



The PAWS Release Cue - “Free”

Introduction

At PAWS we use the word “Free” as our release cue. A release cue tells our puppies that they are released from any training expectations, and they can move from the position we asked them to be in. It signals the end of a training exercise and that they are released from any expectations for the moment. It basically means “I give you permission to do what you want.”

Unlike other cues, we do not have to mark and reward our puppy after we tell them “Free”. In most cases, you’ll ask for a behavior, such as “Sit”, mark and reward the puppy for doing it correctly, and then tell them “Free”, signaling to them that they don’t have to continue sitting. Most commonly you will use it to release from a position, such as “Sit”, “Down”, or “Bed”.

In other cases, telling your puppy “Free” and releasing them can be their reward. You might use it after “Wait,” for example when you are feeding your puppy their dinner, you may ask them to wait and then tell them “Free” so they can begin eating.

Teaching Your Puppy “Free”

To teach your puppy “Free” first give them a cue such as “Sit” or “Down”. “Yes” and reward and then tell them “Free”. As you do so, make it clear to them that they can move by tapping your leg, bending down, or moving with or away from them.

Once you are working on building sit and down duration, you can release and reward at the same time by telling them “Yes”, and tossing the food reward away from your puppy as you say “Free” to reinforce that “Free” means “You can move now.”