– what is reinforcing this for the dog? <answer = **attention** (even negative scolding is attention), touching, exciting bumping game from dogs point of view, etc...>

How do you correct this? Ignore and turn your back- don't speak a word to the jumping dog, walk away and leave the room, go back outside each time dog jumps, etc...see me if you need more strategies to help with this.




Practice with family members and friends this rule—dog only gets attention, petting, talked to, treats, etc... when all 4 feet are on the floor.

What should your dog be doing by now in this class?

- **Name game/attention:** when they hear their name, they should be looking at you for a click, then running to you for their treat.
- **Sit:** dogs should sit promptly in response to hand signal and/or word and look at you expectantly for their treat immediately after you click their sit.
- **Down:** dogs should down promptly in response to hand signal and/or word and look at you expectantly for their treat immediately after you click their down.
- **Loose lead walking:** dog should be starting to realize that keeping the lead loose is their job. If they are not, you need to **strictly (meaning 100% by all people in the dogs life)** enforce these 2 rules: if they pull, you *make like a tree* and stop all forward motion. If they continue to pull, they *earn penalty yards* and you **back up** (don't turn around—back up) to where you started. Don't let your dog practice pulling anyone at anytime!
- **Touch:** they should now understand that when you present the touch stick close to their head, they are to turn their head toward it and touch the tip with their mouth. Some dogs catch on to this fast and will by now run to touch the tip wherever you hold it out.



New this week

- Gotcha! (good manners, safety)
 - Leave it (safety and manners)
 - Trade you (builds trust, safety, beginning of fetch)
 - Run away recalls, restrained recalls, and toy chase recalls (builds enthusiasm to run to owner when called)
 - “Settle”– will come to mean go lie down and relax on your mat, bed, place, etc.... We will begin to get this behavior in class with pure shaping, no luring.
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Teaching "Settle"- Lie down on a mat

- Sit on a chair and place your dogs mat a few feet away from your feet.
- **Completely** ignore your dog unless the dog touches the mat with a foot or sits or downs on it- when they do, QUICKLY click and treat. If they stay on the mat, click and treat every 2-5 seconds or so, vary the time between clicks and treats. If they move off, say and do nothing, but get ready for the next time they return to the mat. If they stay on it, end the game for now after a minute. Get up and release the dog. Come back and play again in a few minutes.
- At first, reinforce for having at least one foot on the mat (or a sit or down).
- Once this is established (8 out of 10 times), only click and treat if 2 or more feet are on the mat or they sit or down .
- Once this is established only click and treat if 3 out of 4 feet are on the mat.
- Once this is established, only click and treat when all 4 feet are on the mat.
- Once this is established only click and treat when they sit or down on the mat. Since they know sit and down, they are likely to volunteer one of these behaviors as they try to figure out what will get you to click and treat them now.
- Once they consistently sit or down every time they step onto the mat, now click and reward only the downs. Intermittently reward staying on the mat in a down by clicking and treating at varying intervals as long as they remain there.
- Once they consistently go over and lie down on the mat when it is presented to them, it is time to name the behavior- tell them "go settle" or "go to your mat" or "go to bed" just before they get there, then click & treat immediately after their down as usual.

***What if they avoid the mat completely? Use your target stick to guide them onto the mat at first. Once they are comfortable with the mat and not afraid, remove the stick and start at step one above.