



THE NAME GAME

Why train name recognition?

A good response to your dog's name – a head turn – is one of the most vital aids available. If you can get your dog's head to turn, his body will turn; and it can be one of the most useful attention getting devices that you have. **Attention is the key that makes training possible.** It's well worth devoting a little training time to on a regular basis. This is not recall training. All we are working toward is for your dog to turn his head.

How to train.

Step 1. To begin, start in a quiet place at home. Gather 20 treats in your hand, get next to your dog and say his name in a happy voice. Click and treat. Repeat until all of the treats are gone. You are not asking your dog to perform a specific behavior. His name means a click and a treat, a positive event; it is as simple as that.

Step 2. Repeat in different environments (other rooms in your house, outside in the yard, on the sidewalk, etc).

Step 3. If you have multiple dogs, do this with each dog separately.

Step 4. Refrain from using your dog's name in casual conversation. If this is impossible, choose a specific name by which you can signal your dog (e.g., Nick is now Nicholas).

Step 5. It's now time to begin using your dog's name when he is not already looking at you. Say his name and when he begins to turn his head click and treat.

Step 6. Repeat often. When he is not looking at you, say his name again. When he turns his head, click & treat. This is a great game to play when you are watching television. Have your treats and clicker ready. On every commercial say his name and click & treat when he looks at you. Then wait until he ignores you and repeat.

Training tip: Don't teach your dog to tune his call name out! We only want positive associations with his name since we are working toward an instant response. We don't want him to stop and consider whether or not he is in trouble before he responds! Don't use his name to scold or punish him.

Training Tip: Always reinforce your dog for looking at you voluntarily, especially when you say his name. Also, say his name before you give a cue, such as come or sit. Click and treat for compliance.

Troubleshooting: What If you say his name and he ignores you? Show him the treat but don't give it to him and say, "Oh well! Too bad!" in a happy voice. Or pretend you are eating it yourself. The next time you say his name he will probably be very attentive! Be sure to click and reward well.