

## Teaching 'Sit'

Keep in mind that puppies (8 weeks to 6 months) have short attention spans. Keep your sessions short at first to minimize distractions and maintain your dog's attention, gradually increasing the amount of time spent on training each day. The SIT is one of the easiest skills to teach. A dog who sits on cue is easier to manage until he learns more self-control. For example, teaching your dog to sit when the doorbell rings means they'll be less likely to jump up on visitors when the door opens.

1. It is recommended to use a handful of tasty treats (soft and smelly). If your dog is small, get on their level, either on the floor or in a chair next to them to start.  
You will begin by holding the treat close to their nose without allowing them to take it. They should be able to lick, nibble and sniff the treat as you lure their nose, moving your hand up and over their head. As their head moves up, their bottom will lower.
2. When the dog's bottom hits the floor, immediately click or say "yes" and release the treat to his mouth. Make sure to praise them well!
3. You can begin to hold your hand flat, palm up, as it raises over their head so that they will start to recognize the hand signal. Eventually, your hand raising upwards with palm to the sky will be their cue to sit.
4. Repeat multiple times until they are doing the behavior consistently. Only then will you start to pair the behavior with the verbal cue, "sit."
5. You can then start to implement the release word. This is a word to let your dog know that they are finished with the behavior. Some suggestions are "release," "free," "finished," or "all done!" To do this, guide your dog into the sit position with your hand and when they do, reward them with a treat, but wait 1-2 seconds and then say your release command while taking a step back. If your dog pops out of the sit before you release them, immediately say "uh uh" and guide them back into the sit before trying to release them again after a couple seconds.

### Tips:

- Don't treat your dog for the release. Only mark and treat the sit.
- Repetitions are important, but your dog will tire of multiple reps. Rather, play the sit game with your dog in short bursts multiple times every day. Once your dog is consistent with the verbal cue and the hand signal, start to vary when you give them a treat. They should always receive praise when they sit on cue, but only treat at random times. You never want to stop treating all together, but the goal will be to have to do it a lot less. You wouldn't work if you didn't get a paycheck – it's the same for your dog!



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- Reinforce the sit in situations outside of training sessions, such as mealtimes, before you put their food bowl on the floor, or when exiting the house, before you open the door to take them on a walk.
- If they break the sit, remind them of the behavior with a quiet “uh uh” before re-positioning them and proceeding. If this cue is reinforced every time you ask your dog to sit away from the door, they will be less likely to bolt and run when the door opens. These examples are ways to begin proofing the sit. You should also practice outside of the home in new environments too!

Good luck and happy wags from the AAA team!