

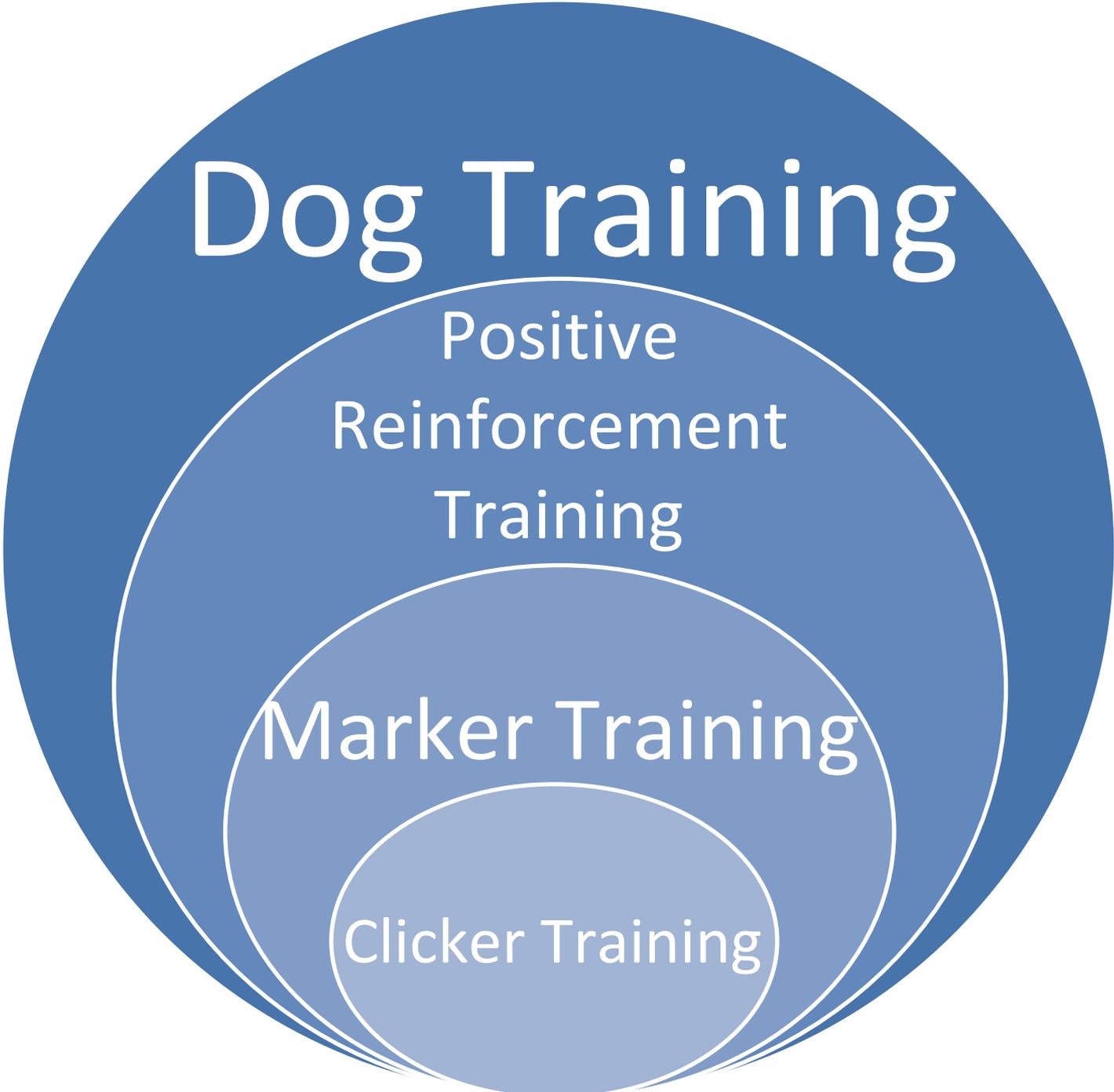


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Intro to Clicker Training for Clients

Dog Training



Positive
Reinforcement
Training

Marker Training

Clicker Training

What Is Dog Training?

Dog training is the process of systematically **influencing your dog's experiences** to **encourage certain behaviors** and discourage others.

The Stick or the Carrot?

Pitfalls of Punishment-Based Training (using pain or intimidation):

- distrust, avoidance, dislike of work
- reliance upon threat
- Stress -> fear, anxiety, aggression





The Stick or the Carrot?

Benefits of Positive Reinforcement Training (using rewards)

- This method builds a bond and trust between you and your dog, which is extremely important for your working relationship!
- Results in a confident dog who enjoys interacting with you and participating in training!





What is Positive Reinforcement?

Adding a reward to encourage a desirable behavior.

- The dog chooses what counts as a reward and what doesn't at any moment.

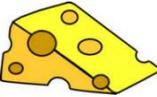


What do dogs want/like/value?

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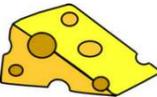
Food (kibble, treats, meat, cheese, etc.)



