

## Teaching 'Down'

A Down, Stay is one of the harder cues for dogs to learn, but can be very useful. Dogs who understand 'down' are much more welcome in public places and much more pleasant to have near the dinner table. 'Down' is also a handy cue if you want to keep your puppy in place for a while: it takes more energy to get up from a down than a sit, so dogs are less likely to break the position.

### \*Teach Your Dog "Sit" Before Continuing\*

1. Start with a handful of soft, smelly treats and find a quiet spot free of distractions.
2. Ask your dog to "sit."
3. Hold a treat near their nose and slowly bring it straight down in front of their chest. The hand signal will be a flat palm down for this behavior.  
Don't say the verbal cue until he is going into position consistently. Sometimes, if your dog doesn't lie down right away, you may have to bring the treat back up to the nose and try again or move the treat backwards backwards or forwards on the ground to see what will work.
4. Be patient with this exercise. It may not work perfectly in the beginning and if your dog gets up instead of lying down, try again.
5. Once they lie down, mark the behavior with a click or say "yes" and immediately reward.  
It's advised to also practice getting your dog to settle on one hip. This is helpful to keep your dog in the position since it is harder for them to pop up quickly. To do this, get your dog into the 'down' position and then slowly lure their nose with the treat around to their side. Keep it close to them, otherwise they may get up. As soon as they roll onto their hip, click or say "yes" and treat. If you are consistent with this every time, they will soon start to go on their hip automatically every time
6. Once your dog is lying down consistently, you can start to add the verbal cue, "down."  
Ask your dog to 'sit' and then flip your hand over to show him the 'down' hand signal. Say "down" and then start to guide them into the position like you did before. Click or say "yes" and give them the treat when they are all the way into the position.
7. At this time, you should also be implementing your release word. This is done by asking your dog for the down, rewarding them, and then waiting 1-2 seconds before saying the release word. (You will add more time to this as you go)
8. The next steps to this behavior will be to decrease how much you guide your dog into the position, proofing the 'down' in new situations and environments, and varying when you give the food reward.

Good luck and happy wags from the AAA team!