

Positive Reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement is a type of learning that works perfectly for dogs. It is based in **motivation** and **enjoyment** which naturally leads to quick and happy learning experiences, trust and a highly positive relationship between a dog and their guardian.

We use positive reinforcement training to speak not only to the dog but also to their brain chemistry. Anything that produces a nice result will fire up the **brain's reward area** and the neurotransmitter **dopamine**. This biological event aids motivation and memory so the dog **learns, remembers** and **enjoys the lesson**.

Positive reinforcement simply means that we **add something nice** to a situation when a dog is carrying out a behaviour which we would like him to repeat. It always works if it's **carefully timed**.

Try waiting until your dog does something you like, then **rewarding with a treat**. A few repetitions of this when the dog makes the link between the behaviour and the treat, will create a very solid behaviour that the dog will start to offer, in case there's the chance of a reward.

Here are some examples:

- **Reward** your dog for all four paws on the ground and **ignore** jumping up.
- **Reward** a barking dog when he falls silent and **ignore** the barking.
- **Reward** a loose leash and stand still when the dog pulls.

Any behaviour that you focus on will be repeated so focus on the helpful stuff and reward it too. The dog will soon realise which produces a treat and repeat that far more often.

Note: Sometimes dogs find the most surprising thing rewarding, so get to know your dog's preferences carefully. Some prefer to be told off to being ignored, as your attention is rewarding to them. Some will jump up just to be pushed off.

Always offer a treat for the behaviour you want and ignore everything else.