

SIT AND SIT STAY



SIT

The Command: “Sit” means to sit; a comfortable position for most dogs, and often the first command a dog learns.

HOW TO:

- Grasp a treat with your thumb and pointer finger, like you’re pinching something.
- Hold the treat close to your dog’s nose.
- Move the treat slowly up over his nose, so that his head tilts up to follow the treat.
- As his head and snout raise up, his rear end will naturally move down to the floor.
- When your dog’s rear end touches the floor, mark the behavior with “yes” and then give him the treat.
- Once your dog repeatedly succeeds at the behavior, you can add the verbal command “sit”, as you pass the treat in front of your dog.

Tips and Troubleshooting:

Pick a quiet spot to practice, free of distractions.

If your dog jumps up to grab the treat, you’re holding it too far away from his nose. Try keeping the treat no more than one inch from his nose.

If your dog backs up, instead of sitting, try moving him to a spot with a wall behind him, so that he can’t back away.

Only say the command “sit” once. Wait until your dog gives you the behavior (be patient!) and then mark with “yes” and a treat.



Adding Hand Signals:

- The hand signal for “sit” mimics the movement you used to teach them to sit: pass your (empty) hand over their head and then back up towards your shoulder, as you say “sit”. Imagine you’re doing an exaggerated bicep curl.
- As soon as your dog sits, mark the behavior with a “yes” and reward them with a treat from your other hand.

SIT — STAY

The Command: “Sit – Stay” means to sit and stay in place, until released. This can be used in everyday situations, both on and off leash.

HOW TO:

- Begin with your dog in a sit.
- Hold treats in your left hand, but do not let your dog see them.
- Give the stay signal with your right hand (use a flat, outreached hand, like a traffic cop signaling you to ‘stop’) and at the same time say “Stay”.
- Silently count two beats. Don’t move away. After two seconds, give the treat.
- After the task is completed say ‘yes’ and immediately give your dog the food reward from your left hand.
- Release your dog by saying “ok!” or “free”. This tells them that the “stay” is over.
- As long as your dog is successful, continue to add on time and eventually, distance to their sit-stays.
- Use the sit-stay checklist to gradually increase the difficulty. Aim for your dog to complete about a dozen successful repetitions before moving onto the next step.

Tips and Troubleshooting:

Begin practicing sit-stay on leash or in the house. As your dog builds their skill level, move outside where there are more distractions. If you have an enclosed area outside, you can practice off leash, but if not, try using a long nylon training lead, so you can increase the distance safely.

If your dog gets up as you try to extend the length of the sit stay, return to the last length of time your dog was successfully able to stay sitting and then build up slowly from that point.

As you go through the sit stay checklist, your dog may move or follow you. If that happens, walk him back where he was originally sitting, then try again, making it slightly easier this time. Always set your dog up for success, so he’ll enjoy your training sessions!

