



Dog Behaviour Guide

Sit Training



Every dog should respond reliably to a “sit” cue. It is a foundational behaviour for basic obedience. You can also train your dog that sitting can help them gain access to desired items, such as treats, toys, or praise. Here are some recommendations for training your puppy or dog to sit.

Training Process

Teaching a “sit” cue helps to teach impulse control through reward-based training. Instead of jumping, barking, or pawing, your dog can learn to “ask” for something by sitting patiently.

Training Tips:

- Have a treat pouch, so you can easily access more treats during a training session.
- Consider using a clicker. A clicker helps you to “mark” or identify when your dog performs the desired behaviour. If you use a clicker, you must train your dog to associate the clicker with treats, which is also called “loading” the clicker. Check out our EHS Clicker Training resource for more information on clicker training.
- Practice in a quiet, distraction-free environment. This will help you and your dog focus.

Training the “Sit” Command

- Stand with your dog in front of you and hold a treat near your dog’s nose.
- Begin to move the treat above your dog’s head. As your dog follows the movement of the treat overhead, they should begin to touch their bottom to the ground. When your dog moves into a “sit” position, immediately mark the behaviour through a verbal cue such as “yes!” or click your clicker and give your dog a treat. This process is called luring.
- Practice Steps 1 and 2 several times, in regular but short sessions. Try practicing daily.
- Eventually, your dog will start to sit without you luring them into position. You can now start to introduce the “sit” cue. When your dog sits, verbally say “sit” or use a hand command. Ensure you do not give the cue before the dog sits, as they may associate the cue with the wrong movement.
- Practice step 4 in regular, but short sessions. Over time, you can start to give the “sit” cue and your dog will sit!

Using “Sit” for Impulse Control

Train your dog to “ask” for valued items by sitting. For example, if you are holding your dog’s favourite toy, your dog’s immediate reaction may be to jump towards the toy or bark excitably. Ignore these behaviours and wait for your dog to sit. If your dog does not respond, you may have to verbally cue “sit” and then reward your dog’s behaviour by giving them the toy.

Eventually, your dog will start to automatically sit when they want something. This is also known as impulse control, which you can read further about by checking out our EHS Impulse Control resource.

Additional Resources:

The Training Academy at the Edmonton Humane Society offers Basic Obedience and Intermediate Obedience! These classes offer basic obedience training to help your dog become a model canine citizen. For more information, visit our website:

<https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/sessions/basic-obedience/>

Did You Know?

You can also ask us behaviour questions by emailing:

askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com

It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 40% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. Please [Donate](#).