



PARKSIDE

CLIENT INFORMATION HANDOUT

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BEHAVIOURAL MODIFICATION TO PROMOTE RELAXATION:

Do not be put off by the above title, the idea of the following is to teach the dog a 'Calm Behaviour' that helps them learn and relax. Once this behaviour has been taught to the dog you can use it in situations where he previously was acting in an excited or fearful way. Using the command will give the dog something to do which you find acceptable and will reward him for it. In other words it will give you both the chance to be happy!

For the purposes of this sheet we will outline the procedure using a 'SIT' but you can substitute this for a 'DOWN' command if the dog is already familiar with this. You may start using 'SIT' but as you become more confident with the dog, move on to using a 'DOWN'. The advantage of the down command has over the sit command is that the dog is likely to be even calmer in a down than in a sit. The disadvantage is that many dogs do not perform a 'DOWN' readily on command.

THE 'SIT/WAIT'

- Call the dog to you using an upbeat voice "{NAME} COME"
- Show a titbit – if they are not looking at you, raise the titbit to your eye and say 'WATCH ME'.
- Give the command 'SIT'. The dog should be sat in front of you close enough to be able to take the titbit from your hand without you having to stretch. If the dog has not sat, lift your hand up and over the top of his head. Most dogs will follow the titbit with their eyes and automatically SIT to keep the titbit in view.
- As soon as the dog has sat give the command "WAIT". Do not pair this command with the dog's name. This can lead to confusion because many dogs take their name to mean COME.
- Repeat the wait command as often as you like. If the dog starts to look away repeat the command and regain his attention. Initially you want to get a wait of about 3-5 seconds.
- Give the titbit to the dog as soon as he has waited the required time, You MUST ensure that when you give the titbit, the dog is still SITTING & RELAXED.

POINTS TO NOTE:

You must have the dog's attention. If they are not looking at you they are not paying attention. If they do not maintain eye contact with you then you need to work on this first or it may be that he is tired or not hungry and hence you need to try again at another time.

Only follow the whole regime if he performs each step well. If you find that you can only get the dog to COME and not SIT, work on the regime up until that point and then reward. Only progress through the regime when he is performing well.

The reward must be given to the dog within 0.5 to 1 second of him performing the behaviour for the dog to build up an association between the two. Therefore you must have the reward in your hand. Often problems arise because there is a delay in giving the

reward by which time the dog has got up and started moving around. In this instance you would be rewarding your dog getting up and moving, in fact rewarding the very thing you did not want!

THE REWARD:

What you choose to give will depend on you dog. It has to be something they value. For the majority of dogs this will be food. For some dogs this may be his dry food for others it may be something more tempting e.g. cheese, sausage, dried liver etc. Which you choose will depend very much on your own dog's preference. You may also find having a supply of extra special titbits is useful to have in case the dog performs exceptionally well. Think of this as his '**JACKPOT TREAT**' to be given for near perfect performances or when the dog has performed something new for the first time. The **JACKPOTS** send a very strong message to the dog of what behaviours you like and help to drive the behaviour along.

There are some dogs to which food is not so important and for these you may find toys or attention from you is the thing they want. The toy should only be brought out for the training session. Attention from you has to be graded from a '**GOOD DOG**' to the **JACKPOT HUG, TICKLE TUMMY** etc.

TIMING OF THE REWARD:

Initially the behaviour will be rewarded every time but as the dog gets better you should start rewarding more infrequently, maybe every third time. As you progress this interval will get longer, the idea behind this is the dog is not aware when he is going to be rewarded so he repeats the behaviour in the hope that this time he is going to get it. **IN OTHER WORDS** it is the anticipation of the reward that drives the dog to perform the Behaviour.

END RESULT:

A dog sitting, relaxed (waiting) for a least 15 seconds in any environment.

To get to this point you will need to practice daily in five minute sessions. Repeat these sessions at different times of the day. Start off in the room that is the least exciting, usually the kitchen and then progress to other rooms in the house. Once the dog is performing a SIT/WAIT for fifteen seconds anywhere in the house it is time you try it in the garden. Once the performance in the garden is good you can try it away from home. Outside it would be advisable, at first, to have the dog on the lead.

All family members who have a lot of contact with the dog should practice the above with the dog.

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