

RSPCA SA Dog Training Canine College Program

Homework - Week Four

What to watch (and read): <https://eileenanddogs.com/blog/2015/09/04/go-out-the-door-before-your-dog/>

Entrance Manners

Teaching your dog door or gate manners is useful in everyday life. If you have a large dog you don't want them to rush through the gate or door and knock you over. If you have a small dog you don't want them to rush through the gate or door and trip you up. You also don't want them being off and down the road chasing next door's cat before you're even through the gate or door.

What to practise

1. Have tasty treats with you
2. Ask "Are you ready?" and offer the dog a piece of food
3. Begin with your dog at least 5m from the gate / door
4. Walk to the gate / door and ask your dog to wait (sit or stand) in a position close to the gate, but not blocking the gate opening
5. To begin with just touch the gate or door handle. If your dog stays in position, bridge and reinforce
6. If your dog gets up, move your hand away from the gate / door, cue them to wait again and attempt to touch the handle. If they wait, bridge and reinforce and move onto the next step.
7. Cue your dog to sit/stand at the gate / door, reach for the handle and open it slightly. If your dog stays in position, bridge and reinforce. Continue until the gate / door is wide enough for you and your dog to move through.
8. If your dog moves, close the gate / door. Go back some steps to touching the handle, bridge and reinforce.
9. When your dog is remaining in position consistently step through the gate / door. Your dog may go through before, with or following you – cue your dog how and when you would like them to go through
10. On other side of the gate / door have your dog turn back to you and ask your dog to make eye contact and wait in a sit or stand while you close and if appropriate lock it
11. Bridge and reinforce
12. Cue your dog to move away with you using LLW

This exercise is hard if your dog has previously rushed through gates and doors. Dogs anticipate the gap coming and so they get up. Be patient and use small steps so you can communicate effectively with your dog.

Stay

It is always hugely important that your dog feels relaxed enough to settle and rest through choice – hence why we put a lot of focus on mat training and having a portable “safe place” that your dogs understand.

However, it is also important that your dog can relax on cue while you are occupied elsewhere or if you need to leave them briefly in a safe position to deal with something urgently. Which is where Stay comes in.

How to train this?

- 🐾 Decide on your release cue! A cue word such as “Free” or “OK” which is not used for any other behaviour. Remember your release cue needs to be less rewarding and exciting than the Stay itself and is not accompanied by reward
- 🐾 Settle your dog in either a sit or down position – it is often easier to start this at home using their mat where they already know to settle
- 🐾 Aim for one second in the “stay” position that you have chosen, remaining directly in front of your dog.
- 🐾 Reinforce at one second intervals, then two, then three and so on, beginning to add duration
- 🐾 Continue this process to a total of 30 seconds in “Stay” with no distance inbetween you and your dog
- 🐾 Give your release cue
- 🐾 If your dog breaks the “stay”, use a lure and reset
- 🐾 Generalisation – remember to keep practicing in other environments. At home is a great place to start. Then progress to your yard, front garden, on your walks

NB: At this stage we are looking to increase duration – NOT distance. Once you have a secure 30 second – 1 minute stay at home, then you can go back to Step 1 taking a step away from your dog. Every time you move to a new location you will need to start from the beginning to build up first duration, then distance.

Final tips:

- 🐾 Don't stare at your dog while they are in a stay - **willing** them not to move. Look slightly above or away keeping them in your peripheral vision so you can act if they do start to move
- 🐾 If practising while the dog is on leash, ensure you are not putting any pressure on that leash. If the dog feels pressure they are likely to follow it. You can drop the lead and put your foot on it if that helps
- 🐾 Set yourself up for success – don't move too soon. If your dog is getting bored or confused they WILL get up