



CLICKER TRAINING

Clicker Training

The clicker is a powerful training tool because it is a communication device used to tell the dog exactly when he has earned a reward. The clicker marks a desired behaviour. Many people are hesitant to use the clicker as they don't want to have to carry it around forever, however the clicker is a training tool used for teaching a behaviour. Once you have taught the behaviour, you can replace the sound of the click with praise and an occasional reward.

Loading the Clicker

Loading the clicker means teaching your dog that he will receive a reward when he hears a click. Using classic conditioning, the clicker is paired with the reward by first "charging" or "loading" the clicker by spending five days randomly clicking and then immediately rewarding. Once your dog slingshots his head towards you, or comes running to the sound of the click then you know that you are ready to incorporate the clicker into your training. You can load the clicker with short sessions (5 reps) where you click and give your dog a piece of food immediately afterwards. (Within one second)

Each click is a promise to reward, be sure to reward every time you click. Later when phasing out food rewards you will offer verbal praise instead of a click.

Why use a clicker?

Since a clicker produces a distinct and consistent sound which is very different from a spoken word that may be repeated randomly through conversation, the dog will come to understand with certainty and confidence that he has performed the right behaviour and a reward is coming.

TIPS:

When using the clicker during training, imagine that you are taking a picture of the exact behaviour that you want to reinforce and remember to always follow the click with a treat or the clicker will lose its power. You can also incorporate clicker training into behaviour modification, click shy dogs to confidence or aggressive dogs to calm.

Click DURING the desired behaviour and then treat. Not after. Imagine that you are taking a picture of the behaviour that you want to reinforce.

You can still use verbal praise, be quiet until you have clicked so your dog can concentrate then praise!