

An excerpt from

Good Dog! Kids Teaching Kids about Dog Behavior and Training

Chapter 3, The BEST Time You'll Ever Have Training Your Dog!

By Evelyn Pang and Hilary Louie,

Dogwise Publishing. 800-776-2665, www.dogwise.com

Permission to reproduce excerpt with attribution granted by Publisher.



Teaching Good Manners and Tricks

Is your dog like mine was? Does he jump and bark when friends come to the door? Does he run away or pull on the leash?

Would you like your dog to learn good manners and even tricks?

Teaching your dog good manners and tricks can be really easy with a clicker and treats. Once you know that teaching your dog tricks is easy, you can make up your own tricks.

What is Clicker Training?

Clicker training is a game you play with dogs and other animals, even people, to teach good behaviors. All you need is a clicker, this information, and some treats. If you learn what is in this chapter, you'll be able to train your pet yourself. You'll learn how to make learning fun. And you'll learn ways to say "yes" to your dog by clicking and giving treats for good behaviors while ignoring bad ones.

What is a Clicker?

A clicker is something that makes a short, sharp sound. You can buy clickers at pet supply stores and at www.clickertraining.com. Local animal shelters and dog training programs may also have clickers for sale.

If you don't have a clicker, or if your dog is afraid of the loud sound some clickers make, use a retractable pen (a pen with a button on top that you push to make the point come out) or a Snapple® bottle cap which also makes a soft clicking noise.

What Treats to Use

When you begin training a dog, you should always have a parent or other adult with you to make sure the dog is safe around food. Some dogs are not used to working for their food. They may try to nip or bite you to get the food. Let your parents give the dog the first few treats to make sure the dog doesn't nip or bite while being given the treat. If the dog barks, growls, or tries to grab the food, give all the food to the dog and stop the training session. This means you and your parents need a professional trainer.

If your parents have decided it is safe for you to give treats to the dog, use treats that the dog really, really likes. Most dogs like cheese, hot dogs, and chicken. You can also use treats made especially for dogs—something better than regular dog food—if you don't want to use human food. Chop the treats into tiny little pieces so you and the dog can play the training game for a long time before the dog gets full.

How to Click

Hold the clicker with your thumb on the part that makes the short, sharp sound. Click when you think the dog's behavior begins to get close to what you want. So if you are teaching a dog to sit, click when he sits or if he tries to sit and comes close. Give a treat right after you click.

The trainer must always look at the dog and pay attention to the dog. If the trainer looks away when the dog sits, the dog will be frustrated because he didn't get the click and treat he earned. He may not want to do it again. If you make it fun, easy, and interesting, the dog will want to do it. Never hurt or punish the dog. Don't pull the dog's leash. Never use force. Find a way the dog will like to do the behavior.

How to Treat

Put the treats somewhere you can reach easily and fast like your pocket or a fanny pack. You can also put the treats in a bowl easy for you to reach, but away from the dog. Give the dog a treat by dropping it on the ground in front of him or holding the treat in your open hand.

Authors **Evelyn Pang** and **Hilary Louie** learned dog behavior and training with Lynn Loar, Ph.D., in SHIP, the Strategic Humane Interventions Program, in San Francisco. They had so much fun learning about dogs, how to be safe around them, how to train them, and how to enjoy them that they wanted to bring the information to other children through their writing and illustrations. Both live and attend school in San Francisco, CA.