



Foster Program

Foster Dog Behavior Guide

Some Simple Tricks to Teach Your Foster Dog!

While you have a pup in your care why not teach them some simple tricks to help enrich their lives and help them get adopted! Dogs who understand basic cues and even know some tricks are more appealing to adopters, and are often more successful in their new homes. Below are some fun and simple things to teach your foster dog along with step by step instructions.

Sit

Many dogs already know how to sit on cue, but if not, it is very easy to teach!

1. Have a tasty treat hidden in your hand. You want the dog to be able to smell it but not see it.
2. Take your hand with the hidden treat and bring it to the dog's nose. Make sure they smell it!
3. Slowly move your hand backwards aiming for between the dog's eyes and ears. Do not lift your hand up. The dog should follow your hand with their nose moving their head to look up. This movement will also cause them to put their butt down on the ground to help align their spine to a more comfortable position.
4. Reward the dog with some excited praise, and give them the treat hidden in your hand.
5. Repeat the steps above until you can get the dog to do the sit behavior without the treat hidden in your hand (you will still give them a treat if they do sit)

Lie Down

Lying down is a little bit more challenging to master than the sit cue, but if your foster dog can do this one it will likely impress potential adopters!

1. Get the dog into the sit position, and give them a treat.
2. While the dog is in the sit position take another treat hidden in your hand and bring it directly to the dog's nose. Make sure they can smell the treat!

3. Bring your hand very slowly down to the ground aiming between the dog's front paws. If you move your hand too far forward or too far backwards the dog will most likely get up from the sit and you will have to reposition them.
4. Once the dog follows your hand down to the ground, and bends their elbows lowering themselves into the down position give them some excited praise and give them the treat you had hidden in your hand!
5. Repeat until you can get them to follow your hand into the down position without needing the hidden treat. (You will still reward them after they lay down!)

Spin

Spin is a fun trick that dogs usually love to learn! Once they know one direction you can teach them to spin the other way too.

1. Take a treat and hide it in your hand. Bring it to the dog's nose and make sure they smell it. Make sure the dog is standing.
2. Move the treat slowly to the right or left in a wide circle motion. Make sure that your hand stays level with the dog's nose, don't lower it or raise your hand. The circle should be wide so the dog feels comfortable following your hand. (Some dogs will prefer left and some will prefer going right!)
3. When the dog completes 75% of the circle give them some excited praise as encouragement! When they complete 100% of the circle, release the treat as a reward.
4. Repeat until the dog can follow your hand without a treat hidden in it. (Still reward them for completing the spin, and give them lots of excited praise!)

Beg or Sit Pretty

A slightly more challenging but adorable trick that will help your foster dog develop some core strength. This trick is a little more challenging for both trainer and trainee but it is fun to watch them start to understand it!

1. Get the dog into the sit position and reward them.
2. Take another treat hidden in your hand and bring it to the dog's nose. Make sure they smell the treat.
3. Raise your hand straight up from the nose slightly. Do not raise it too far because you will cause the dog to stand up with their hind legs, and we want their hind legs to stay in the sitting position.
4. Once the dog attempts to raise the top half of their body, even if it just a paw raise or a small hop, give them excited praise and release the treat!

5. Practice this until the dog can lift both of the front paws up off the ground while still keeping their hind legs in the sitting position. This trick may take a while to learn, it is like doing situps for a person!