
NAME RESPONSE

Goal

Teach the dog to respond to their name immediately

Overview

The goal of this exercise is to mark the moment your puppy orients towards you in response to its name, even if there is a distraction nearby.

Name response is an excellent tool that can be used in so many other skills that you will work on with your puppy. A strong name response is helpful in acting as an interruption before your puppy makes a bad choice, like jumping up on the counter or jumping onto a human friend. This skill will also help with building handler focusing and makes loose leash walking go more smoothly.

Exercise

1. Food is in the left hand.
2. Say pup's name ONE TIME
 - Pup responds by looking or orienting toward you (as practiced in NAME + TREAT)
3. Say YES or GOOD DOG as soon as your puppy shows a response to it's name.
4. Reward

Work on this exercise in multiple environments (different rooms of the house, front yard, backyard, garage, etc) as well as different angles and at varied distances.

Troubleshooting

1. Wait 3-5 seconds after calling your puppy's name for a response. You can also build a quicker response time later.
2. If your puppy does not turn to look at you, sometimes making a small movement or sound (kissy noise, etc.) in their peripheral vision helps regain their focus. Reward as normal when they react.
3. Avoid repeating their name multiple times. This does not teach them their name but rather that the cue must be given multiple times before they need to respond.

Moving On

80% of the time you say the pup's name, they give you immediate attention, you may start adding in higher distractions.

Distractions

1. Begin with small sound distractions
 - a. Squeaky toy (out of sight)
 - b. Object drop (out of sight)
 - c. Get creative! If your puppy becomes excited and strains towards the sound, it was too loud and must be softened.
2. Visual distraction
 - a. Someone walking by
 - b. Seeing a dog from afar
 - c. Again, you can use ANYTHING as a visual distraction but keep in mind your puppy's age—the farther away something is, the easier it is to regain your puppy's focus and get a name response.

The key is to start out with small distractions and build from there. There's no rush, this entire process is a marathon, not a sprint.