HSNBA BASIC OBEDIENCE

Thank you for adopting a dog from the HSNBA. Training your dog in basic obedience is crucial, and it has so many benefits.

Communication: Training improves communication between you and your dog, so you can better understand each other's wants and needs.

Bonding: Training your dog can help build a stronger bond with your dog based on trust and respect.
Confidence: Training your dog helps your dog become more confident and comfortable in many different situations.

Socialization: Training can help your dog learn how to behave in social situations with other people and dogs.
Focus: Training can help your dog learn to focus on you, which can be useful in many situations while out in public.

Mental and Physical Stimulation: Training your dog helps fulfill their daily need for physical and mental stimulation, which is essential to their overall well-being.
Stress Reduction: Training your dog helps reduce your dog's stress level. This can result in preventing stress- related issues.

Problem Behavior Prevention: Training your dog and providing them with daily mental and physical stimulation can help prevent them from developing problem behaviors.

CORE BEHAVIORS

Here at HSNBA, we believe the following Core Behaviors will help set your dog up for success by providing them with a strong foundation in this new life with you.

Below you will find step-by-step instructions on how to teach your dog each of these core behaviors to start building that strong foundation between you and your dog.

Release Command: The release command is essential in training, as it signifies the end of a behavior for both the dog and the owner. By giving the release command (okay or free), this indicates to the dog that the performed behavior is now over and they can now "break free" or stop the behavior.

Release Command steps:

1. Bait your hand and place your hand behind your back.
2. Approach your dog standing no more than 3-4 feet away from them. Obtain your dog's attention by calling their name or making a high-pitched friendly noise. Once you obtain your dog's attention, immediately give the release command. Hold your baited hand out to your leg so that your dog will approach you for the treat. The Release Command is a verbal cue that tells your dog he or she has finished the behavior.
3. If your dog does not immediately respond to you, wait 1-2 seconds and toss the treat on the ground near your feet or you could also use gestures such as slapping your leg and making smoochy sounds encouraging your dog to respond to the command.
4. It is important to delay any gestures or treat tossing until after you give the command. This allows your dog to quickly learn that the release command (okay or free) is followed by encouraging gestures that lead to lavish praise and treats once he or she gets to you. Your dog will quickly learn that there is no need to wait for encouraging gestures that follow the release command because it simply delays the reward.

Sit: Sitting is a natural position that dogs assume many times per day, therefore making it a cue that can be taught quickly. Since the Sit cue is usually easy to learn, it can help build up your dog's confidence through a positive and successful training experience.

Positive and successful experiences help to keep both the dog and owner motivated to continue and maintain the training.

Sit steps (luring):

1. Put a treat in your hand and close your fingers over it.
2. With your dog standing in front of you, slightly lure your dog into the sit position by putting your treat hand to your dog's nose. Your dog should follow the food lure by looking up at it. As your dog is looking up, begin to move the lure back over top of your dog's head. Move at a slow and steady pace, ensuring you do not lose your dog in the baiting process. As your dog looks up and back to follow the lure, he or she will begin to move into the sit position. As your dog's rear-end touches the ground, mark that exact moment with YES and give your dog a treat.
3. Give your dog the release cue (okay or free) before the dog moves out of position.

Sit steps (adding the verbal cue):

1. Call your dog to you and wait to see if your dog comes to you and offers the Sit without being told. If your dog does not, toss a treat about 3 to 4 feet from you. Most dogs who have been reinforced for the behavior will eat the tossed treat, walk back to you and sit because doing so makes the treats appear. If this happens, it is now time to add the cue.
2. Reset your dog by tossing a treat about 3 to 4 feet from you. When your dog walks over to you, say "SIT" and wait for your dog to respond and perform the behavior.
3. As your dog sits, mark that behavior with "YES" and give the treat to him or her.
4. Give the release cue (okay or free) before your dog moves out of the Sit.
5. Continue resetting your dog and practice adding the verbal cue by repeating steps 2-4 about 5-10 times.

**Remember, when you have your dog come to you, say "SIT" before your dog offers the behavior. When your dog responds and performs the behavior (Rear-end touches the ground), Mark, Reward and Release.

Down: The Down cue is used to instruct a dog to lie down in a spot chosen by you. The goal of the Down is to get your dog to lie down by verbal cue only (this will take time).

When teaching the down cue to your dog, it's very important you never physically force your dog into position because you could (1) potentially cause harm and injury to your dog or (2) break apart the human to dog bond you are trying to build and establish.

Down Steps (Luring from a sit position):

1. Bait your hand with a treat.
2. With your dog directly in front of you, ask your dog to sit.
3. Place your baited hand to your dog's nose and encourage him or her to touch their nose to your hand. With your dog's nose stuck to your hand, move your hand downward at a slow and steady pace towards the ground. Once your hand is at ground level with the dog's nose still at your hand, start to move the lure a little bit away from the dog or a little bit into your dog. The direction you move your hand will depend on how your dog responds. Some dogs may just walk towards your hand and not go down if you move it away. If this happens, try moving your hand a little bit into your dog to get your dog to back up and lie down. (Sometimes this takes some time. Remember to be patient.)
4. The down behavior is complete when your dog's rear end, belly and elbows are all on the ground. As the dog's rear end and elbows touch the ground, mark that behavior with "YES" and give them the treat. Give the release cue (okay or free), before your dog breaks the down position.

