



TEACHING WATCH

Why teach watch?

Because getting your dog's focus with a single word is very useful. You can distract him from enticing trash in the street, for example, or keep his eyes on you when walking past another dog. Plus, dogs that are rewarded for paying attention do it more. And attentive dogs are easier to train.

How to teach it.

Step 1. Grab a bunch of small, delicious treats and your clicker. Face your dog—he can be sitting, lying down, or standing. You may be standing or sitting.

Step 2. Start with food in one hand and your other hand behind your back or at your side. Ask your dog to "Watch" as you bring the food from his nose up to your eyes. Your dog will most likely follow the food and look up at you. When he does, click and hand him a treat from your other hand. At first you are quickly clicking just a glance, so be ready and have good timing. Repeat this many times over as many sessions as is necessary until your dog looks at you the instant you start to move your hand.

Step 3. At the next session, practice the same way as above, except take the food out of your luring (moving) hand. Continue to lure him with your empty hand and when he looks at you, click and reward him from your other hand.

Step 4. Begin by luring your dog with your empty hand as you have been for 4 or 5 times, while asking him to "Watch." On the 6th try, ask him to "Watch" you without moving your hands. If he looks at you, praise him, reward with food and end your session. Some dogs will begin to look at the hand that has the food. If this happens, do nothing. Do not interact with him at all. Let him figure it out. He will most likely stare at your hand for a couple of seconds and then look at your face. When he does, praise him and hand him the food reward. Some dogs will begin look back and forth from the hand with the food to your face. Be silent and still. He is trying to figure out what will earn him the reward. He is learning. When he commits to looking at your face, praise him enthusiastically and hand him 2 or 3 food rewards.

Step 5. Slowly over a couple of sessions, decrease the number of times that you lure your dog and increase the number of times that you don't until you are completing entire sessions without moving your hands. When your dog can "watch" you when you do not move your hand you are ready for the next step.

Step 6. Begin by asking your dog to look at you without any hand movement, Remember to click and reward all successful attempts.



WATCH (CONTINUED)

Step 7. Adding Duration. Continue as described above, slowly increasing the amount of time your dog has to look you before receiving the reward during each training session until your dog can maintain eye contact with you for 10 seconds.

Step 8. Begin to ask him to look at you when he is turned away from you, but still within 2 or 3 feet. When he looks at you, even if he does not come to you, praise him enthusiastically and reward him generously. If he doesn't look at you, make the exercise easier by moving closer to him.

Step 9. Continue as above except begin to practice in different places in your home. When you are successful, slowly add more distractions by practicing in different places including outside.

Step 10. Adding Distractions. Build up the time she can hold contact, and start adding distractions. The first distraction to use is just wiggling your fingers. Do this when you're sure the dog understands that she's being paid for holding eye contact. When she sees your hand move in the corner of her sight, she'll glance over at it. Just keep moving it and do nothing else. Pretty soon she'll remember what game she's playing and bring her eyes back to yours. Click! Next open your hand near her, then close it if she comes for the treat and wait for eye contact. If you've been sitting down, stand up (remember to make time easier when you make distance harder). Work in different rooms and with different distractions.

Training Tip: Place your treats somewhere behind you or out of your dog's view, so he doesn't look at the treats instead of you. If he continues to look at the hand you are treating from, just wait. He will stop trying that eventually and look back up at you.

Troubleshooting: If your dog seems bored or distracted, you may be asking too much too soon. Lower your standards so you can click and treat more often. Getting something right and being rewarded is fun for your dog and keeps him interested in the training.

Troubleshooting: **She keeps looking at other dogs or people!** Start playing this game in a distraction-free place if you have to. The bathroom (working in the bathroom should give you several solitary times each day to work!), the bedroom – put the other dogs and people out of the space. You'll work up to distractions, but don't start that way.