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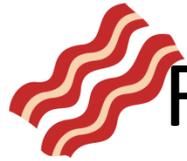
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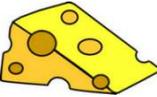
Play (toys, ball, tug, play with other dogs)



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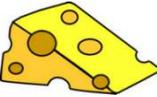
Massage/Petting/Snuggling



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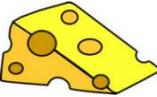


Walking, Sniffing, Environmental Access

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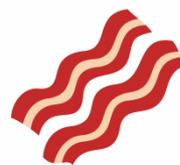
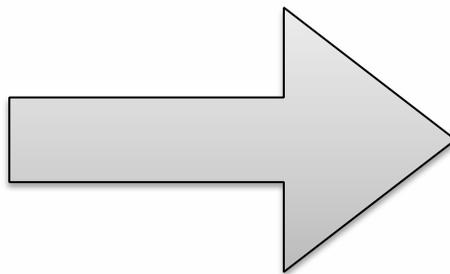


Walking, Sniffing, Environmental Access

Chewing 

The Key to Positive Reinforcement:

Desirable,
trained
behaviors



Would this work for a dog?



You've been generally good all day, let's have a picnic tomorrow!

Would this work for a dog?



You've been generally good all day, let's have a picnic tomorrow!

Why not?

Marker Training

Training using a tool called a **Reward Marker** for clarifying your use of Positive Reinforcement to train your dog.

What Is a Reward Marker?

a signal that *guarantees* the dog will get a reward, which helps us communicate exactly *when* (and how) the dog earned a reward.

Reward Marker Options



Clicker

a handheld noisemaker that makes a distinct, consistent “click” when pressed



“Yes”

The dog’s handler saying the word “Yes” (distinct, higher tone helps!)

Mark= Click or say “Yes”

Let's Get Started!



1. Ready some treats or other small objects to practice getting and giving the treat at the right moment.

If you have something like a bowl or cup handy, you can use that as a target to place the treats into.

Let's Get Started!



2. Have your Marker ready.

Put your finger on the button (or tongue) of your clicker (or on the top of a clicky pen for practice if you don't have a clicker.

or

Be ready to say "Yes".

Let's Get Started!



3. Stand still.

- Don't reach for the treats or rest your hand where they are.
- Don't make any noise or movements that would draw your dog's attention.
- When we Mark, we want the dog to notice with all of their attention, so the pattern of 'Mark-> reward' is very clear.

Let's Get Started!



4. Mark (click or say “Yes”) *immediately* when you see the wanted behavior happen.

- Mark at the exact moment you see the behavior happen. Accuracy is important!
- It is important to have a clear picture of what you are looking for, so you don't hesitate about whether or not to Mark and miss the right moment.

Let's Get Started!



6. Once the Mark is finished, reach for one treat, pick it up, and place it in the bowl or cup (or just on the table).

- Be sure that you don't reach for the treat at the same time as you Mark or before you Mark (either of these can distract the dog from the marker). Finish marking, then get the treat immediately afterward.

Clicker Dos & Don'ts

- Remember that a mark happens the *instant* a behavior occurs and ALWAYS means a reward is coming!
- It is NOT to be used for getting attention or to distract the dog.
- If you inadvertently click a behavior you don't want, you still must follow with a treat anyway.
Don't dilute the click!

Basic Clicker Training Rules

- Do not use any verbal or physical corrections while using your clicker as this can create a negative association that can work against your training.
- Make training sessions short and fun. Playing after training can also help make it even more fun and effective.



Teaching Dogs Skills

Four methods we use to teach dogs new skills are capturing, luring, targeting and shaping.

- *Capturing*: rewarding the dog for doing a behavior all on their own, without being asked.
- *Luring*: using a baited hand to draw dog into a space or position.
- *Targeting*: teaching a dog to use its nose or paw to touch hands and objects.
- *Shaping*: rewarding for small pieces of a behavior to morph it into a more complex behavior.

Cues

- What is a cue?
 - It is the instruction for the dog (i.e., sit, watch, touch).
- Cue Rules:
 - The cue should come BEFORE the behavior and C/T.
 - Avoid repeating cues.
 - Don't say the cue after the behavior is performed (i.e., "Good sit!").



The Complete Model:

Cue-> Behavior and Click-> Treat (or other reward)

Rates of Reinforcement

- In the beginning, you will be C/T for every response.
- As your dog becomes reliable with what you're asking within a certain context, you can start to C/T every other response and eventually fade out the clicker.
- You will still want to provide praise and other reinforcement for the dog, including treats from time to time, to maintain the behavior.

Criteria Changes

- When you change criteria you will want to raise your reinforcement rate again.
- Criteria changes can be:
 - Increasing distance, or duration, or distraction
 - Modifying or adding to the behavior
 - Changing environment
 - Changing handlers



Choosing Reinforcement Wisely

- Use lower-value food for easier tasks and situations.
- Use higher-value food for more challenging scenarios, or scary stimuli.
- Remember, the dog decides what is reinforcing! Take a variety of food with you to be most prepared.



Delivering Reinforcement Wisely

- Remember to click, *then* reach into your treat pouch for the treat.
- Deliver the treat all the way to the dog's mouth.
- Where you place the treat will effect how the dog performs a behavior over time.



Troubleshooting



- Re-evaluate your training plan:
 - Have I raised criteria too quickly?
 - Break complex behaviors into small steps
- Is your dog comfortable?
- Do you have the right motivation?
- Short, quick sessions are usually best! End on a high note. Play and have fun together afterward.