



**GOLDEN PAWS**  
DOG TRAINING LLC

# CLICKER TRAINING BASICS

## What is a clicker?

Clickers are valuable dog training tools that are used to mark desirable behaviors. Every time a dog hears a click it means "a reward is coming". Using this clicking sound to mark wanted behaviors leads to an increase in the frequency that a behavior is performed. This training method is rooted in the science behind operant and classical conditioning.

Watch for  
Behavior



Mark the  
Behavior



Reinforce the  
Behavior



## Why clicker training?

Clicker training is a safe positive reinforcement method that is free from the side effects commonly seen with force-based training (fear or aggression). Dogs that are trained with positive reinforcements are often more eager to learn and excited to train. Clicker training can also be used by anybody- young or old.

## Can I use my voice instead of a clicker?

Yes- although it will not be as effective. Your dog hears your voice all the time and your voice can mean many different things (sometimes good and sometimes bad). The clicking sound is distinct from all other sounds and therefore produces more consistent results.

### **What if my dog is deaf?**

Try using another one of your dogs senses besides hearing as a marker. Examples of substitutions for markers include using a penlight or hand signal (visual cue), touching your dogs nose (touch que) or stomping your foot (vibration).

### **How often should I treat?**

Every-time you click you should give your dog a treat. Even if you accidentally click. Otherwise you are breaking the promise to your dog that the "click" means reward. Experienced trainers may be able to click and reward as many as 20 times a minute!

### **What types of treats should I use?**

More clicks means more food so you should make sure that you are training with small pea sized dog treats that are easily chewed. Large treats may lead to an over consumption of calories in your dog and may take too long for your dog to eat in between repetitions. Also make sure that the treats are something your dog enjoys. Some dogs may need higher value treats such as cubed cheese or turkey.

### **What if my dog isn't food motivated?**

Believe it or not dogs like this do exist. Instead of reinforcing with food try giving your dog a favorite toy or praise. Use whatever motivates your dog!

Now that we know the basics of clicker training and why it works- lets give it a try!



# LET'S GET STARTED!

Before starting clicker training you will need to condition your dog to the sound of a clicker. To do this take about 10-20 bite sized treats. Next click the clicker and feed your dog a single treat immediately after each click. Repeat until you're out of treats.

Now that your dog understands that the click sound means that a treat is coming you can use your clicker to teach your dog almost anything.

## ***What you will need:***

*Treat bag*

*Clicker*

*Training sized treats*

*Your dog*

## **IMPORTANT!**

In between clicks be sure to **return your hand to a neutral position** (next to your side or behind your back). Otherwise your dog may watch your treat hand instead of focusing on you.

Let's start off with something basic- sit. Begin by verbally telling your dog to sit (you may have to lure your dog into the behavior at first by holding a treat over their head). *As soon as* your dogs rear hits the ground \*click\*. It is very important to click *while* the desired behavior is happening (not before or after). Follow the click promptly with a treat and return your hand to a neutral position. Repeat until your dog will sit on your verbal cue.