Down Steps (Adding the Verbal Cue):

1. Call your dog to you, wait for a response to see if your dog walks over to you and offers the down. If your dog does not come to you when called, toss a few treats 3 to 4 feet away from you. Most dogs that have been reinforced for the down will eat the tossed treat, then walk back to you and offer the down, because by doing so makes treats appear.
2. Reset your dog by tossing treats about 3 to 4 feet away from you. When your dog walks over to you, say "Down" and wait for your dog to respond and perform the behavior.
3. As your dog responds to the verbal Down Cue and lies down, mark that behavior, "YES" and reward with a treat. Give your dog the release cue (okay or free), before your dog gets up and moves out of that position.
4. Continue resetting your dog and practice adding the verbal cue by repeating steps 2-4 about 5-10 times. Remember, every time your dog responds and performs the behavior: Mark, Reward, Release.
5. Continue to practice to only mark and reward your dog when he or she responds and performs the behavior after you give the verbal cue. If your dog offers the Down behavior without a verbal cue, simply ignore it. This will help to reinforce the dog to learn that he or she needs to wait for the verbal cue in order to receive the reward.

Come (Recall): Developing a reliable recall is critical. It enables you to keep your dog safe, allows you to avoid and/or remove your dog from unwanted situations, and can eventually allow your dog more freedom. The goal of the Come Command is to have your dog immediately come to you when called every time.

Come Command (recall) steps:

1. Attach a leash to your dog's collar, make sure there is plenty of slack in the leash.
2. With your dog only a few feet away from you, say your dog's name then the verbal cue "Come." You may have to entice your dog to come to you by backing up for them to approach you.
3. As soon as your dog starts to approach you, immediately mark that behavior with "YES." Once the dog fully gets to you, reward with a treat, followed by the release cue (okay or free).
4. Continue to practice by repeating steps 2 and 3 about 5-10 times each training session. Over time, you can increase the distance between you and your dog with a long line leash.

Place Command: Teaching your dog the Place command is not only about giving your dog a specific designated place to go, but it's also about teaching your dog impulse control. While your dog is learning Place, they are also learning to manage their impulses and emotions. The Place command encourages them to relax and remain calm, even in distracting or exciting situations.

Place Command Steps (Luring):

1. Choose a specific place for your dog that you will want them to go to. (Raise dog bed, Blanket, towel, etc.)
2. Have your dog on-leash
3. Using a treat, place the treat to your dog's nose and have them follow it onto the designated place.
4. As soon as your dog has all four paws on the place item, mark that behavior with "YES," then reward with a treat, and end with the release cue (okay or free) before the dog moves off the place.
5. Continue to practice by repeating steps 2-4 about 5-10 times, until your dog starts to get the hang of the behavior.

Place Command Steps (adding verbal cue):

1. Choose a place for your dog that you will want him or her to go to. (Raise dog bed, Blanket, towel, etc.)
2. Have your dog on-leash
3. Using a treat, place the treat to your dog's nose and have them follow it onto the place.
4. Right before all four paws are on the place say the verbal cue "Place." When all four paws are on the place item, mark the behavior with "YES," then reward with a treat, and end with the release cue before the dog moves off the place item.

5. Continue to practice by repeating steps 2-4 at least 5-10 times.

Touch behavior: Teaching your dog the touch cue will help your dog build up confidence when your dog is curious but slightly cautious about a new object/person. It helps shy dogs build up confidence with strangers and being handled. It can also help your dog understand that approaching hands is not a threat therefore does not require a negative response.

Touch Behavior Steps:

1. Hold your hand flat with palm out facing the dog about 1-2 inches away from your dog with a treat in between your fingers.
2. When your dog sniffs your hand, and touches their nose to your palm, mark that behavior with "YES" and give the dog the treat that you have in between your fingers.
3. Repeat the process above until your dog is reliably touching their nose to the palm of your hand.

Touch Behavior Steps (adding verbal cue):

1. Once your dog is reliable with the Touch behavior, you can now add the verbal cue. Follow the same steps listed above, but right before your dog's nose touches the palm of your hand say the verbal cue "Touch," mark the behavior with "YES" and then reward with the treat.
2. Continue to practice by repeating step 1 above at least 5-10 times and until your dog is reliably performing the Touch behavior with the verbal cue.
3. Once your dog is consistently performing the behavior with the verbal cue and baited hand, the next step is to remove the baited hand. Present your hand to your dog and say the verbal cue, "Touch." Wait for your dog to approach you and touch their nose to the palm of your hand. When your dog performs this behavior, mark the behavior with "YES" and reward with a treat.
4. Continue to practice by repeating step 3 at least 5-10 times and until your dog reliably performs the Touch Behavior with only the verbal cue.

Thank you for taking an interest in training your new dog. These basic obedience behaviors will help you jumpstart your dog's learning and provide a strong foundation for you and your dog.

It is important to note that training needs consistency and commitment to be successful. Training sessions should be short to keep your dog engaged and remember to have fun. Just 5 to 15 minutes a day of training with your dog is all you need! Always remember to end your training session on a positive note. This will help to continue to build and strengthen the bond between you and your dog.

We look forward to hearing about the ongoing progress between you and your dog. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to us. The HSNBA Behavior Team is here to help you and your dog.

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