



We say our pet's name to get their attention, but to do so, we must teach them to recognize and respond to their new name. The following exercise will guide you on how to teach your pet their new name or help you with changing your pet's name.

How to Teach Your Pet Their Name

Step 1

Pick a quiet place to practice, like your living room or basement.

Step 2

Toss a treat a short distance away from you. Your pet will go to eat it, and once they've finished the treat say their name once and only say their name. If they don't respond, do not repeat their name. Instead, make another sound to get their attention, like a high-pitched sound or kissing sound. The second they turn their head to look in your direction, say "yes" and reward them with a treat.

Step 3

Repeat this process: *toss the treat* → *say their name* → *reward for looking at you* – repeat this pattern multiple times. Your pet should begin to catch on and start to quickly respond to their name.

Troubleshooting: *If your pet goes to eat the treat you tossed and turns their head before you say their name, **do not** reward this, because they are not actually responding to their name. If this happens, then instead of tossing a treat, allow them to get distracted on their own. When their attention is no longer on you, call their name. When they turn their head, say "yes" and reward them.*

Step 4

Once they are responding consistently, practice throughout the house and toss the treats further from you. Repeat this until they're consistently responding to their name in the new setting and from further away.

Step 5

Continue practicing the *toss the treat* → *say their name* → *reward for looking at you* - pattern in different settings that have slightly more distractions, like a busier room or outside with your pet on leash.

Step 6

With repeated practice in a variety of increasingly more distracting situations, your pet will become consistent in responding to their name and you won't need to reward them with a treat each time. You can then start rewarding them every few repetitions, rather than every time.

Additional Resources

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