

LEAVE IT

THE COMMAND: “Leave it” means to leave an object or an animal alone. This command is helpful in countless situations such as asking your dog to avoid food you’ve dropped, trash on the street or other dogs and people.



HOW TO:

- Ask your dog to sit.
- Show your dog a treat.
- Place the treat in the palm of your right hand, then close your hand around it.
- Put your closed fist in front of your dog’s nose and let her sniff your hand.
- Your dog will begin to nose, lick, paw or mouth your right hand.
- In a quiet voice say “leave it”.
- The moment your dog looks away from your hand, mark the behavior with a “yes”, then give the dog a treat from your left hand while saying “take it”.
- Repeat this several times.
- Your dog will quickly figure out that they get rewarded for looking away.
- With practice, when you say “leave it”, your dog will begin to turn her head away or move away from the treat.
- After they master the behavior, switch the treat into your left hand and repeat.

Tips and Troubleshooting:

In the beginning, your dog does not have to move her entire head away from your hand in order to get the reward. The instant her eyes look away from your hand, breaking attention from the treat, you can reward your dog.

When giving the reward from your left hand, say “take it” in a cheery voice.

To make it easier for your dog to succeed, you can use a less exciting treat (like a baked biscuit) in your right hand and reward her with a high value treat (chicken) from your left.



Increasing Difficulty:

- **Open Hand:** Show your dog the treat. Leave your hand open, instead of making a fist.
- Repeat the steps above.
- If your dog tries to take the treat, close your palm into a fist, say “leave it”, then return to practicing with a closed fist. Once they’ve had multiple successful repetitions with a closed fist, try with an open hand again.

- **On the Floor:** After your dog masters “leave it” with an open hand, you can then place the treat on the floor.
- Ask your dog to sit.
- Place treat on the floor, then move your foot over the treat with your weight on your heel.
- Swing your foot to the side to reveal the treat to your dog.
- Tell them to “leave it”.
- If your dog attempts to take it, swing your foot back over the treat to block them.
- When they look away, reward them with a treat from your hand.
- After they master this behavior, increase the challenge by taking a few steps away from the treat.
- As you move away, say “leave it” and, when your dog succeeds, reward them with a treat from your hand while saying “take it.”

Tips and Troubleshooting:

Use your foot to block the treat on the floor, rather than bending down to cover the treat with your hand. Your dog is fast and will get to the treat before you get your hands to the floor! Since accidents happen, your dog might get the treat from the floor. If that happens, say “oops” and start again.

If your dog is successful at each interval, have some fun with this command!

Try this: Have your dog lie down. Place a treat on their paw and ask them to leave it. If they ignore the treat on their paw, give them a reward from your hand while saying “take it.” If they can do this, try putting the treat on their nose or forehead. Tell them to “leave it” until you release them with “take it.” Bonus points if your dog can flip the treat into their mouth!