



Dogs Speak

Secret Lake Dog Training, LLC

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My dog won't do anything if I don't have food.



Does your dog's expression say, "No cookie. No sit."?

When we teach a new behavior we use a food to lure the dog into position. Once the dog does the behavior, the food lure becomes the reward. I know you don't want to walk around forever carrying pockets of treats. So you need to start *intermittent reinforcement* which means give a food reward for some correct responses, but not all.

Start *intermittent reinforcement* with sit because sit is an easy behavior for your dog to do. When you believe there is an 80% chance your dog will sit when you ask, start *intermittent reinforcement*.

The goal is to condition your dog to feel wonderful when he does what you ask, without having to

have treats involved. Here's how: Keep the treat in your left hand. You are not going to lure with the treat. Ask your dog to sit verbally or with your hand signal (using your right hand). If he sits, praise and treat from your left hand; then ask for a 2nd sit. If he sits, praise and treat. Immediately ask for a 3rd sit. If he sits, give lots of praise, but no food reward. Ask for a 4th sit; treat and praise. Now do it a 5th time; withhold the treat, but give lots of praise. Ask once more and give him a treat and praise. Then end the lesson on a positive.

Continue *intermittent reinforcement* with the sit and then start doing it with down and other commands that your dog does *readily* with treats.

If you don't start *intermittent reinforcement*, you will have a dog that will only work for food.

Mattie's Safety Tips

Coyotes, fox, hawks, and bobcat are predators who live among us. In a flash, a dog can be injured or killed. Hawks will even take small dogs right out of your yard. Bears are very common in our backyards. Wild animals have a right to live among us. We owe it to our pets to keep them safe. Never leave a dog outside unattended.



Be Prepared in Case Your Dog Gets Lost

Keep a tag on your dog's collar containing your up-to-date home phone, cell phone and address.

Prepare flyers in advance. Take some clear, close-up photos of your dog's head and side profile of his body. Use color for flyers and posters and b&w for faxes.

Include all the ways you may be contacted: home, cell, work, email, and your local animal control officer's number.

Write out a description including: Breed or if mixed, the breed it most resembles; Color and Distinguishing marks; Age; Sex; Size; Weight; Coat texture and length (short, medium, long, rough, silky, smooth, wiry); Ear set (erect, cropped, tipped, left ear); Eye color; Tail (long, short, medium, docked, corkscrew, C-shaped, etc.)

If your dog is lost, you can quickly add information such as when and where dog went missing, print the flyers and get them out there.

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